

Martha E. Couch

Professor and Associate Agency Director,  
Texas AgriLife Extension Service



Home: College Station, TX  
Nominated by: Texas 4-H  
Internet: [mec12345@msn.com](mailto:mec12345@msn.com)  
Year Inducted: 2012

**4-H Activities:** Ten year 4-H member with projects in gardening, communication, leadership, home improvement, food and nutrition, clothing, electricity, public speaking and international studies. Thirty-six year career: Co. Extension Agent-Home Economics in Gaines Co., TX (1972); Extension 4-H and Youth Development Specialist for the panhandle districts (1975); District Extension Administrator; Associate Director for 4-H and Youth Development (1997-2008).

**Honors:** Texas AgriLife Extension Service Emerita Designation; Texas AgriLife Extension Service Superior Service Award; Texas Tech University, College of Human Sciences, Distinguished Alumni; NAE4-HA Distinguished Service and 25 Year Recognition.

Martha Couch was raised on a dry-land cotton farm in Big Spring, TX. She joined a community 4-H club in Howard County in the 1950's. As she grew in 4-H, she realized the positive effects 4-H was having on her and her family. She was an accomplished youth leader and award winner in 4-H, including a trip to National 4-H Congress, the Texas 4-H Gold Star Award (highest award in Texas 4-H), and many trips and opportunities at district and state levels. Martha obtained her B.S. degree in Home

Economics in 1972, a M.S. degree in Family Studies in 1976, and a Ph.D. of Home Economics in 1980, all from Texas Tech University. Her research focused on the importance of leadership skill development for 4-H youth and volunteers.

Martha began a thirty-six year career in 1972 as a County Extension Agent-Home Economics in Gaines County. She followed her calling in 4-H and youth development as Extension 4-H and Youth Development Specialist for the panhandle districts, District Extension Administrator and ultimately Associate Director for 4-H and Youth Development from 1997 to 2008. Under her leadership, the Texas 4-H and Youth Development Program reached over one million members. She instituted Youth Protection Standards, created a Character Education Program that reached 100,000 youth annually and established county youth boards to gain quality input from youth. After retirement, Martha still provides human and financial support to Texas 4-H.

**Quote:** The journey from being a 9-year old 4-H member, who started with a gardening project, to serving in the leadership role of the Texas 4-H and Youth Development Program is unbelievable. The mentors and co-workers along this journey have been supportive and are to be thanked. Impossible dreams are possible and that possibility was established for me through the Howard County 4-H Program and those great local County Extension Agents.

Also, thanks to the current Texas 4-H Program for nominating me for this honor. Supporting them and their current efforts to develop Texas youth is a great pleasure.



Martha and former state 4-H leader Tom Davidson are "Texas 4-H King and Queen."



Martha as a member of the National 4-H Design Team.