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Seaman A. Knapp Lecture

**“Who needs Extension, anyway?”
The Relevance and Values
for our next 100 Years of Engagement**

Thank you very much for the immense privilege of addressing you this morning. I would like to thank Peter McPherson, President of APLU, and Doug Steele, Director of AgriLife Extension System at Texas A&M, for making it possible for me to honor Seaman A. Knapp, one of the most respected educators in our history and, in every way, an innovator of premier order. I would also like to recognize the members of the Cooperative Extension System and especially Mary Burrows, from Montana State University, who received the APLU Western Region Award for Excellence in Extension, and Mike Vogel and his team, also from Montana State University, recipients of the 2012 National Extension Diversity Award. Thank you to all of you, members of the audience who, in one way or another are engaged in the vital and forward-looking work of providing higher education of exceptional quality to our citizens in America and around the world.

As a proud alumna and as a servant of the land-grant university system, I remind myself that our constituents hold high expectations about what our particular brand of universities can, should and must bring to their lives today and to the generations that will inherit the land tomorrow. Please allow me to start with some relevant biographical notes as a point of departure, proceed with a chronological review of the impact of Seaman Knapp’s legacy, and present some implications for the future of his paramount contribution, the Cooperative Extension System.

Once Upon a Time

I was born and raised in Puerto Rico, in the Western city that is home to the only land-grant university in the Caribbean, the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez, which is also the only land-grant university in a Spanish-speaking speaking country. Since the turn of the twentieth century, the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez has been preparing the engineers, the scientists, and the professionals that have transformed, forever, the economic landscape of the island and of the Caribbean basin. Therefore, as a child, I always aspired to attend Puerto Rico’s land-grant university.

Like many of you, I was the first person in my family to graduate from college. My grandparents were farmers, my father was a coffee merchant and my mother was a

homemaker, endowed with intelligence and drive. So what was it that made it possible for me to explore a life path different from that of my family? The answer is simple: I was given an opportunity to go to college. As a result, I am determined to ensure that no other young man or woman is ever deprived of the wonders of a college education, because education truly transforms lives.

The education that many of us have received in a land-grant university has provided us with opportunities we could have never envisioned. In my case, it enabled me to start my career at the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez, giving me an opportunity to give back and to pay forward. My education made it possible for me to work at another land-grant university when I moved from the Island of Enchantment to the Land of Enchantment, New Mexico. And most recently it allowed me to live and work in the majestic state of Montana, serving the first land-grant university of the state. Thanks to Congressional legislation passed in 1994—and to the advocacy of an APLU committee that was chaired by then President of Montana State University, Michael Malone—the third Land-Grant Act benefitted tribal colleges. Montana has eight land-grant campuses, the largest number of any state.

To give you a sense of perspective, my native Puerto Rico has a total area of 3,500 square miles. By my hurried calculations, it could fit into the state of Montana about 42 times. Keep in mind, however, there are 4 million people living in Puerto Rico and less than one million in the Big Sky State. So, I have known the densely and the sparsely populated, the tropics and the desert, some climate extremes in different latitudes and then the wonderful weather of Montana.

Last May, I was invited to serve as the keynote speaker at an 8th grade graduation ceremony in a rural community outside of Bozeman. The occasion required the combination of three rural schools to reach the celebratory quorum for the happy graduates--all eleven of them.

At the end of the ceremony, while enjoying cake and ice cream with the members of the Class of 2012 and their families, a second grader approached me. There he was, with his wild blond hair, wearing long pants that were already too short for him. When the time came for me to bid farewell, this farm boy, still enjoying his cup of ice cream, looked up with the brightest blue eyes you have ever seen and said to me: “I hope you have a wonderful life.”

I think we can say that, thanks to our land-grant education, we have had a wonderful life.

Providing a good life for all Americans was on President Lincoln’s mind when he signed the Morrill Act. With that signature, President Lincoln changed the lives of millions of individuals, not only on the American continent, but beyond its shores, for centuries to come. Today, a century and a half later, the promise of access to higher education for the sons and daughters of the working families of America keeps us strong. It was the stroke of Lincoln’s pen that brought us here today.

I believe it is very fitting for us to meet in the Mile High City. I hope the altitude will inspire us to elevate our thoughts and provide a clear perspective as we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the 1862 Morrill Act, 125 years of the 1887 Hatch Act, and, next year, the 100th Anniversary of the 1914 Smith-Lever Act that gave us the National Treasure that we call Extension.

While traveling from my home in Bozeman, along the spectacular Rocky Mountain front—the backbone of our nation—I could see from the window of my plane a silver ribbon below: the beautiful Yellowstone River. Calmly winding its way from its headwaters in the monumental National Park that bears its name, it runs to the East and joins with the Missouri River, becoming an important water source for some of our country's most productive agricultural land.

I remembered how nearly 18 months ago, that scenery of spectacular beauty looked very different when it experienced historic flooding. People were hurting. The enormity of the devastation was almost impossible to comprehend. Immediately, there were many heroes striving to mitigate the impact of the disaster. Among them were Extension agents who quickly took to the airwaves to explain how Montanans could save livestock from the floods, salvage property and rebuild their lives.

A year later, Extension agents in nearby counties were again providing much needed resources and objective information to residents whose land had been plagued by severe drought and resulting wildfires. There were extensive losses in crops and livestock for farmers and ranchers around Montana. Families watched stoically as years of hard work and effort were reduced to a dark, smoldering pile of ash.

At Montana State University, we asked ourselves: how could we help those students whose families have experienced such tremendous loss? How could we communicate with them rapidly and efficiently? The answer came quickly: "MSU Extension can help." Our agents knew the impacted families—they know them by name. So when they arrived at students' homes offering a one-year tuition remission from Montana State University, people recognized the helping hand and smiling face.

Seaman Knapp: the Father of Extension

So, how did this all start? How was it that this nation, rich in natural resources and vast in land, came to design a system that reached to each corner of its territory with access to education and service? ? The name behind this extraordinary accomplishment -- the name of the man whose work inspired a distinctive trait of land-grant universities and whose hands-on outreach is now replicated around the globe --is Seaman A. Knapp. During his life, Seaman Knapp was recognized for innovations that changed the course of history in America. His story is well known, especially to many in this room, yet it deserves to be told one more time.

Seaman Asahel Knapp was born in northern New York on 1833. He grew up working on the family farm and attended a one-room school, where his schoolmaster lit the fire of knowledge and curiosity in his mind and in his heart. According to one of his biographers, young Seaman discovered “the existence of the world of books . . . and the unseen horizons of the imagination.”¹

College was, of course, the next logical step, but Seaman’s father and his brother Alonzo opposed his plans. “It is too expensive,” said his father, tuition equal to a year-worth of the family’s income. Besides, added Alonzo, it would mean “the spoiling of a fine cabinet-maker to make a poor scholar.”²

But Seaman’s mother understood his passion for learning. Secretly, she encouraged her son to pursue his dream, and his sister Mary ultimately sacrificed the contents of her hope chest so that her brother could go to college.

Seaman Knapp graduated from Union College and married Mary Hotchkiss. Life became complicated very quickly and one adversity followed another. While working in Vermont, he suffered an accident that destroyed his knee, almost crippling him for life. The young couple moved to Iowa and invested all their savings in acquiring the finest herd of Merino sheep that money could buy . . . only to have the entire flock die in the first winter storm. The harsh, cold weather in the Iowa plains was very different from the hilly landscape of Knapp’s native countryside. “Destitute, crippled, with wife and two children,” his daughter wrote, “these details of his life . . . are given to show his indomitable will and energy when most men so afflicted would have given up.”³

But better days were in store for Seaman Knapp. He was appointed to head the department of agriculture at Iowa State Agricultural College, where he later served as the second president of the institution. It was while he was there that some friends encouraged him to cultivate a tract of land in Louisiana. His life was about to be transformed.

Meantime, America was being transformed in its own painful way. The Civil War, which had threatened to unravel the nation’s very fabric, culminated in a renewed social pact: no longer half slave and half free, as a nation we finally understood that a house divided against itself would not prevail.

In the midst of this conflict, the people’s representatives were hard at work. In fact, in the year of 1862, the U.S. Congress produced several pieces of legislation that would have an enormous impact on the country. The federal Department of Agriculture was established in May of that year, in the same month that saw the passage of the Homestead Act. Congress approved the Pacific Railroad Act on July 1st, 1862, just one day before lawmakers approved the Morrill Act. The Homestead Act and the Railroad Act would provide us with geographical and horizontal mobility, while the Land-grant Act gave us the vertical and social mobility that strengthened American democracy in an everlasting manner. What a wonderful lesson for all of us! Rather than being constrained

by the difficult circumstances of their time, those elected officials chose to envision a better and brighter future for the sons and daughters of the working families of America.

Back in the South, a decade after the conclusion of the Civil War, Seaman Knapp was becoming impatient. It appeared, he said, the U.S. Department of Agriculture was not living up to its expectations. Increasingly frustrated with the lack of scientific research that would result in meaningful contributions to the advancement of agricultural production, Knapp became an advocate for the passage of the Hatch Act. With its approval in 1887, agricultural experiment stations were established at land-grant universities across the country. The U.S. became the first nation in the world to establish such a cohesive system in which teaching and research strengthened each other.

After his life-long friend, Secretary of Agriculture James Wilson, retained Knapp's services, he became interested in the development of the rice industry and traveled the world to research his topic. He visited Japan, China, the Philippines, India, Mexico and the Island of "Porto Rico." The island had become part of the United States in December of 1898, at the end of the Spanish-American War. Exactly two years later, the U.S. Department of Agriculture delivered to Congress a report entitled "Agricultural Resources and Capabilities of Porto Rico." The report proposed, among other developments for the impoverished island, the creation of a federally-funded agricultural experiment station to be established in the Western city of Mayaguez. The author and proponent was Seaman A. Knapp.

Another opportunity was in the horizon for this indefatigable visionary, when the South suffered the disastrous effects of a boll weevil infestation, which was rapidly destroying hundreds of acres of cotton plantations. Cotton—the king of the Southern industries--was brought to its knees; the economy of the region, still recovering from the devastation of the Civil War, was on the verge of total collapse.

Historical accounts tell us that Seaman Knapp rescued the cotton industry from the boll weevil. When we take a closer look at his role, an interesting fact comes to the surface. Through research, the U.S. Department of Agriculture had already developed a plan to control the pest by accelerating the point of maturity of the cotton plant. The department had disseminated the results through reports and pamphlets, but growers were skeptical. Farmers then—as many farmers now--did not believe in "book farming." So Seaman Knapp was appointed as "Special Agent for the Promotion of Agriculture in the South," with the specific charge to take the plan directly to cotton growers.

Let me insist on this point: It was clear that a solution to the pest problem had been identified, but implementation of the proposed plan necessitated something more than just science. It required good and effective communications. In order to create the desired change, the plan needed a person who would earn the good faith of growers and businessmen alike. It needed someone who could provide objective and relevant information, who could show farmers how to replicate the proposed solution and, in the process, build a trusting relationship for the future. The plan needed an intermediary who would bridge geographical and cultural differences. It was then that the figure of the

extension agent was born. “The farmer,” said Knapp, “must solve this problem on his own farm and with his own hands...What a man hears, he may doubt, what he sees he may also doubt, but what he does he cannot doubt”⁴

Knapp developed his famous Demonstration Work on a farm in Texas and soon afterwards, on November 12, 1906, W.C. Stallings became the first farmer agent. By 1912, one hundred years ago, farm agents were traveling many miles demonstrating better production methods. By 1914, there was at least one agent in almost every county in the nation.

The year of 1906 is also important because Seaman Knapp visited Tuskegee Institute under its founder and first president, Booker T. Washington. There he met with George Washington Carver, an emancipated slave who became a scientist, educator and innovator extraordinaire. Sharing the same passion for Demonstration Work as Seaman Knapp, Carver had developed a hands-on program employing a mule-drawn wagon. The Jessup Wagon, as it would come to be known, was the first moving classroom of its kind, a marvelous roving laboratory that exposed rural communities to the latest in farm machinery and equipment. According to his grandson, Roger Knapp, this development was instrumental in preparing “a system of Black agents that would help the Black farmers. By 1914 there were over 100 black agents covering eleven states.”⁶ Who would have thought that, in such an unforeseen manner, the Demonstration Work would become a bridge for interracial collaboration? Robert Mouton, the second president of Tuskegee, summarized the feat in this manner: “No other two men have done more for the Negro in the lower South since Emancipation than did Seaman A. Knapp and Booker T. Washington.”⁶

So powerful was this simple demonstration methodology that, in a very short time, it swept the nation with a wave of optimism. “Every man that had been helped by the agent invariably wanted to help his neighbors,” asserts Roger Knapp, “The people took on new confidence and hope. The period of the Demonstration work from 1906 to 1914 was precisely the period of the most rapid development in public education.”⁷ The Demonstration Work also resulted in prosperity in ever expanding circles: agricultural communities started buying products manufactured in urban centers, which resulted in economic growth and a better quality of life for all.

In this thriving environment, President Theodore Roosevelt appointed the Commission on Country Life, which recommended the addition of “the third coordinated branch” of extension work to complete the branches of teaching and research in land-grant universities. The language included in this recommendation deserves to be quoted in its entirety: “Each state college of agriculture should be empowered to organize as soon as practicable a complete department of college extension, so managed as to reach every person on the land in its State, with both information and *inspiration*”⁸ (emphasis mine)

The rest, as they say, is history: the pathway to the Smith-Lever Act had been carved out. Championed by Congressman Asbury F. Lever of South Carolina and Senator

Hoke Smith of Georgia, in 1914 Congress approved the bill that gave life to the Cooperative Extension System. On the occasion of its signage, President Woodrow Wilson described it in a powerful manner: “Next to the Federal Reserve Act, this is our greatest contribution to the national welfare.”⁹

It is obvious that Seaman Knapp was a man ahead of his time: an advocate for a dignified quality of life for the underserved, a tireless innovator in the improvement of agriculture and an adviser to legislation that would foster social and economic advancement through science and service. That is why we celebrate the man who has been hailed as the father of the Extension system, the schoolmaster of American agriculture and one of our greatest agricultural leaders.

Extension: Our Relevance and Values

Yet, it is undeniable that despite the devotion, the best efforts and the incredible accomplishments of thousands of Extension agents documented in every corner of our country, Extension has faced and continues to confront many challenges. Some of them, like those associated with budget constraints, are nothing new; sadly, we have almost become accustomed to attrition being the normal way of conducting our business. Some of the circumstances Extension faces today are, however, unprecedented. Challenges such as:

- a) Changes in demographics, with the aging and diversification of a critical population served by Extension;
- b) Different agricultural patterns, with larger corporations and fewer independent farmers who are an important base for Extension;
- c) Increasing difficulty recruiting young agents who often find more lucrative careers elsewhere; and,
- d) An overwhelming amount of information, mostly free and readily available on computers everywhere.

Some dedicated agents and users fear, once again, that the best days of Extension “have come and gone.” I know that many of us have had interesting conversations with those unfamiliar with Extension (and even with some elected officials) who question the value of Extension today. Let’s examine some of the statements that are commonly heard:

- **“I had no idea that Extension was part of your university.”**

Many people are surprised to learn that Extension was designed to complete and complement the educational mission of land-grant universities. Extension was conceived as the vehicle that would transmit the research conducted in the labs and in the fields, the lessons that were taught in the classroom, to those individuals who were not “residents” of the land-grant universities.

This third branch of our tripartite mission has an unbreakable bond with land-grant institutions. The founding commission described it almost as a *conditio sine qua*

non, “without which, no college of agriculture can adequately serve its State. It is to the extension department of these colleges, if properly conducted, that we must now look for the most effective rousing of the people of the land.”¹⁰

Because of Extension, and the nature of its geographical presence, we can rightfully assert that our entire state is our campus. Actually, Extension occupies not only the dimension of “place” but the dimension of time as well, with programs and services offered year-round. With almost no restrictions in place and in time, Extension provides access to all, sharing the land-grant value of serving every man, woman and child who can benefit from the fruits of our educational labor. Finally, Extension is the component that enables land-grant universities to break away from the isolation of the Ivory Tower. It builds bridges and connects us to our communities in a meaningful way. John Campbell explained eloquently the transformation that was brought to our universities by Extension, when he said:

“The university campus came to be recognized as one of the most heavily traveled, cross-roads in America—an intersection traversed by farmers and ranchers, by homemakers, by persons in other businesses and industries, and by politicians as well as by students from every part of every state, not to mention many other states and nations.”¹¹

Looking toward the future, in addition to the questions we are being asked by others, we should be asking even tougher questions of ourselves. Such as: if our Extension programs are partners in our scholarly endeavors, if they are one crucial element in our three-dimensional mission, do we hold the Extension initiatives in the same level of esteem as our academic and research endeavors? Do we value them and reward them in a manner that is consistent with our aspirations as engaged land-grant universities?

- A second statement we frequently hear is, **“I like Extension programs, but I am not willing to pay for them.”**

The word “cooperative,” as in “Cooperative Extension,” is in the name for a very good reason. It denotes a funding model that goes back to the manner in which Seaman Knapp first supported his Demonstration Work. In order to make things happen, the passionate and impatient Knapp accessed funds from private and public sources at different levels, including General Education Board monies provided by John D. Rockefeller to expand educational opportunities in the South. The Smith-Lever Act preserved this mechanism for different sources of funding, including matching requirements. The legislation described Extension as, “a cooperative venture among federal, state, local, and individual funding support—a system of adult and youth education that has become a model for the rest of the world.”¹²

Certainly at the time of its creation, and even today, Extension offers a distinctly entrepreneurial approach to a federally established program. This fact reflects Extension was born out of necessity and grew based upon the age-old principles of collaboration and partnership.

Looking toward the future then, we should ask: Where in our funding priorities is Extension? If our budgets are a reflection of our values, how do we—or even do we—help make its case not only at the county, state and federal levels, but also at our own institutions? Next time someone asks Extension to embrace one more great project, are we ready to apportion an adequate level of funding to make it happen?

- A third common assertion is, **“Extension programs are dated; we are not an agricultural society anymore.”**

A hundred years ago, when Extension was founded, one-third of our nation’s population was involved in agriculture. Today, about one percent of our population feeds our entire nation. This is a *very important* one percent.

This one percent includes hundreds of thousands of individuals who, today, use and need the products, programs and services provided by Extension throughout its history. American families in this segment of the population still find immense value in 4-H, in the responsiveness of Extension’s local advisory boards, in the empowerment that results from our community development efforts and in our agricultural and natural resources programs. The farmer boy I met at this summer’s graduation belongs to this group: he, his family and hundreds of thousands like him around the nation look up to our programs as a source of stability for the present and hope for the future.

Thanks to the advancements of the agricultural research that is conducted in our universities and at our experimental stations, we have increased productivity and quality in food, fiber and fuel in unprecedented ways. At the same time, we have protected pricing structures and ensure that farmers and ranchers will receive a profitable return on their investment and enjoy, as Seaman Knapp envisioned, a more satisfying and comfortable quality of life.

It is important, however, for us to be more vigilant than ever, to strive for reasonable agility and to be not too set in our ways. There have been moments in our history when the dissemination means for the research conducted at land-grant universities and the U.S. Department of Agriculture has not been particularly well respected. Wayne Rasmussen reminds us of times when prominent farmer and agricultural associations have voiced concerns about the relevance and utility of the research produced by faculty and researchers, “criticizing the reports as compendiums of old, useless materials; farmers said that the research reports could not be applied to meet their needs.”¹³ Even in his time, Seaman Knapp had some strong words of caution that still resonate today, “It is a sad commentary on our land-grant institutions of higher learning” he bemoaned, “when they devote more time to their bureaucratic needs than to the people trapped in the cluster misery of poverty!”¹⁴

The promise of our future will depend largely on how well we continue to adapt to our new realities. Being responsive to the changing face of our national demographics, several Extension programs have already implemented urban projects in which a strong interest in agriculture is having a transformative effect. The local food movement and a

new widespread interest in urban gardening are making a difference in the nutrition, health and well-being of these communities. In essence, these new offshoots constitute a grassroots movement for which Extension is a perfect collaborator and -- just as we were challenged to be -- a source of inspiration.

Some of the questions for our future are: How can we help Extension continue to strengthen its agricultural programs? How can we better market the exciting projects that have provided legitimacy to Extension among the agricultural producers of the nation and the world? How do we tell our story in a way that honors our traditions *and* integrates the new voices of society today? How do we expand our circle and bridge differences so that we include the values and the assets of the traditional rural landscapes as well as those of the urban urgent realities?

- This brings up another challenge we frequently hear, **“It looks like Extension is losing its mission.”**

The Agricultural and Natural Resources programs were the first base of support of Extension, followed by programs in Youth Development like 4-H, as well as those in Family and Consumer Science and Community Development. Extension excels in providing educational and service programs that have relevancy for people from different backgrounds, ages, and socioeconomic status. However, in their survey of 1981, Paul Warner and James Christenson reported, “Some individuals see Extension as moving too far away from its traditional programs and clientele.”¹⁵ At some times and in some places, some more socially or service-oriented programs have been considered as deviations from Extension’s intended mission.

Classifications, thick as walls, have been erected to separate the “traditionalists” or “ruralists” (those who advocate for the original agricultural programs) and the “expansionists” or “urbanites” (those who provide service in community development programs). This exercise provides little more than a divisionary nomenclature and a false distinction between service and education. Again, citing Warner and Christenson, “Extension is in the business of communicating ideas, practices, and technologies to whomever is interested in using them.”¹⁶

Yet, on more than one occasion, some of us have devoted precious time and resources determining whether a program is “agricultural enough” or “diversified enough.” It seems to me the crux of the matter ultimately boils down to this, Did Seaman Knapp propose research-based agricultural programs as the foundation for an enhanced quality of life only for those in the countryside, or was he advocating for a better quality of life for a larger number of people? In essence, then, is agriculture to be perceived as a means or as an end? I think it was—and it still is---both.

For people who are in need, all our programs are needed: Agricultural Education, Youth Development, Family and Consumer Sciences, and Community Development. Still, let’s accept that in some occasions a sense of “sibling rivalry” gets in the way of what we have to do. This is nothing but an unnecessary slippery slope. “Your mission,”

said Seaman Knapp, “is to solve the problems of poverty, to increase the measures of happiness, and to harness the forces of all learning to the useful and needful in human society.”¹⁷

We recently witnessed a timely example of Extension’s ability to address immediate human needs with the rapid response that was deployed in helping citizens stricken by Hurricane Sandy with education and outreach, particularly in the area of food safety. Extension organizations in the East Coast will continue to help storm victims in coming weeks by providing them with information about the most effective science-based strategies to prevent and reduce food-borne illnesses. Such objective and immediate personal response to crisis points to Extension’s value in America today. This is our best answer to those who might be confused about Extension’s mission; this is how we continue to anchor our credibility and enhance our basis of support.

The questions for our future should be less about the nature of our programs and more about the impact of our projects on the people we serve. Are our programs relevant? Do our programs make a difference? Are we communicating in the best possible ways the latest results—agricultural, financial, developmental—to our users? Is this information changing behavior and results? Is it improving lives?

Extension: the Next One Hundred Years of Engagement

- A fifth statement that I know we all hear frequently is, “**Why do we need Extension, anyway?**”

This question comes with a particular sting, because it goes to the core of our souls and the labor of our days. It questions our existence and our very reason for being.

We need Extension today because it is a well-rounded program that, at the national level, provides consistency as well as the pooling of resources and expertise, while preserving a local sense of identity and responsiveness.

We need Extension today because it is among the most effective mechanisms for individual and social empowerment. As Campbell has asserted, “Not only does this system communicate new research findings from the agricultural experiment station staff to farmers and others, it encourages problems identified on farms and ranches and other areas to be brought to the attention of the station staff for research, study and resolution.”¹⁸

Extension was among the first programs to encourage the direct participation of its users in the process of planning, implementation and assessment of its programs. Extension is not only about service and outreach: it is truly about engagement. “Extension,” explains Rasmussen, “went even further when it moved from the simple transfer of knowledge to the idea of helping people identify their problems and find the tools with which to solve them, This approach remains a capstone of the land-grant concept.”¹⁹ The vectors of Extension do not point just in one direction; Extension

provides a two-way street promoting an exchange that strengthens the skills and the self-confidence of the user as much as the talents, expertise and knowledge of its providers.

We need Extension today, more than ever, because our society is growing not only in size, but also in the nature and complexity of its problems. The recent and painful lessons of natural disasters, the threats of man-made catastrophes, of pandemic diseases, and the fragility of the technological systems on which our trust and welfare so blindly reside, give us reason to be concerned. But we also need Extension not only for the times of deprivation and sorrow, but also for those of prosperity and happiness. People in Extension know that the future will always be better, of necessity, if it finds us with the unwavering commitment to learn from each other and to help each other.

Plain and simple, we *need* Extension and we are all called to be agents who transmit the message that a better, healthier, happier world is within our reach. One hundred years from now, we will still rely on the individual-to-individual contact that Seaman Knapp recognized as the most transformative tool for change that humans have at their disposal. There is a structure in Washington DC that, rich in symbolism, commemorates Seaman Knapp. It is not a building with thick walls: it is a bridge.

We salute Seaman Knapp today as one of the sources of inspiration for land-grant universities and as the pioneer of the Extension system. Let's affirm today our commitment to the powerful legacy we have inherited: the land-grant university system with its inseparable tripartite mission of teaching, research and service. Let's recommit to being even more extended, more engaged, more meaningful institutions. Seaman Knapp encouraged us with his words, "Now let us have an education for the masses, one that will fit them to become a great, honest, faithful, intelligent, toiling, thrifty, common people, upon which alone great nations are founded."²⁰

Happy 100 years of Extension, dear colleagues! I salute all of you for your dedication and for your many extraordinary accomplishments. I should mention that there is one last statement that I commonly hear, and that is: **"Extension agents are the unsung heroes of this nation and have the best people skills that one can find."**

That's why I feel so certain that we can exult in celebration for today and for the future: Here's to Seaman Knapp and the next century of Extension!

(Actually, what I am saying is: "I hope you have a wonderful life.")

Notes

- ¹ Roger Knapp. rogerknapp.com/knap/seamanknapp.htm
- ² A.M. Mayo. Biographical Sketch. Dr. Seaman A. Knapp
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- ³ Mayo, ereserves.mcneese.edu/depts./archive/knapp009.htm
- ⁴ Knapp. rogerknapp.com/knap/seamanknapp.htm
- ⁵ Knapp. rogerknapp.com/knap/seamanknapp.htm
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- ⁷ Knapp. rogerknapp.com/knap/seamanknapp.htm
- ⁹ Burlingame, Merrill & Edward J. Bell, Jr. The Montana Cooperative Extension: A
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- ¹⁰ John R. Campbell, Reclaiming a Lost Heritage. Land—Grant & Other
Higher Education Initiatives for the Twenty-first Century. East Lansing: Michigan State
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- ¹¹ Campbell, p. 26
- ¹² Smith Lever Act, <https://nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/Smith-Lever%20Act.pdf>
- ¹³ Wayne D. Rasmussen, Taking the University to the People. Seventy-Five Years of
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- ¹⁵ G.R. Westwood, “Seaman A. Knapp: Won’t You Please Come Home?” The Journal of
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- ¹⁶ Paul D. Warner & James A. Christenson, The Cooperative Extension Service. A
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- ¹⁷ Warner & Christenson, p. 21.
- ¹⁸ Westwood, p. 35.

¹⁹ Campbell, p. 23.

²⁰ Rasmussen, p.

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