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# Steven C. Turner

## Lifetime Achievement Award

Dr. Steven C. Turner is currently a professor and department head in Agricultural Economics at Mississippi State University. Previously, he was in the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics at The University of Georgia where he began as an assistant professor in 1986 and left as a professor in 2003 to go to Mississippi State. Throughout his career, his excitement for applied economics and its derivative components (marketing, finance, management, etc.) has permeated his teaching, research, and service. Over the last 8 years as an administrator, Dr. Turner has motivated students, faculty, and colleagues around the south and nation to use their economic training to examine and analyze issues with a keen eye and a ready computer. His service on the Board of Directors for the Southern Agricultural Economics Association (SAEA) and the Council of Food, Agriculture, and Resource Economics (C-FARE) has left both organizations stronger and ready to meet the challenges of a changing and competitive environment. His view of leadership is one of commitment, duty, and responsibility: commitment to the organization and its mission, vision, and goals; duty to his fellow members, employees, and students; and responsibility to the future, not forgetting the past.

Dr. Turner is an agricultural economist who began his academic career as an English literature graduate from Mercer University. After discovering agricultural economics in graduate school at the University of Georgia and Virginia Tech, he gained an outstanding reputation as a teacher at The University of Georgia where he received numerous teaching awards, including the American Agricultural Economics Association Distinguished Teaching Award and the Distinguished Professional Contribution in the Teaching of a Course Award from the SAEA. During his 17 years at The University of Georgia (UGA) he received 14 teaching awards and recognitions. He also established a solid research



program in the marketing of landscape plants and livestock and published 31 articles in journals ranging from the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* to the *Journal of Animal Science* to the *Journal of Environmental Horticulture* to the *Journal of Futures Markets*. He published nine articles in the *Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics* and its predecessor, the *Southern Journal of Agricultural Economics*.

One of Dr. Turner's research contributions was in publicizing the importance of the green industry (especially ornamental and landscape plants) to the economics profession. Nine of his refereed journal articles analyzed different aspects of the landscape plant industry. Topics ranged from retail target markets for landscape plants to computerization in the ornamental nursery industry to a portfolio approach to ornamental plant production and marketing. The range of journals included the *Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics*, *Journal of*

*Environmental Horticulture*, and *Agribusiness: An International Journal*. Dr. Turner was one of the first agricultural economists to publish articles in agricultural economics and related journals on a regular and consistent basis about the green industry. This was important due to the lack of economic research on this large segment of agriculture that grew at a 10% rate over much of the 1980s and 1990s.

Dr. Turner also has a long history of encouraging undergraduate and graduate students. Almost immediately upon his arrival at UGA, Dr. Turner became faculty advisor to the Agricultural Economics Club and advised the National Agri-Marketing (NAMA) Student Chapter. Working closely with the professional southeastern chapter of NAMA, the UGA student chapter competed in 14 consecutive NAMA Student Marketing Competitions and placed in the top 12 twice. Dr. Turner also developed a food and fiber marketing course that became a core course in the Agribusiness major and complemented the NAMA marketing competition. As a department head, Dr. Turner has encouraged and supported the Mississippi State Student Chapter of NAMA as they have finished in the top 12 twice in the last seven years. He also was involved in the early development of the Student College Bowl at the American Agricultural Economics Association annual meetings and was instrumental in initiating the SAEA Student Section and Student Quiz Bowl. At the graduate level, he was a major professor to 14 students and served on committees for another 16 students. Of his 31 published articles, 17 included graduate students as authors (often as senior author). In 2003, a graduate student in Animal Science at UGA, Newton Pavia, wrote a paper for Dr. Turner's futures and options course, submitted it to the SAEA Graduate Student Paper competition, and received the award at the annual meeting.

In 2003, Dr. Turner became head of the department of Agricultural Economics at Mississippi State University. The department has two undergraduate majors, Agribusiness and Environmental Economics and Management, and graduate students have received the SAEA Outstanding M.S. Thesis Award in 2008 and 2010. Over the eight years of Dr. Turner's

tenure at Mississippi State, the faculty has received 20 national awards and 10 regional awards, in addition to publishing over 190 refereed journal articles (10 in the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*). Currently, half of the faculty are assistant professors and Dr. Turner has followed the philosophy of his predecessor, Dr. John Lee, to recruit talented people and provide resources for them to grow and excel.

Dr. Turner has a long history with the Southern Agricultural Economics Association, where he presented his first professional paper at the 1982 Southern Agricultural Economics Association (SAEA) meeting in Orlando, FL. As mentioned, he has published nine articles in the *Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics* (*Southern Journal of Agricultural Economics*), presented 30 papers at SAEA annual meetings, and served as student advisor in the first years of the Student Section of the SAEA. He served as President of the SAEA in 2002 and secured funds to digitize 30 years of archived *Southern Journal of Agricultural Economics* and *Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics* volumes to put on-line. He continues to be an active SAEA participant at the annual meetings.

Dr. Turner has contributed at the national level through his service to the Council on Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics. C-FARE is a non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening the national presence of the agricultural economics profession. Its mission is to help agricultural economists contribute to private and public sector decision-making on issues important to agricultural, rural, environmental, food safety, and other related societal issues. In 2001, Dr. Turner was appointed by the SAEA Board to serve as the first SAEA representative on the C-FARE Board. In 2004, he was asked to chair C-FARE's Board. During his tenure as chair, the organization's budget grew from \$100,000 to over \$225,000, a summer student internship program was initiated, and the organization began coordinating review services to governmental agencies. In addition, C-FARE increased its presence in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, Economic Research Service,

Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyard Administration, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and the Risk Management Agency.

Dr. Turner's strength has been as a liaison between students, faculty, staff, colleagues, and administrators. His greatest accomplishments have been his ability to connect students to the excitement of economic analysis and research, faculty to the importance of public goods and interac-

tion with their agricultural and natural resource colleagues, and administrators to the economics of the university and public constituencies.

Dr. Turner has served as the faculty athletic representative for Mississippi State University since 2005 and served on the Board of Directors of the Athens Housing Authority from 1996–2003. He, his wife Jenny, daughter Emily, and son Clay live in Starkville, Mississippi.