Biographical Sketch

Gary David Bloss co-manages the Josie Porter Farm, a diversified vegetable farm and farmer-lead food hub, with his wife Heidi Secord in Stroud Township, Monroe County, Pennsylvania. He also currently serves as Executive Director of Pennsylvania Farmers Union and is a Produce Safety Alliance certified Food Safety Trainer and Educator.

The Josie Porter Farm honors the legacy of Josephine Porter, who made biodynamic agriculture preparations in this country for almost three decades at this farm. Biodynamic growers recognize the soil itself to be alive and that human health and vitality depend upon the health and vitality of the soil. The mission of the farm is to connect people to the earth through agriculture, education, and community.

Bloss served 9 years on the board of the Northeastern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NESAWG) and was a member of the Steering Team for the Chesapeake Foodshed Network. He also served a 9-year term as a member of the PSU Arts & Architecture Alumni Society Board. He is a life-time member of Pasa Sustainable Agriculture and the Penn State Alumni Association.

He was the first Executive Director for the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership serving 22 counties and 70 river towns along the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania promoting healthy living by connecting communities, open space, and trails.

Bloss earned a BSLA in Landscape Architecture from Penn State University (1972) and an MLA from Harvard University (1975). He is a licensed Landscape Architect in Pennsylvania and a licensed Professional Planner in the state of New Jersey. In 2010 he was honored as an individual recipient of the Karl Mason Award by the Pennsylvania Association of Environmental Professionals (PAEP).

Position Statement

How we do Agriculture in the coming decades is crucial to our long-term ecological and economic health. Pennsylvania has been at the forefront as a strategic leader. Especially as exemplified by the adoption of the first state-wide Farm Bill. Generations of Penn State University faculty and graduates especially from the College of Agricultural Science have helped deliver the mindset and skillsets required to accomplish this vision. And it will be through future innovations and collaborations among all of the Colleges at the University that will navigate us toward the essential agricultural choices that will meet the demands of informed consumers, support farmers with fair compensation, and provide for the long-term ecological health of our state, our nation, and our planet. We can do this because we are Penn State!
Biographical Sketch

Valerie L. Detwiler, a strong advocate for Pennsylvania agriculture, currently serves as Senior Vice President and Senior Commercial Banker for Reliance Bank. Valerie has been involved with agricultural lending since 2004, when she began working for the USDA Farm Service Agency, Farm Loan Program. Mrs. Detwiler previously served as a Farm Loan Officer with the USDA Farm Service Agency, and as a Vice President, Agricultural Banking Officer with CBT Bank, until she began her employment with Reliance Bank in January 2018. In addition to her employment with the Bank, Valerie and her husband, C.A., own and operate Forsheys Ag & Industrial, a New Holland machinery dealership, located in Martinsburg, PA, as well as, a beef and crop operation located in New Enterprise, PA. Valerie graduated in 2006 with High Distinction from the Pennsylvania State University, with a B.S. in Accounting and a minor in Legal Environments of Business. Mrs. Detwiler served the Penn State community during her tenure at University Park by serving as a Lion Ambassador from 2004 until 2006. Valerie currently serves on the Blair County Chamber of Commerce Farm City Committee, the Loan Committee of the Southern Alleghenies Planning & Development Commission, and the Pennsylvania Banking Association's Agriculture and Rural Issues Advisory Committee. Valerie and her husband support the University as members of the Golden Lion Society and the Nittany Lion Club, and are lifetime members of the Penn State Alumni Association.

Position Statement

The Board of Trustees of the Pennsylvania State University is charged with many tasks. It is my belief that two of the most important tasks of the Board are to further promote the mission of a Land-Grant University, and to provide an unrivaled educational atmosphere.

As Pennsylvania’s only Land-Grant University, I believe that Penn State must be a leader in both research and education for Pennsylvania producers. Agriculture is the number one industry in Pennsylvania. We can best serve all Pennsylvanians by employing the resources of the University to further the knowledge, productivity, and profitability of farmers within the Commonwealth, which in turn stimulates our state economy and provides job creation. Should I be reelected to the Board of Trustees, I will remain committed to ensuring that these areas of the University receive the funding and attention necessary for success.

As a Lion Ambassador, I was afforded many opportunities to see the best that Penn State had to offer to prospective students, donors, etc. It is these nuances which give the University its character and which help to make it a place that students call “home”. Should I be reelected to the Board of Trustees, I will remain committed to supporting initiatives that uphold the history and tradition of the University, which will in turn allow the University to remain as a top choice for the brightest students, and as a prestigious employer for world class educators.
Biographical Sketch

M. Abraham Harpster, partner in Evergreen Farms, Pennsylvania's largest dairy operation, located in Spruce Creek, Pa. With his brothers and nearly eighty employees, they farm 7100 acres, milk 3300 cows, operate a feed mill, property management company, logistics company and a hospitality business focused on outdoor recreation. A longtime leader in environmental stewardship, Evergreen Farms supports many charitable and youth programs.

A 1994 graduate of Penn State with a degree in Agricultural Business, Abe hosts many tours and student classes at Evergreen Farms, hires Penn State graduates and offers summer internships for students looking for hands-on agricultural experience.

Abe is a member of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, PA State Grange, Holstein Association, and has served on boards of the Beef Council, FFA Foundation, Beef Quality Assurance Commission, Pennsylvania 21st Century Environmental Commission, Northeast Agricultural Education Foundation, and the Pennsylvania Workforce Investment Board.

As member of Penn States Board of Trustees, Abe is engaged in the leadership of the university. He has served on the Academic Affairs and Student Life, Legal and Compliance, Business, Finance and Capital Planning Committees, is currently serving as Vice Chairman of the Equity and Human Resources committee and is serving an eighth term on the Trustees Executive Committee.

Abe learned his work ethic on the family farm; Penn State broadened his perspective, provided a foundation in business principles and gave him opportunities to hone his leadership skills.

He enjoys spending time with his wife and three children, enjoying the outdoors and attending Penn State sporting events.

Position Statement

In my life I have four great passions: my family, my farm, my country, and all things Penn State.

As a seasoned business owner and a regular contributor to the agricultural education experience at Penn State, my goal is to facilitate efforts to improve our university.

- I’m committed to the value of education.
- I will strive to make Penn State affordable to all, while seeking to attract the best and brightest faculty and staff.
- I will work to make the university more responsive to the needs of all students.
- I support strengthening partnerships with corporations, industries, and small business and promote the exchange of ideas. Partnering with industry ultimately helps our graduates secure the best employment opportunities and provides an exceptional pool of employees to business and industry.
- Penn State was established as a land grant university. As a farmer who makes his living in production agriculture, I will work to maintain and strengthen the agricultural roots from which our university has grown and to which we must remain committed.
- Finally, I hope to better serve the community as a whole by making the resource that is our university available to all residents and taxpayers and support the Commonwealth campus system which can make a Penn State education accessible to everyone in Pennsylvania.

My Penn State experience provided me with the tools to become a successful businessman and leader. I would like to ensure future graduates have the skills, ability, and opportunities to achieve the highest levels of success.