

NEXT GENERATION AGRICULTURE

CALS alumnus recognized as an outstanding ag educator

BY CHLOE MADISON

TEACHING OTHERS about agriculture has turned a childhood passion into a career for **Josh Davenport**. With two decades of agricultural teaching under his belt, the Louisville, Mississippi, native remains dedicated and enthusiastic about his chosen career and the students he is able to impact every day.

“Teaching has always held a special place in my heart. I try to be resourceful for my students and I always want what is best for them. If I know a student is not putting their best effort forward, I will be honest with them and try to help motivate them. I don’t want my students to strive for mediocre because I know they can accomplish more,” Davenport said.

And it appears he is doing well in his chosen profession, receiving numerous honors and awards.

In 2024, he was named the Mississippi Association for Career and Technical Education Teacher of the Year, the Outstanding Teacher for the Mississippi Association of Agricultural Educators, and Mississippi Farm Bureau FFA Advisor of the Year.

Davenport said his love for agriculture began as a child.

“Growing up in a small rural town in Mississippi, my parents always had us gardening, fixing fences, and farming, which instilled my love for being outside and learning how to take care of the plants that give back to us on a daily basis,” he said.

As his passion for agriculture grew, he knew he wanted to study that field when he went to college.

“I have always been an MSU fan growing up only 30 miles away, and I knew I wanted to be an agriculture major. MSU already felt like home to me, and I knew the university’s agriculture education program would set me up for a successful and fruitful career,” Davenport said.

Along with his awards, he has served in multiple roles throughout his teaching career. He served as president of Mississippi Association of Vocational Agriculture Teachers for a few years and has been the regional secretary for the National Association of Agricultural Educators since 2011.

He also shares that he was a part of the Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences organization and aims to incorporate diversity and inclusivity into his classroom.

“Being a minority teacher and especially teaching agriculture, sometimes minority students don’t see a lot of people that look like them. I can sympathize with them, but I always teach students that it doesn’t matter what you look like. We are all here for a certain purpose, and we will include everybody,” Davenport said.

Davenport received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in agriculture and extension education in 2000 and 2003, respectively. In addition to being an instructor at South Panola High School, he also is the FFA advisor, a position he has held for 20 years.

“I love being the FFA advisor because it teaches students an array of skillsets including public speaking, livestock judging, and floriculture. The best moments are when I see students take the skills they learn from FFA and become successful in their field,” Davenport said. 🐾

Josh Davenport instructing students at the Mississippi FFA Convention. (Photo by David Ammon)

