



ATCLIFFE HICKS SCHOOL *of* AGRICULTURE

Then & NOW



University of
Connecticut
College of Agriculture
and Natural Resources



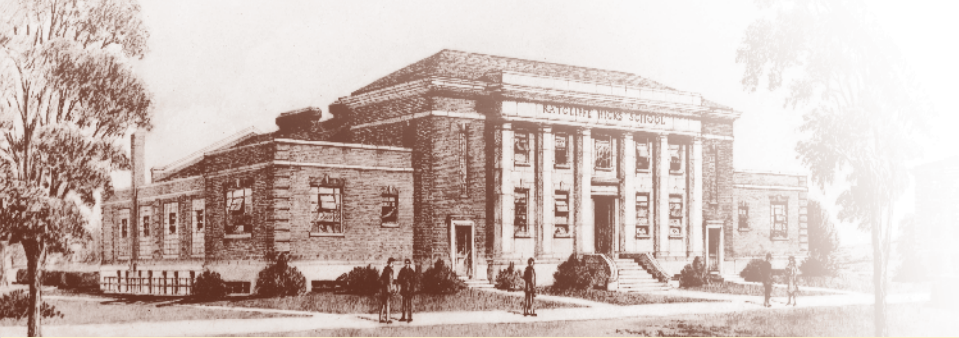
“My father’s wish was to have built an agricultural school in Tolland County where boys and young men residing in the State of Connecticut, of good moral character and of promising intelligence, shall be maintained and instructed in all agricultural arts, forestry, irrigation, the utilization of water power, and kindred subjects. The purpose is that instruction shall be elementary rather than advanced, practical rather than theoretical, adapted to produce good citizens, who shall be able to utilize the resources of the soil with intelligence and thrift, rather than to rival or duplicate the work of the colleges and scientific schools.”

ELIZABETH HICKS, Daughter of Ratcliffe Hicks

November 5, 1950

(Address given at the dedication of The Ratcliffe Hicks School)





HISTORY

Situated on the northeast corner of campus, nestled within the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the Ratcliffe Hicks School of Agriculture stands as a legacy to one of the University's proud benefactors, Mr. Ratcliffe Hicks (1843-1906).

Ratcliffe Hicks, a Brown University graduate (1864), was known as a brilliant attorney and businessman in both real estate and manufacturing. He was the youngest member elected to the 1866 Connecticut legislature — serving 29 years as a prominent voice in support of women's rights and against capital punishment. Hicks also served as attorney for the city of Meriden and New Haven County.

Hicks was known to be a stickler regarding his somewhat unusual name. When Brown University misspelled his name as "Radcliffe" on his diploma, Hicks was so angry that years later he intentionally omitted Brown University from his will, with the exception of a student scholarship fund.

A Tolland resident, Hicks created a trust for the purpose of establishing an agricultural school in Tolland County where "young men residing in the state of Connecticut of good moral character and of promising intelligence," would study agricultural arts, forestry,



Ratcliffe Hicks (1843-1906)



Left: Architectural renderings of the Ratcliffe Hicks Building, the W.B. Young Building, and the Elizabeth Hicks Building by Frederic C. Teich.

1906 -Present



A CENTURY OF TEACHING

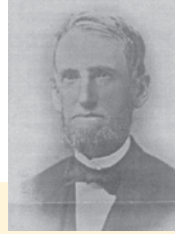
College of Agriculture and Natural Resources *It all started here.*

1906

Maria (Stearns) Hicks



Charles Hicks



Ratcliffe Hicks (1843-1906)

■ Ratcliffe Hicks was born in Tolland, Connecticut, October 3, 1843, the oldest son of Charles and Maria (Stearns) Hicks. Hicks was a Brown University graduate (1864), successful lawyer, industrialist, and Connecticut legislator.

■ Hicks died in 1906. In his will he left instructions to start an agricultural school to encourage and support farming in New England.



■ Hicks envisioned the creation of an agricultural school where "boys and young men residing in the State of Connecticut, of good moral character and promising intelligence" would study agricultural practices.

1930s - 1940s

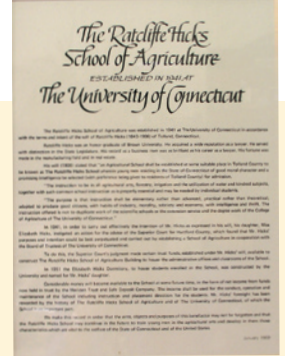
Meriden Trust
&
Safe Deposit
Company
Trustee



■ Trust monies from the Ratcliffe Hicks estate, administered by the Meriden Trust & Safe Deposit Company, were to be invested for twenty-five years before building the school.

■ In 1936 the estate established scholarships, grants and loans for assistance to boys and young men pursuing education in agricultural subjects.

1940s - 1960s



■ The School was established in Storrs at the University of Connecticut in 1941.

■ In 1946, Albert I. Mann was appointed the Director to head the two-year school. From 1949 until 1965, he was Assistant Dean of the College and Director of the School.



A LEGACY OF LEARNING



1970s - 1980s



■ The state funded an expansion to the Ratcliffe Hicks building and added a large state-of-the-art livestock judging arena. It still hosts livestock judging, an annual horticulture show, animal shows, and College-wide events.



■ Edwin J. Kersting was appointed Assistant Dean and Director in 1965.



■ Construction of several buildings began, including the Ratcliffe Hicks School and W.B. Young Building.



■ Elizabeth Hicks gave a speech in honor of her father's dream at the 1950 dedication of the Ratcliffe Hicks building.

■ In 1951, the state provided funding to build the Elizabeth Hicks dormitory, dedicating it to Miss Hicks in recognition of her contribution to the university.



■ Dr. John P.H. Brand (right) was appointed Associate Dean and Director of the Ratcliffe Hicks School in 1967 and served until 1994.

1990s - Present

■ Dr. Suman Singha was appointed Associate Dean and Director of the Ratcliffe Hicks School in 1995 and served until 2004. Singha was a faculty member and head of the Department of Plant Science. He was appointed Vice Provost in 2004.



■ From the school's inception through 1994, graduating students were awarded a two-year certificate.



■ In 1995, the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree was added to the program. Coursework for students earning an AAS degree was more rigorously integrated with the general curriculum of the University.



■ Dr. Cameron Faustman (right) became Associate Dean and Director of the Ratcliffe Hicks School in 2005. He served as a faculty member and as head of the Department of Animal Science.

■ The Ratcliffe Hicks School offers technical and applied education in Ornamental Horticulture and Turfgrass Management and in Animal Science. Areas of concentration include dairy and livestock, turfgrass, horticulture, equine science, and landscape and plant maintenance.





HISTORY

Elizabeth Hicks (1884-1974)



irrigation, and related subjects. He decreed that the school should provide a practical rather than theoretical education and should not duplicate the work of the colleges or scientific schools. Even though his will specified young men, the school has been open to women since its early years.

According to the terms of the Hicks will, trust monies were to be invested for twenty-five years before building the school.

His daughter and only child, Elizabeth Hicks (1884-1974), played an important role in fulfilling her father's request to build a two-year agricultural school. She recalled that as she and her father would ride home in their carriage, her father would become upset at the growing number of farms being abandoned. He felt a need to educate young men in the skills needed to operate a farm successfully.

Elizabeth traveled the east coast looking for a location to house the agriculture school. She was turned down by several institutions but was not deterred. Elizabeth chose the University of Connecticut in Storrs, as animal and plant teaching facilities already existed on campus. In 1941, the Ratcliffe Hicks School of Agriculture was established at the University of Connecticut.

In 1951, the state provided funding to build the Elizabeth Hicks dormitory, dedicating it to Miss Hicks in recognition of her contributions



"Elizabeth Hicks was a lovely woman, perhaps one of the last of the Victorian age. She had a sincere affection with her boys [the Ratcliffe Hicks students]. They were almost like her own sons."

JOHN P.H. BRAND
DIRECTOR OF THE RATCLIFFE HICKS SCHOOL, 1967-1994



Below: Architectural rendering of the Elizabeth Hicks Dormitory by Frederic C. Teich.



to the University. Elizabeth Hicks took great interest in the school and was known for having formal teas each spring with the students and campus dignitaries .

From the School's inception to 1994, graduating students were awarded a two-year certificate. In 1995, the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree was added to the program. Concurrent with the AAS degree approval was a greater integration within the general education curriculum of the University.

Because Ratcliffe Hicks believed in the value of citizenship, a political science course, *Introduction to American Political Processes*, has been a traditional requirement of the school curriculum.

Monies from the Hicks trust continue to fund additions and improvements to the Ratcliffe Hicks program. Agriculture students in both the School and College enjoy the mutual benefits of a shared campus that provide a unique educational opportunity.

“Enter to learn, go out to serve. And that is my hope for the boys who enter the school. May they go out to serve not only this state of the union, but the Nation and the World, for only in service for others is there perfect freedom.”

ELIZABETH HICKS





RATCLIFFE HICKS



THE RATCLIFFE HICKS SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE IS A GEM HIDDEN AMONG THE LARGER SCHOOLS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT.

It offers both an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree and two-year certification in a wide variety of disciplines within the plant and animal science majors, each designed to give the student a well-balanced education with an emphasis on the technical aspects of each major. Experiential learning has been and continues to be a hallmark of the Ratcliffe Hicks education.

Graduates acquire skills necessary to work in a variety of careers including floristry, landscape and grounds maintenance, greenhouse and garden center operation, nursery and fruit production, turf management, park and land maintenance, animal health, production agriculture, breeding and genetics, nutrition, meat and food science, and food handling and production.

Students may choose to continue their education. Those completing the Ratcliffe Hicks



"RH offers meaningful learning opportunities to students with a wide variety of backgrounds and interests. Many students are undecided about their career direction, or even about their major, when they go to college. Ratcliffe Hicks students develop academic skills while learning subjects of great personal interest. Those that choose to continue higher education are more enthusiastic about learning in general and are often more successful in all courses than some students who start directly in baccalaureate programs."

**PATRICIA JEPSON, ACADEMIC ADVISORY
CENTER DIRECTOR, RATCLIFFE HICKS
SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE**





Below: David Hart (Animal Science, Class of 1978); Joyce Burr Hart (Animal Science, Class of 1979; Bachelor of Science, School of Education, Agricultural Education, Class of 1982)

TODAY

program with a cumulative grade point average of 2.7 or above may apply to transfer into the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources or other baccalaureate degree programs. Some graduates have gone on to complete MS, PhD, and/or DVM degrees.

Ratcliffe Hicks offers educational opportunities for a number of individuals at different stages in their lives. Traditional students generally include those who desire a more practical education or those deciding relatively late that a college education would be an option to pursue. The Ratcliffe Hicks program also serves the adult student seeking a career change or those individuals who wish to pursue a personal interest in horticulture or animal science after retiring from a first career. Nontraditional students are welcome at the Ratcliffe Hicks School.

Today, students attending the Ratcliffe Hicks School of Agriculture at the University of Connecticut pay the same tuition, fees, and room and board costs as those charged to four-year students. They benefit from all the resources available to other students and are eligible to participate in all cocurricular activities except NCAA team sports.



JOYCE and DAVID HART met while attending Ratcliffe Hicks. They married in 1979, and in 1983 they had twins, a son and a daughter. Dave began his career as the Plant and Soil Research Farm manager at UConn, while Joyce worked for Dave's uncle at his orchid breeding facility. The Harts started a market garden and roadside stand at their home. They built a small cold frame and heated it with horse manure. That first year the plants netted the couple \$30. They built a greenhouse and heated it with wood. That year they made \$300. The couple realized that their little roadside stand on a back country road was the start of something, but location was key. They purchased a home on Route 14 in Canterbury, Connecticut, and built a greenhouse. At that point, Dave made the decision to leave his job at UConn and take the plunge into a full-time retail business, Hart's Greenhouse and Florist. At present, the couple owns three retail garden centers in eastern Connecticut, including a state-of-the-art growing facility and a floral and gift shop. Their twins Christopher and Jessica, are 22 years old and horticulture graduates of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

"Ratcliffe Hicks was a great hands-on experience. It was also about broadening my horizons, getting away from home and meeting people."

DAVID HART



Below: James Cropley (Nursery Management, Class of 1976)



JAMES CROPLEY, was general manager for East Hartford Nursery before deciding to open his own business. In 1984, he purchased a building lot on Route 44 in Bolton, Connecticut, constructing a 24-by-24 foot building and erecting a 20-by-40 foot greenhouse purchased at an auction. It was the start of Cropley's Garden Center and Landscaping. Today, the retail building has tripled in size and includes 4000 square feet of greenhouse space. In addition to the garden center, his business includes landscaping and design. "We cater to a clientele that appreciates quality," he says. "We have our little niche."

Cropley describes his childhood as "very poor." His high school vo-ag teacher took him under his wing. At Ratcliffe Hicks, he found that same nurturing atmosphere. "I needed to be pushed," he says. "You felt like they really cared about you. That's why I stay involved."

Cropley served two terms as president of the University of Connecticut Agricultural and Natural Resources Alumni Association and is a member of the Connecticut Nursery and Landscape Association.



The facilities available to students include laboratories and field facilities. Horticulture students use the 90-acre teaching and research facility that includes six greenhouses, a floral design studio, numerous field plantings, the five-acre Ratcliffe Hicks/C.R. Burr Teaching Nursery and a landscape design laboratory. And, the plants on the Storrs campus constitute an arboretum, which is used in teaching.

The facilities provide many learning opportunities. For example, at the Plant Tissue Culture Facility, students multiply lilac shoots in tissue culture and then root lilac microcuttings. In the greenhouse, students gain experience in plant propagation by grafting plants, rooting cuttings, air layering plants, and treating seeds to overcome dormancy.



"I loved Ratcliffe Hicks. For what I wanted to do, it gave me exactly what I needed. It allowed me to get hands-on experience in a relatively short period of time."

JAMES CROPLEY

At the turfgrass facilities, students establish their own turf plots from seed, planting a number of different grass species, and study grass identification from previous years' plots. They study insect and weed identification and learn integrated pest management practices. Students learn how to install turfgrass irrigation systems and perform



maintenance operations in the field. They work with the latest equipment used by turfgrass managers.

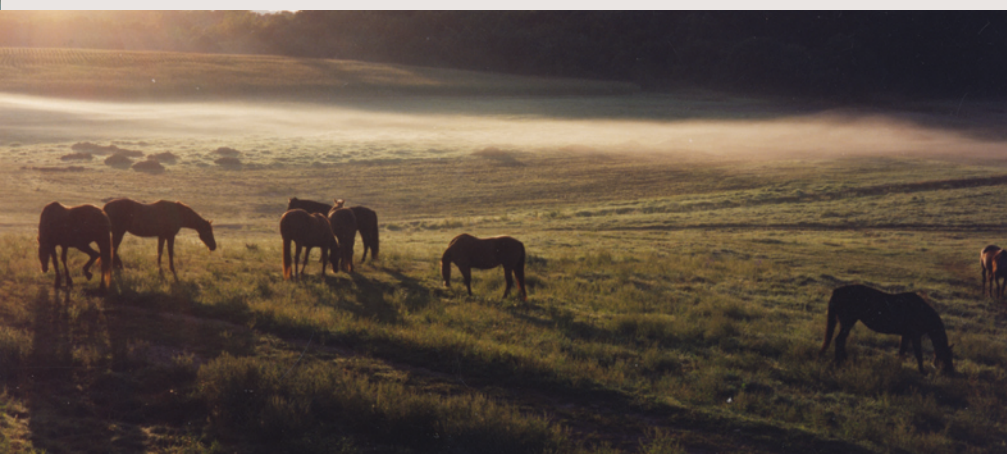
The animal science program boasts teaching facilities for horses, dairy, livestock, and poultry; a food sensory laboratory and food processing area; and several arenas including a lighted outdoor riding arena,

an outdoor training area, and a heated indoor arena. The college maintains approximately 85 horses and specializes in the breeding of Morgans.

Below: William Stuart (Animal Science, Class of 1988; Bachelor of Science, CANR, Animal Science, Class of 1992)



WILLIAM STUART JR., spent a semester in Germany conducting research and assisting local farmers with meat quality issues. He worked twelve years as a commercial meat processor and manager in Boston and Philadelphia and is currently self-employed at his four-generation family farm. Both parents are UConn graduates. Stuart feels that his education from the Ratcliffe Hicks School was essential to his success in the field, where he sees many opportunities for Ratcliffe Hicks graduates.





R H S A TODAY



Below: Barbara Torino (Horticulture, Class of 1993; Bachelor of Science, CANR, Horticulture, Class of 1995)



BARBARA TORINO, entered Ratcliffe Hicks as a nontraditional student after working many years as a hairdresser. After graduation, she worked in the Connecticut Cooperative Extension System before opening her own business, Little Brook Herb Farm, in North Branford, Connecticut.



Students gain hands-on experience in areas such as nutrition, health, grooming, showing, milking, and equipment use. Students working in the meats laboratory learn the basics of food science. At the UConn creamery, students participate in the making of ice cream, yogurt, and cheese.

Students can be involved in research projects where, for instance, they might study growth rates and feed efficiency or identify a particular pathogen affecting animal health.

Opportunities abound in all areas of study. Students may choose an independent study in one particular area of interest. They may gain work experience through University or off-campus internships or off-campus employment at a variety of businesses, organizations, and state or federal agencies.



"I'd been out of school for a long time. Ratcliffe Hicks gave me the confidence that I needed to stay in college. In actuality, I could have done what I'm doing now with only my education from Ratcliffe Hicks. Getting my four year degree was a personal goal."

BARBARA TORINO



THE RATCLIFFE HICKS EXPERIENCE

KENNETH LEWIS (Poultry, Class of 1944). Kenneth Lewis spent his career in the poultry field, retiring as a senior management consultant of technical services, at Indian River International in Nacogdoches, Texas, a company with over 65 years of broiler-breeding success.

At age 12, Lewis found his first job in the poultry industry, working on a farm outside Meriden, Connecticut. He was paid two dollars a week — for six days' work plus two meals a day. Lewis began his employment at the Indian River Poultry Farm during a summer break from Ratcliffe Hicks. At that time, Indian River was located in Ocean View, Delaware.

In 1946 he returned to Indian River, where he remained, actively participating in the continuing development of the broiler industry. "I've worked in 52 foreign countries plus the U.S. I loved to help people solve their problems. It was a great life. Just wonderful. I enjoyed every minute of it," he says.

"Ratcliffe Hicks certainly gave me the basis to begin my career, and taught me leadership. Dean Young was the man back then. He was more like a father to us. Those were fantastic days. They were really great."

KATHERINE HEMINWAY (Nursery Management, Class of 1978), (Bachelor of Science, CANR, Environmental Horticulture, Class of 1984). Heminway spent 19 years at the Hartford Institute of Living, fifteen as a horticulture therapist and four as manager of the grounds for three Hartford hospitals. She is currently a partner with Spielman Landscaping of Ellington, Connecticut.

"I can truly say I'm very glad I went to Ratcliffe Hicks. I feel that I received a very good hands-on education."



Below: Albert Gray (Poultry Science, Class of 1943)



ALBERT GRAY majored in poultry science. Life as a Ratcliffe Hicks student in the early 1940s was quite different from that of current students. Gray and his classmates attended classes from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ROTC training was mandatory, so Monday afternoons were reserved for training and military drills. Physical education was taught during the evening.

In the early years, the students did not have the extensive facilities available to today's student. Lab classes were held outdoors. "We had to make do," Gray says.

Gray served as a Navy Seabee during World War II, then returned to UConn and enrolled in the four-year program. He graduated in 1951 with a Bachelor of Science degree in poultry. Gray spent the majority of his career as a Tolland County Extension agent, retiring in 1978.



"Attending Ratcliffe Hicks was a wonderful experience."

ALBERT GRAY



THE RATCLIFFE HICKS EXPERIENCE



Below: Susan Hageman Cusato (Fruit and Vegetable Production, Class of 1978; Bachelor of Science, Southern Connecticut State University, Chemistry, minor in Biochemistry, Class of 1982; MS, CANR, Environmental Education, Class of 1985; PhD, CANR, Nutritional Sciences, Class of 1994)



SUSAN HAGEMAN CUSATO taught high school science, then joined Southern Connecticut State University as a part time instructor. She is currently an associate professor and chair of the Department of Science Education and Environmental Studies at Southern Connecticut State University.

"What impressed me about Ratcliffe Hicks was that it was very exciting to be learning from people who were passionate about their area of plant or animal science and were actively involved in pursuing their livelihood in the field. It was good to be out in the field for coursework, actually practicing what we studied."

WILLARD JEPSON (Animal Science, Class of 1979)

Jepson went on to complete a Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Technology at Central Connecticut State University. For more than twenty years, Jepson has been employed at a milk processing facility in Newington, Connecticut. The operation started as a farmer-owned cooperative, Connecticut Milk Producers Association, and has gradually transitioned to a commercial food processing plant now known as Koehler Mix Specialties. Jepson's role has evolved as market structures and processing technologies have changed over the years.

PAUL HAMMER JR. (Floriculture, Class of 1967; Bachelor of Science, CANR, Natural Resources, Class of 1970; MS and PhD, Ohio State University, Floriculture, Class of 1972 and 1974)

In 1974, Hammer purchased Ledgecrest Garden Center, in Mansfield, Connecticut. He spent ten years during the 1970s and 1980s as a guest lecturer at Ratcliffe Hicks. Hammer says that Ratcliffe Hicks is an excellent program that prepares students for a vocation in agriculture, or to continue their education. "Ratcliffe Hicks is very good at preparing students like myself. I was not a good student in high school but the curriculum brought out my ability to focus while involving me in courses I enjoyed with people interested in the same subjects."

"I think the best thing about Ratcliffe Hicks is a nice family atmosphere between faculty and students. Everyone seems to care."

CYNTHIA WYSKIEWICZ (Floriculture, Class of 1979; Bachelor of Science, CANR, Horticulture, Class of 1988; MS, CANR, Plant Science, Class of 2005)

Wyskiewicz worked for twelve years as a retail garden center perennial manager. In 1997, she earned her Master Gardener certification from UConn. When the UConn Home and Garden Center opened in 1998, she joined the staff as a part-time research assistant while continuing her work at the nursery.

*"Ratcliffe Hicks inspired me to go on and continue my education.
The program put you right into your core courses. Those years
at Ratcliffe Hicks were a good experience. Hard work, and a lot of fun.
I still stay in touch with a lot of the people from my class."*

CYNTHIA WYSKIEWICZ



ROBERT STEINER (Animal Science, Class of 1949; Bachelor of Science, CANR, Animal Science, Class of 1952; Sixth Year Diploma in Professional Education, School of Education, Agricultural Education, Class of 1955; M.S., University of Rhode Island, Education, Class of 1966)

During high school, Steiner worked at Nyala Farm in Westport, Connecticut, a farm that bred registered Guernsey cattle. After college, Steiner was drafted into the army and was selected to be a military intelligence agent. He says, "It was interesting work, and I might add, many of the people in the intelligence corps were land grant agriculture college graduates selected because they were well-rounded, loyal young men."

Steiner held various positions in agriculture including vocational agriculture instructor; agricultural journalist; Cooperative Extension information specialist; assistant to the director at the University of New Hampshire; chair of animal science at Essex Agricultural and Technical Institute in Hawthorne, MA; dislocated worker coordinator for the State of New Hampshire; state director at large for the Northeast with the Farmer's Home Administration; and youth specialist at the New Hampshire Job Training Council. In his retirement he has been involved with the Eastern States Exposition and serves on the Board of Directors. He also judges at agricultural fairs in New England.

"The hands on instruction I received at Ratcliffe Hicks helped me to teach my students useful practices in the vo-ag and FFA programs. Many young people out of high school are not always ready for the rigors of college. Ratcliffe Hicks makes the transition to a four-year program much easier. It's a motivator."



"We have a huge horticultural industry in the state. We have no problem placing our graduates. They usually have three or four offers ... there are thousands of unfilled jobs that would require at least a two-year degree. We're a hidden industry."

EDWARD CORBETT, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF PLANT SCIENCE

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WHERE ARE THEY NOW

JOHN BENNETT JR. (Animal Science, Class of 1970; Bachelor of Science, CANR, Animal Science, Class of 1974) Equine Unit Manager at UConn.

"I can honestly say that the years in Ratcliffe Hicks were the two best years of my formal education."

ELIZABETH JONES CONWAY (Animal Science, Class of 1999; Bachelor of Science, CANR, Natural Resources, Class of 2001; MS, CANR, Natural Resources, Class of 2003) Cancer research scientist at Pfizer.

"... the Ratcliffe Hicks program was a great hands on experience in agriculture. The practical and academic experiences it gave me prepared me for the Bachelor of Science degree program and for life."

MATTHEW BAGSHAW (Turfgrass Management, Class of 2003) Accounts manager for E.A. Quinn Landscape Contracting, Glastonbury, Connecticut.

"Now that I am in the industry, I am definitely using the information I was taught at Ratcliffe Hicks."

SEBASTIAN RUFFINO (Nursery Management, Class of 1988; Bachelor of Science, CANR, Horticulture, Class of 1990) Perennial manager, Pride's Corner Farms, Lebanon, Connecticut.

"Ratcliffe Hicks gave me the opportunity to make choices. Because the courses were in practical horticulture, I felt that I

was preparing for a job in the industry while deciding if I wanted to make the commitment to the four-year college."

RICHARD BALLEK (Horticulture, Class of 1982) Ballek's Garden Center, East Haddam, Connecticut.

"Ratcliffe Hicks gave me a lot of practical information that I've been able to use throughout my years."

JOYCE WYSOWSKI LARSON (Horticulture, Class of 1981; Bachelor of Science, CANR, Environmental Horticulture, Class of 1983) Co-owner with husband, Paul Larson (CANR, Class of 1983), of Sprucedale Gardens Nursery and Greenhouse, Woodstock, Connecticut.

"Ratcliffe Hicks gave me a broad range of experiences from floral design to landscape plant identification. It helped me decide that this is where I wanted to be and paved the way for me to complete my horticulture degree in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources."

RICHARD PIEPER (Nursery Management, Class of 1982) Owner, Garden Acres Garden Center, North Haven, Connecticut.

"It was definitely an asset to have gone through the program. It was a lot of fun."

"When tillage begins, other arts follow. The farmers, therefore, are the founders of human civilization."

— DANIEL WEBSTER

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“Whoever could make two ears of corn or two blades of grass, to grow upon a spot of ground where only one grew before, would deserve better of mankind, and do more essential service to his country than the whole race of politicians put together.”

— JONATHAN SWIFT, *GULLIVER’S TRAVELS*



University of Connecticut