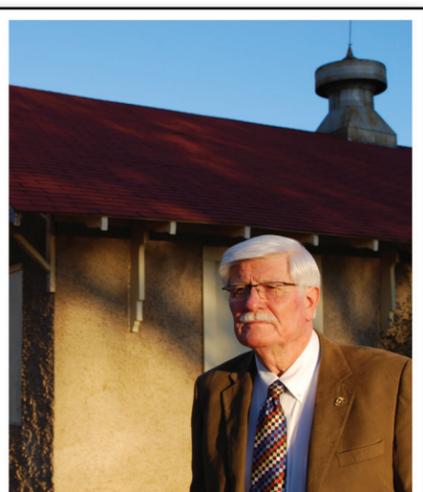


A Man of Many Faces

“Every morning when he comes in, he has a big grin on his face and has something witty to say that helps start your day off right.”

Among the jokes and adventures, John Burns has also provided a great amount of leadership during his time at Texas Tech University. He has found a place in the hearts of many who have met him while he has served as Dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR). Burns has been a leader



The Professional

at Texas Tech for 42 years and has helped the university grow into what it is today. His final retirement in 2011 is a humbling reminder of his accomplishments at Texas Tech.

In 1969, Burns came to Texas Tech as an assistant professor of biology, with research expertise in animal reproductive physiology. During his time at Texas Tech, Burns was involved in the development of the Clark Scholars program and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute program, while sustaining several positions at the university.

was also in charge of undergraduate research.

Burns' first retirement was short and sweet. He said it lasted all but one year before he was asked to serve as the Interim Dean of CASNR.

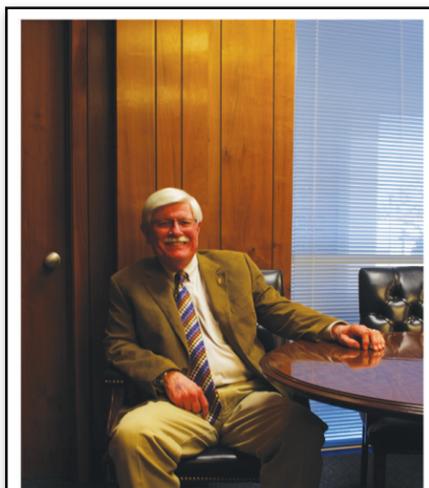
“When they asked me to come serve as Interim Dean, I said I'd be glad to do that because when I was Provost this was always my favorite college,” Burns said.

After serving as Interim Dean, Burns was asked to serve as the Dean of CASNR. He agreed to serve for three years and retire in summer 2011.

Norman Hopper, the Executive Associate Dean of Academic Programs for CASNR, said he has enjoyed working with Burns over the past few years.

“We were all excited when we heard he was going to be our dean,” Hopper said, “because we knew he was bringing a wealth of background information, knowledge and experience to the college. Our college has grown in many ways, and he has been instrumental in it by creating a very open environment for our college to excel.”

Sukant Misra, Associate Dean of Research for CASNR, said Burns is a true professional and adheres to high values and principles.



The Joker

About Burns, Misra said, “He has a keen sense of humor -- I don't know how he does it. He remembers thousands and thousands of jokes. He uses them all the time to basically relax everyone around him. His idea is to provide a work environment where people are relaxed and stress free.”

Steve Fraze, Chair for the Department of Agricultural Education and Communications, said Burns always has a joke for every occasion.

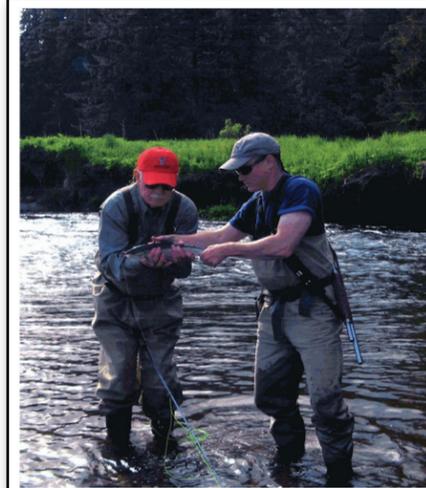
“He always likes to tell jokes to begin any event he is speaking at,” Fraze said. “Usually at any meetings or dinner parties he always has a joke to start things off.”

Burns said his humor is well-known, and he is the type of person who can remember any joke he hears.

“When I used to teach the big sections of anatomy and physiology, the students' most numerous comment was that they loved my jokes,” he said.

Hopper said Burns' humor creates a stress free environment to work in, and when making difficult decisions, his wit helps in the administrative process.

“I've never seen him in a bad humor,” Hopper said. “Every morning when he comes in he'll have a big grin on his face and has something witty to say that helps start your day off right.”



The Adventurer

After retirement, Burns said he plans to relax, travel and spend time with his wife. He said they have planned a trip to go fly-fishing in Colorado and New Mexico in the future.

“I taught my wife to fly-fish,” Burns said. “We went on an Alaskan cruise last June, and one of the things we did was book an excursion out of Juneau. We got on a float plane and went into the wilderness with a guide and we fly-fished.”

Fraze said Burns enjoys shooting sports and traditional hunting adventures.

“He enjoys all types of outdoors stuff,” Fraze said. “He is very adept at shooting sports with both pistols and rifles. He likes to do authentic types of hunting. For example, I've heard stories about him going buffalo hunting in full Native American dress.”

Burns also said he and his wife have a ranch in Flomot, Texas, and love to spend time there on the weekends.

“I always wanted a place of my own where I could hunt, and now that I've got one, I don't hunt anymore - just the hogs,” Burns said. “I like to watch the deer and the turkeys, but I don't bother them anymore.”

Fraze said Burns will be greatly missed by everyone in CASNR.

“It will be tough without him, because you never know what change will bring,” Fraze said. “He was really good about not having any bias toward any department. We were always treated and managed fairly.”

After he retires, Burns said he will greatly miss the staff and faculty, as they are invaluable and work well together.

“We have a great bunch of faculty - the best in the university,” Burns said. “We also have an outstanding staff in the Dean's office. I tell people I've been here at Tech now for 42 years and this is the best staff that I've ever had. I'll really miss the interaction with the faculty.”



The Unforgettable

Tara Petty | Lorena, Texas



PHOTO BY: ELIZABETH BURNS