

THE Bolton NEWS
 601-990-9511
 Volume 4, Number 1
 Publisher
 Clay Mansell
 www.BoltonMS.com

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Garraway named Farmer of the Year

Special to The Bolton News

Gaddis & McLaurin sounds more like the name of a law firm than a general store, but since the 1870s, the name is synonymous with all manner of dry goods in the Hinds County community of Bolton.

Its expansive range of inventory is one reason for its longevity. Items normally found at local co-ops – animal feed, grass seed, lumber, tools and hardware – have been the store’s calling card for much of its existence. Over time, store owner and longtime row crop producer Kendall Garraway has brought in a multitude of home and garden items.

“We have great management in place, and it has really grown in the last ten years,” says Garraway. “Not only does it supply and act as a hub for the community, but it helps keep the value of the land assets up.”

Garraway’s success earned him a major accolade, as he was recently named the Mississippi winner of the 2023 Sunbelt Ag Expo Southeastern Farmer of the Year award. He joins growers from nine other states who received the same distinction. All ten growers were recognized at the Sunbelt Ag Expo.

Kyle Lewis, an agent with the Mississippi State University Extension Service in Hinds County, nominated Garraway for the award.



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 Kendall Garraway was recently named the Mississippi winner of the 2023 Sunbelt Ag Expo Southeastern Farmer of the Year award. He joins growers from nine other states who received the same distinction.

“Mr. Kendall has been a friend of MSU Extension by hosting on-farm demo tests in soybean and cotton where he uses the data received in making variety selections and management decisions,” Lewis said. “He has made great strides in timberland and wildlife management with timber harvest and prescribed fire management. He allows us to use his store for programs and demonstrations and is always ready to help in any capacity.”

The store is hardly the only business operation flourishing under Garraway’s watch. His primary focus has always been on growing row crops, raising cattle and managing timber at his family farm, Gaddis Farms.

Garraway also operates a cotton gin, leases portions of his land for hunting, and invests in commercial and retail real estate. He has several acres of solar panels installed as a financial investment that could potentially become a solar farm.

Despite the leadership responsibilities he juggles, Garraway says his work rarely seems like a real job. He is quick to point out the heavy involvement his uncle and cousin, Ted Kendall III and Ted Kendall IV, share with him on the numerous business ventures.

“I did not attend a school with an agriculture program, so I majored in banking and finance,” he explains. “After graduating, I almost went to work for a bank but was offered a job on a farm by my uncle, and I’ve never looked back.”

Garraway uses soil health and stabilization practices in his row crop operation by using minimal tillage. On about half of his acres, he uses no-till planting along with cover crops.

“We have used several programs to take highly erodible land out of row crops and into timber to better utilize and protect the soil,” Garraway says. “We have been using no-till and minimum till on our row crops. This method uses less fuel and helps prevent erosion. Hunting and wildlife have been important to me for recreation and to provide income to the farm, so habitat management has always been important.”



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 Garraway was recognized at the Sunbelt Ag Expo as the Mississippi Farmer of the Year.

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Poe welcomed as new pastor

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Bolton Baptist Church recently welcomed Jonathan Poe as their new pastor.

Poe is a 2017 graduate of Mississippi College, where he studied Christian studies and history. He has a M. Divinity in church history from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Poe’s wife, Taylor, has a doctorate in math from Mississippi College, where she currently teaches in the math department.

“The Lord moved us to the Bolton community two and a half years ago,” notes Poe. “During that time, we have grown to love the people and enjoy the land He has given us. Almost every day, I have driven by Bolton BC (three and a half miles from our house) without knowing eventually He would call me to serve this wonderful family. I am excited to serve as pastor to this community we have called home for the last two years!”

After receiving a unanimous vote from the congregation to serve as their pastor, Poe’s first Sunday preaching for Bolton Baptist Church was December 10, 2023.



Special to The Clinton Courier
 Jonathan Poe (left) has been welcomed as the new pastor of Bolton Baptist Church. He is pictured with his wife, Taylor (right).