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### **Gardner-Webb Community Remembers Contributions and Service of Dr. Jack Hunt**

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# Gardner-Webb Community Remembers Contributions and Service of Dr. Jack Hunt

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Office of University  
Communications

May 28, 2020

## *Dentist, Farmer, Entrepreneur and Statesman Dedicated His Life in Service to Others*

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Dr. John Jackson “Jack” Hunt, who once reminded all elected officials that service is not about the “Love of Power” but the “Power of Love,” passed away May 27, 2020. The public servant, dedicated supporter of Gardner-Webb University and namesake for the Hunt School of Nursing is being remembered and celebrated by the GWU campus and community.

“The Gardner-Webb community mourns the passing of Dr. Jack Hunt, but we join with many others across the state in celebrating a life so well lived,” shared GWU President Dr. William M. Downs. “Dr. Hunt was a true servant-leader, and his reputation for bringing people together—whether in politics or in other facets of his impressive career—means he stands among the greatest of North Carolinians. I feel privileged to have met and visited with Dr. Hunt at his Lattimore home and to see him surrounded there by a loving family. With his wife, Ruby, Jack Hunt leaves a lasting legacy at GWU’s Hunt School of Nursing, and his impact will be felt throughout Cleveland County and beyond for years to come.”



Hunt, 97, was recently presented the title of trustee emeritus by the GWU Board of Trustees in recognition for his outstanding service to GWU and contributions to the community. A native of Lattimore, N.C., Hunt excelled at many careers in his lifetime—as a dentist, a farmer, an entrepreneur and a statesman. Hunt graduated from Lattimore High School in 1939, Wake Forest College in 1943 and earned a Doctor of Dental Surgery degree from Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1946.



Ruby and Jack Hunt pose with friends at a dinner held in the couple's honor at Gardner-Webb in 2014.

A veteran of World War II and the Korean War, Hunt earned the rank of Major in the U.S. Army. For 22 years, he served as an elected representative in the North Carolina General Assembly. He was the longest-running Chairman of the House Rules committee and also served as Speaker Pro-Tempore. Hunt and Ruby financially supported many community projects for institutions including Gardner-Webb, Cleveland Community College, the Ruby Hunt YMCA, and the Earl Scruggs Center. In 2012, Hunt was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters by the Gardner-Webb Board of Trustees.

Among his most notable accomplishments as a representative, Hunt helped author legislation that secured state financial support for nursing students in North Carolina at a time when North Carolina had a shortage of nurses. This legislation was a catalyst for the growth of nursing education at Gardner-Webb and other institutions around the state. In July 2014, Hunt and Ruby presented a generous gift to the University to establish the Hunt School of Nursing.

Dr. Tracy Arnold, the school's dean and a four-time nursing alumna, is grateful for Hunt's dedication to the faculty and students. "Dr. Hunt's commitment to providing opportunities for nurses to continue their education in North Carolina and his support of the Hunt School of Nursing are a testament to his unwavering support of the nursing profession," she observed. "Dr. Hunt leaves an incredible legacy in the Hunt School of Nursing in which he invested not only in our students, but in our faculty as well. His contributions to the Hunt School of Nursing were instrumental in expanding our experiential lab experiences. He always carried an open-door policy and many of our faculty were blessed to join him for lunch, in his home, to discuss current trends in nursing and nursing education. The Hunt School of Nursing is forever grateful to the significant contributions Dr. Hunt and his family have made in support of nurses and nursing education."

In addition to providing program enhancements and renovated nursing facilities, the Hunts' donation established the Hunt Sisters Nursing Scholars Fund. "We've always had a passion for helping nurses and have a deep, deep appreciation for their call and their purpose," Mr. Hunt shared at the time of the donation. "Nursing is a calling. I don't believe you can be a caring nurse without that call. I am happy to see that Gardner-Webb is supplying a place for those to meet that calling."



Hunt has been recognized many times for his service, including Emeritus Director of the NC Biotechnology Center and a member of the Cleveland County Cattlemen Hall of Fame. He was a Baptist, Mason, Shriner, and served on a variety of local and state boards and committees. Together, he and Ruby were awarded North Carolina's Order of the Long Leaf Pine.

Woody Fish, GWU vice president of Advancement and External Affairs described Hunt's character. "He never failed to answer the call of service wherever it took him," Fish reflected. "From the military, to the healthcare community, to the state government, to numerous local non-profits—Dr. Jack Hunt was always a champion for giving of ones' self for the betterment of others. He was a shining example of Gardner-Webb's motto. His life-giving work for humanity was an extension of his commitment to God."

Hunt and Ruby were married 71 years, when she passed away on May 27, 2017. A private family service is planned and a celebration of life ice cream party will be planned for a later time.

The family requested memorials to GWU Hunt School of Nursing Scholarship, P.O. Box 997, Boiling Springs, NC 28017 or Ruby C. Hunt YMCA, P. O. Box 2272, Shelby, NC 28151 or to the charity of donor's choice.

[Read more: Nursing scholar pays tribute to Dr. Jack Hunt](#)

*Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university. Gardner-Webb emphasizes a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics to prepare students to become effective leaders within the global community. Ignite your future at [Gardner-Webb.edu](http://Gardner-Webb.edu).*