



**Gamma Sigma Delta  
Louisiana State University Chapter  
Spring Banquet 2008**

**Keynote Speaker**

**Dr. Michael G. 'Mike' Strain** DVM is Commissioner of the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry. Born and raised on a cattle farm in Covington, Strain is no stranger to rural life in Louisiana. He was very active in FFA and 4-H and remains involved in his family's cattle business. After graduating Covington High School, Strain's interest in livestock led him to pursue studies in preveterinary medicine at Louisiana State University.

In 1983, Strain earned a Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine from LSU and quickly found clients for his new large animal practice through the family cattle operation. A year later Strain married his Veterinary School sweetheart, Susan Searcy, a native of Hot Springs, Ark. Together they opened Claiborne Hill Veterinary Hospital in Covington, where she focuses on a small animal practice and Strain remains involved in hospital management and herd health consulting.

He served 17 years with the St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office Reserves as a Lieutenant in the Special Operations Division and was further involved in his local community as a Commissioner for St. Tammany Parish Fire District 12. Strain was also appointed by the parish government to serve on the Local Emergency Preparedness Planning Committee. He is a member of the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation, Louisiana Cattlemen's Association and the Louisiana Veterinary Medical Association. He served as parish president and state board member for Farm Bureau, a parish officer for LCA and state president for LVMA.

In 1999, he was elected to the office of State Representative in House District 74. He ran unopposed to win a second term in 2003. While in the Louisiana Legislature, Strain served on the Agriculture Committee and chaired the Legislative Rural Caucus, the largest legislative caucus in Louisiana. He was one of three veterinarians from Louisiana chosen to train in a bioterrorism awareness program sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention through the Center for Food Security and Public Health at Iowa State University. In 2003, the LSU School of Veterinary Medicine presented Strain the Distinguished Alumni Award. He was also named Legislator of the Year by the St. Tammany Parish Alliance for Good Government.

## Faculty Award Recipients

### Faculty Research Award

**Dr. Qinglin Wu** is currently Roy O. Martin Sr. Professor in Composites and Engineered Wood Products at the Louisiana State University. He received a BS in Agricultural Engineering from Henan Agricultural University in 1983, an MS degree in mechanical Engineering from University Tasmania in 1989, and a Ph.D. in Forest Products (Minor: Mechanical Engineering) from Oregon State University in 1993. His research emphases include wood/natural fiber polymer composites, wood–moisture relation, composite durability and engineering performance, and nano-composite materials. Dr. Wu has received numerous honors including *Markwardt Wood Engineering Award* for Excellence in Wood Engineering Research and *Wood Award* for Excellence in Graduate Research. He has served on various committees for professional societies and government agencies and as panel member for USDA National Research Initiative and USDA SBIR programs. Dr. Wu’s research is published in over 100 technical papers in journals, books, and proceedings. His research has been supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF), Louisiana Board of Regents, USDA National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program (NRCGP), USDA/DOE Biomass Research Program, and wood-products industry.

### Faculty Extension Award

**Dr. Diane Sasser** is the recipient of the 2008 Gamma Sigma Delta Extension Award. Dr. Sasser has been with the LSU AgCenter for over 25 years, first serving as an agent and later, moving to the state office to serve as a specialist. Her expertise is in family and child development, with particular emphasis on adolescent youth. She developed a curriculum on parenting adolescents and has a passion for helping 4-H state and field faculty with programming for youth and adult leaders in the family and child arena. One of Dr. Sasser’s greatest professional achievements is the development of the “Parents Preparing for Success Program” that provides parenting skills education for Louisiana public assistance applicants and recipients who are pregnant or have a child under age one. She currently serves as one of three Team Leaders for the Extension faculty, facilitating collaborative efforts between state and field faculty, chairing the specialization committee and improving communications and training efforts for both field and state office.

### Faculty Teaching Award

**Dr. Kayanush J. Aryana**, known as Kai by his colleagues, is currently an associate professor in School of Animal Sciences and Department of Food Science. He is currently teaching two courses in dairy/food science. He is an outstanding faculty member who has established an excellent teaching program in COA. He is a dedicated teacher and always available outside of class to work with students. One student said “anyone who sat through his lectures witnessed his drive, motivation, and passion for teaching about the dairy industry.” Another student said “He makes learning easy by incorporating the actual subjects of our studies in the classroom.” His teaching extends beyond the classroom. He has advised a number of undergraduate students on research related to functional dairy foods, which results in research presentations at professional scientific meetings. Dr. Aryana’s teaching dedication has been recognized by his peers. He was a recipient of the 2007 Tiger Athletic Foundation Award for Outstanding Teacher and Gamma Sigma Delta Award of Merit Teacher Honor Roll for 3 consecutive years (2005, 2006 and 2007). He has been selected as a recipient of the 2008 Gamma Sigma Delta Teaching Award of Merit.

## Alumni Award

**Dr. Neil Odenwald** is Professor Emeritus and former Director, School of Landscape Architecture, Louisiana State University. He retired with 38 years of service to the LSU community, including serving as a horticulturist with the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service. Dr. Odenwald earned B.S and Ph.D. degrees in horticulture from Mississippi State University and a M.S. degree in Landscape Architecture from LSU. He is a Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects and a past president, Louisiana Chapter of ASLA.

He has received numerous awards for his landscape projects and his books, including The Garden Club of America's 2002 Medal of Honor, and the prestigious 2001 James A. Foret Award from the Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Association. He has also been recognized as the outstanding teacher in both the School of Landscape Architecture and the College of Design at LSU.

Dr. Odenwald is the author of five garden books: Southern Plants, Plants for American Landscapes, Live Oak Splendor-Gardens Along the Mississippi from Natchez to New Orleans, Attracting Birds to Southern Gardens, and The Bountiful Flower Garden, co-authored with Texas A&M horticulture professor Bill Welch. Dr. Odenwald actively serves as a gardening consultant and regularly provides lectures throughout the US and abroad to consumer and commercial audiences

Dr. Odenwald is master of ceremonies for the annual Southern Garden Symposium in St. Francisville and has been a long time supporter and board member of Friends of Hilltop Arboretum. He was the long-time coordinator of "the landscape school of the south" horticulture short course. He has been actively involved the last few years with the LSU AgCenter providing assistance in development of landscape plans for Louisiana House and in implementation of landscape efforts at the Hammond Research Station.

Dr. Odenwald is presently working on a project with retired LSU AgCenter horticulturist Tom Pope that will offer a web site where nearly 10,000 plant images will be featured along with over 30 categories for special landscape uses.

## **Distinguished Achievement in Agriculture Award**

**Dr. Roger Hinson** is currently serving as a professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness at the LSU AgCenter. He has served as a faculty member at LSU since 1980. Dr. Hinson's responsibilities with the LSU AgCenter include research in the areas of agricultural marketing and farm management of horticultural crops. Dr. Hinson's teaching responsibilities with the LSU College of Agriculture includes an agricultural business management class focusing on linear programming, forecasting, inventory models and planning models.

Dr. Hinson has provided significant service to the university, our campus community and statewide agricultural groups during his tenure at the LSU AgCenter. He has worked with the Strawberry Promotion Board, Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Association, Louisiana Turfgrass Association, Louisiana Vegetable Growers Association and other groups. He serves on Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation advisory committees and has worked with the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry on specialty crop projects. He is a past president of Gamma Sigma Delta and has been a member of the LSU Kiwanis Club since 1990. He is also a board member with Campus Federal Credit Union.

Currently, agricultural economics and horticulture efforts at the LSU AgCenter, lead by Dr. Hinson, has developed production budgets for many of our economically important horticulture commodity crops – including nursery crops, sod, pecans, mayhaw, vegetables, strawberries, and others. He has also been instrumental in providing the leadership for development of studies that have quantified the economic contributions of the green industry in Louisiana.

Currently, Dr. Hinson is working on risk management projects pertaining to the green industry and developing some additional specialty crop marketing plans and resource guides for Louisiana producers.