

— Spotlight —

(Continued from page 1)
 "The Agriculturalist of the Year award is given each year to the person who serves the larger agricultural community," Smith said, explaining it can include not just farmers, but service people, equipment dealers and veterinarians.

This year's Agriculturalist of the Year went to Don Willis, who, with his sons Brad and Shannon, farm in the Greenpond community, and Willis also continues to run a small feed store which saves many miles of travel for other farmers in the area. The Willis family has been an important resource to farmers throughout Greenpond, said Todd Mahon, who presented the award.

"I told him yesterday I was not going to mention his age but h's been involved in Laurens County Agriculture for almost 70 years, and he started showing cows for 4-H at the age of 10," said Mahon, who grew up on a farm in the same Greenpond community with Willis.

Willis wasn't able to be at the Spotlight on Agriculture. He spent years as a chairman or board member for a variety of agencies which helped further the cause of agriculture in the region. He spent 17 years as chair of the Farm Service Administration, 12 years on the Rabon Creek Watershed Board and many years on the local and state level of dairy organizations.

"He bought the local dairy in Greenpond in 1978 and operated it until 2005," Mahon said. Though the family no longer has the dairy, Willis still has about 300 heifers on some of the 2,000 acres, which are also used for hay.

"He's always been the go-to person for anyone with questions about their cows. His career in agriculture put two sons through Clemson, and both are heavily involved today" Mahon said, adding that they were formerly awarded the Farm Family of the Year.

In addition to honoring the



TOP FARMER — Todd Mahon, right, presented the Agriculturalist of the Year award to Brad Willis, who, along with his daughter, accepted the prestigious award for his father, Don Willis who wasn't able to be at the Spotlight on Agriculture. See additional pictures on page 6.

the long-time farmers, the outstanding members from Clinton High, Hannah Martin, and from Laurens District High, Caitlin Bowie. Future Farmers of America Laurens Academy student Julia Kerber won the \$1,000 Laurens County Clemson Extension Advisory Council Scholarship and plans to attend Clemson in the fall.

Photo by Judith Brown

UCBI named to Forbes World's Best Banks list

United Community Bank has been named one of the "Best Banks in the World" according to the inaugural Forbes World's Best Banks list. The list, which was based largely on customer satisfaction data compiled by research firm Statista, ranked banks in 23 countries across the globe. United was recognized as fifth on the list of 60 banks in the United States and was the top bank recognized with a regional Southeast presence.

"We are extremely humbled to receive such a global recognition and have customer feedback make us one of the top five financial institutions in this country," said Lynn Harton, President and Chief Executive Officer of United Community Bank. "Customer service has always been our primary

focus and continues to be the driving force behind our success. Our employees go above and beyond every day to serve our clients to the best of their ability. This award would not be possible without them."

In collaboration with market research firm Statista, Forbes surveyed more than 40,000 customers around the globe about their opinions on their current and former banking relationships. Banks were rated on overall recommendation and key attributes like satisfaction, trust, terms and conditions, customer services, digital services and financial advice.

The complete ranking list can be found at <https://www.forbes.com/worlds-best-banks/#159adcd91295>.

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