

2017 WOMAN OF THE YEAR IN AGRICULTURE

Dr. Martha Roberts



Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Adam H. Putnam, Commissioner



Since 1985, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Florida State Fair Authority have recognized the significant contributions of women in the agriculture industry with the "Woman of the Year in Agriculture" award. I am proud to honor Dr. Martha Rhodes Roberts with this distinguished award in recognition of her outstanding work to advance Florida agriculture.

Dr. Roberts was born in Oxford, Mississippi, and later moved to Gainesville, Georgia, where she attended Blue Ridge High School. Martha joined the local 4-H Club and began to cultivate her passion for agriculture, which led to focusing her collegiate education on aspects of the industry. Roberts graduated summa cum laude from North

Georgia College, and she continued her studies at the University of Georgia, where she earned her master's degree in bacteriology, a Ph.D. in microbiology and public health postdoctoral studies.

Dr. Roberts joined the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Division of Food Safety in 1968 as a Microbiologist/Chemist. She was appointed Assistant Commissioner of Agriculture in 1984, and was the first woman in the United States to hold this position. From 1991 to 2003, Dr. Roberts served as the department's Deputy Commissioner and played a pinnacle role in shaping agricultural policies to improve practices in each stage of production. Beginning in 2003, Dr. Roberts served 13 years as Director of Industry Relations and then as Special Assistant for Government Affairs for the University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS).

Throughout her career, Dr. Roberts served in leadership capacities for numerous organizations, including: President of the Association of Food and Drug Officials, Chairman of the Conference for Food Protection, the FDA Food Advisory Committee and the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods, the University of Florida International Trade and Policy Center Board of Directors, the Farm Foundation, Food Foresight and Chair of the Feeding Tomorrow Foundation. She has served on the Board of the Center for Produce Safety since its inception in 2007, and currently serves as a consultant with the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture on FSMA implementation with the FDA.

Dr. Roberts has received numerous awards from the FDA, USDA and industry associations. In recognition of her lasting contributions to the agriculture industry, Dr. Roberts was inducted into the Florida Agricultural Hall of Fame in 2003. She continues to support Florida agriculture as a scientific authority, industry counselor and advocate.

Dr. Martha Rhodes Roberts joins 33 other women who have earned the respect and admiration of their peers by making outstanding contributions to Florida agriculture. Therefore, it is my distinct pleasure to congratulate Dr. Roberts on being named the 2017 "Woman of the Year in Agriculture."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Adam H. Putnam". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "A".

Adam H. Putnam
Commissioner of Agriculture





As a microbiologist and chemist, Dr. Martha Roberts dedicated her life to science and how it can be applied to improve lives. As an advocate of Florida agriculture, Martha spearheads one of the most sweeping food safety reforms in our nation's history.



HAPPY TRAILS TO YOU!

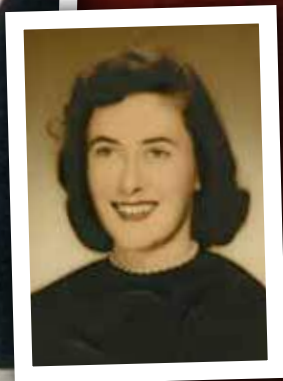
DR. MARTHA RHODES-ROBERTS
CELEBRATING OVER 3 1/2
DECADES OF SERVICE



FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2003
5:00 - 8:00 PM
CONNER COMPLEX
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TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA



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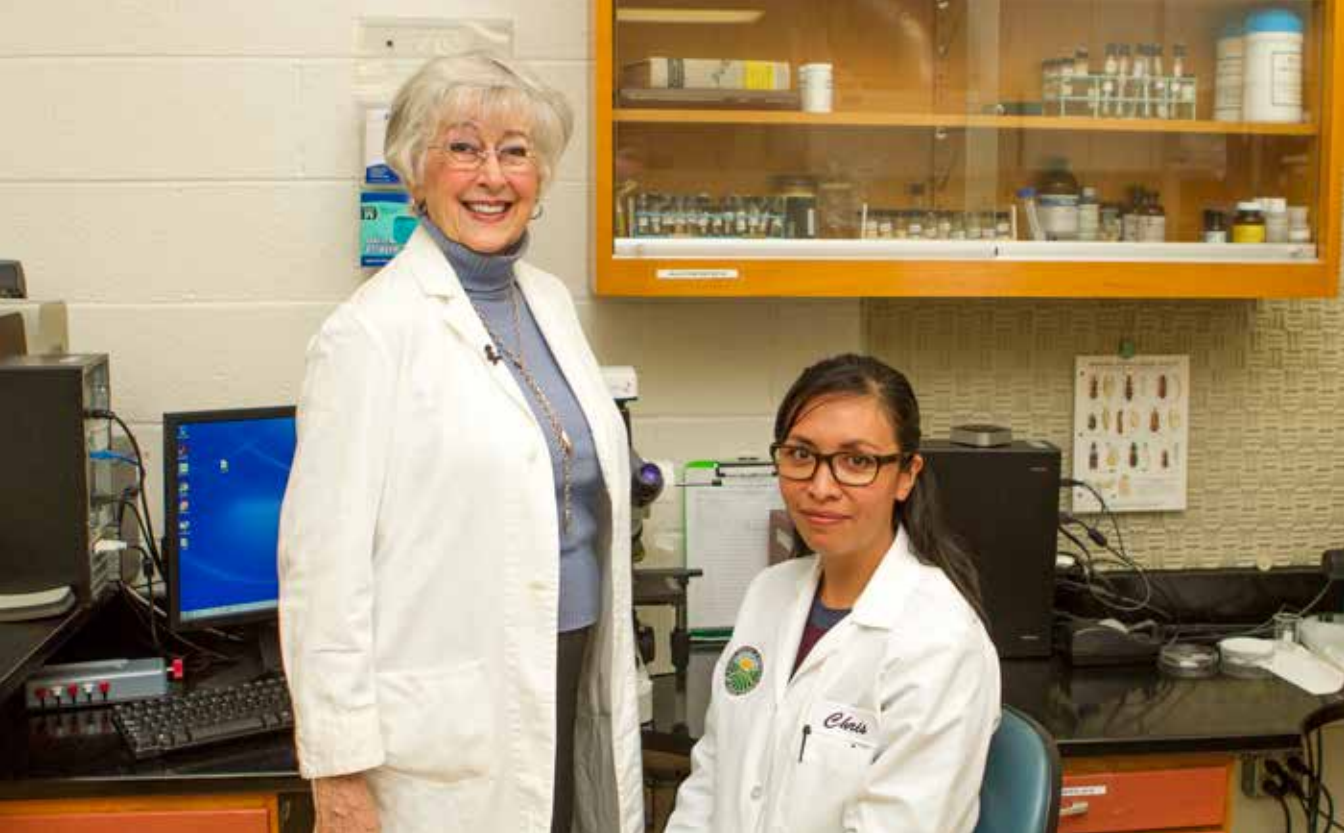


Martha has spent a lifetime improving Florida's agriculture industry. Her hard work has endeared her to Florida farmers, like Reggie Brown, for nearly 50 years. Known for fighting plant and animal pests and diseases, and battling foodborne outbreaks, Martha has been at the forefront of agriculture policy and food safety issues for decades.



The first woman in the country to be appointed a state Assistant Commissioner of Agriculture, Martha has been a role model for women in science, and a mentor for numerous people, including long-time friend Dr. Lisa Conti. Martha truly believes "you are put on earth to be of service to others. You need to pass it on and help the next generation."







Since the '60s, Martha's active leadership has allowed Florida to greatly influence national food safety policy. She helped establish the Florida Tomato Food Safety Program to protect Floridians from foodborne illnesses, the first government-mandatory produce safety program in the nation.



Almost a decade after creating Florida's food safety program, Martha helped spur Congress to pass similar protections on a national level with the monumental Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) in 2011.




Skilled at building coalitions and partnerships for government and industry, today Martha works with associations and centers across the country as a food safety and ag consultant.



Martha enjoys spending time with grandchildren Sarah, Reagan and George.



From left, Martha Roberts, Andy Roberts, Sarah Bolles, Becky Bolles, Steve Bolles, George Bolles (front), Alan Rhodes, Reagan Gould (front), Kathy Gould, Drew Roberts.



Between business and pleasure, Martha has travelled to 47 countries and spent time on 5 of the 6 continents, but she always looks forward to quiet times alone at home with her husband, Andy Roberts.



Andy Roberts and Dr. Martha Roberts



Previous Winners

Woman of the Year in Agriculture

2016

Judi Whitson

2015

Lisa Hinton

2014

Belinda Chason

2013

Lynetta Usher Griner

2012

Imogene Yarborough

2011

Sarah K. Childs

2010

Ann Holt

2009

Marcia Lightsey

2008

Patsy Nathe

2007

Colleen H. Boggs

2006

Iris Pollock Wall

2005

Marlene Strickland

2004

Martina "Teena" Borek

2003

Jennie Lee Zipperer

2002

Annette Barnett

2001

Barbara Carlton

2000

Helen Houck

1999

Vina Jean Banks

1998

Nancy Gurnett Hardy

1997

Gertrude "Trudy" Carey

1996

Norma Stokes

1995

Louve "Vee" Frierson Platt and Patricia Robbins

1994

Anne Wardlaw Dickinson

1993

Sarah W. Bailey

1992

Carol C. Murphy

1991

Ruth M. Tucker

1990

Jeanette Barthle

1989

Belle Jeffords

1988

Carolyn Reed Kempfer

1987

Dorothy Conner Shipes

1986

Ruth Wedgworth

1985

Jo Ann Smith

