

tant to you,” says Butler. “We have to learn how to conserve the soil, or we could face the problems of Ephesus and Troy, which did not conserve and, as a result, lost their cities.”

The group next entered Jordan, starting in the capital city of Amman and then traveling north to Jerash, a Decapolis city. In the northeast, the group headed for Jawa. There, they explored the Paleolithic ruins of this ancient site, where the first human-made dam system was built. To get to Jawa, Butler, her students, and their guide had to follow a pick-up truck full of Bedouin herdsman through the barren, rocky, basalt desert.

After Jawa, the students and their instructor headed for the Dead Sea, then to Petra, an ancient city in Jordan whose name means “rock” in Arabic. The group visited a large farm overlooking the Dead Sea where the owners, members of Jordan’s Ministry of Agriculture, showed them different and successful agricultural practices being implemented throughout Jordan.

They also camped out for one night in Jordan’s majestic Wadi Rum region. “Sleeping in the desert was absolutely amazing,” says Sandra Howland, then a senior in Agricultural Science. “We watched the sunset and ate a fantastic meal cooked over a fire. There are no lights, so you can see the entire night sky—all the stars are visible.” The next morning, the group took a safari on camels back to the city.

“The purpose of the class was to grasp how the physical aspect of soil relates to how a society developed,” says Amy Stauffer, who was a sophomore majoring in Agricultural Science when she made the trek in 2007. “We looked at how parts of the society either thrived or died. Middle Eastern culture is amazing, and applying the course objectives to the trip was an awesome learning experience.”

—Vincent Rome

### Faculty, Flowers, and Food Science Help Launch a Career

Talk to Catherine Adams about her days at Penn State and you won’t hear much about late-night cramming and early morning classes. For her, the best of Penn State’s College of Agricultural Sciences can be distilled into family, faculty, and flowers.

Adams is a recipient of the 2008 Penn State Alumni Fellow Award, given by the University’s alumni association to graduates who, as leaders in their professions, are nominated by an academic college and accept an invitation to return to campus to share their expertise with students, faculty, and administrators. She’s also a member of the college’s advisory committee and a charter member of the Armsby Honor Society. She was selected as an Outstanding Alumna of the college in 1995.

Adams was a vice president for worldwide quality, food safety, and nutrition with McDonald’s Corporation before recently establishing a food safety and health policy consulting firm, RdR Solutions, which counts McDonald’s among its clients. She’s held food safety and quality positions with Coors Brewing Company, H. J. Heinz, YUM Brands (Pizza Hut, Taco Bell, and KFC restaurants), and the Campbell Soup Company. Previously, she managed scientific affairs for the Grocery Manufacturers of America and at the International Life Sciences Institute. She also was an assistant administrator for the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food Safety and Inspection Service, where she engineered the development of the hazard analysis of critical control points, or HACCP, process.

She graduated with honors from the University in 1979 with a bachelor’s degree in food science before earning a master’s degree from Michigan State Univer-

sity and doctorate from the University of Illinois. Adams credits the encouragement and education she received in Happy Valley for many of her accomplishments, and she can point to the specific Penn State course that inspired her outstanding career.

“I was a pre-vet student until I took a course in food science taught by (former department head) David Lineback,” Adams remembers. “I became smitten with the topic because it seemed to take a broad-based approach that interfaced with nutrition. I was interested in applying science to policy, using it to drive decisions consumers make in the real world. Food science seemed to focus on those application-based aspects of science.”

While she was drawn to the practical nature of food science, it was the faculty who nurtured her abilities. People such as Lineback, professor emeritus Gerald Kuhn, and former department head Philip Keeney invested time and personal interest in a promising student, welcoming her into the department with challenging assignments and family dinners.

“Elsie Keeney gathered violets from Mt. Nittany for the scented salads she served to the students they invited to dinner,” Adams recalls. “Collecting flowers on Mt. Nittany with Mrs. Keeney changed what could have been a lonely period into a very rich time for me, and I have warm memories of my days there. I worked a summer in extension with Dr. Kuhn; he let me do interesting things and he treated me with respect. As an undergrad, that made a tremendous difference.”

In Paul Dimick’s analytical chemistry class, Adams earned an “A” and a chance to test herself.



PHOTO: GENE MILLER

“He said, ‘You did well, but let’s see what you have in the lab,’” she says. “He challenged me. I worked hard, but the faculty created a supportive environment that made me want to be the best I could be. That’s why I feel strongly about Penn State and what it did for me. I’ve learned a lot in my career—some through the school of hard knocks—which I’d love to impart to students. When I have the opportunity to give back the lessons I learned, I want to do it more than financially.”

Her career has taken Adams many places, and she now lives in Washington, D.C., and in Texas, where she owns and operates a working ranch, breeding and raising competitive cutting horses and an Angus cattle herd begun with Penn State stock. But, she notes, wherever she lives, she remains an active Penn Stater.

“I’ve been living in three places for several years, and I never felt distance was an issue,” she says. “The issue is loyalty to the institution first and foremost. Penn State stands head and shoulders above others as a university that engenders a sense of community and a passion about institution and people.”

—Gary Abdullah