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August 19, 2015

Hall of Fame Inductee, Trustee Remembered as Lifetime Advocate for Education

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Hoyt Q. Bailey’s commitment to education started when he was a young boy, and it became a major part of the fabric that wove together the man he was throughout his life. Bailey, who passed away Aug. 15 at the age of 88, will be remembered as a longtime leader at Gardner-Webb University and in the community.

Hoyt Bailey, center, was inducted into the GWU School of Education Hall of Fame in June 2015.

“My mother thought there were only three things in the world, and that was God, family and education, so she made sure her three children received an education,” Bailey shared as he was inducted into the GWU School of Education Hall of Fame’s inaugural class in June. “My grandfather had five daughters who graduated from college in 1917, and that was very difficult in those days. So we’ve been a very educational family, and I continue to see the needs of it everywhere I go.”

Among a host of other education leadership, philanthropic and advocacy roles, Bailey served as a trustee and major supporter of Gardner-Webb, and he received an honorary doctorate from the University in the late 1990s.

Bailey, left, received an honorary doctorate from the University in the late 1990s.

Bailey grew up in Shelby (N.C.), earned a bachelor’s degree at N.C. State University, and forged a successful career in textiles in Cleveland County, first with J.P. Stevens and then Dover Textiles, where he worked for his father-in-law. He later became president of his own company, DTI Yarn Sales, Inc.

His wife Anne Dover Bailey, a UNC-Chapel Hill graduate, worked as a teacher, served on the board of directors of the Co-Founder Club of the UNC Medical Foundation and also served Gardner-Webb as director of the Christian Service Organization. “She was with me in everything I did,” Bailey recalled. “Education was her life, too. I think about her and life just starts over again.”

His wife's family started the Dover Foundation, Inc.—which has been instrumental in providing thousands of dollars in college scholarships to high school students and support for countless other educational endeavors in Cleveland County—and Bailey served the organization as a board member, director and president.

Committed to improving the lives of children and the education of youth and adults, Bailey also founded the Boys & Girls Club of Cleveland County, chaired the Cleveland County Schools Board of Education and the Cleveland Community College Board of Trustees, and he served on the board of trustees at his alma mater N.C. State. He received the Raleigh Dingman Most Outstanding School Board Member award in 1995.

“You start putting all of that together and it's pretty amazing,” reflected Scoot Dixon, a former longtime Gardner-Webb senior staff member and Bailey's friend. “Hoyt Bailey has always had a very significant commitment to improving the quality of education in our region. That's always been very clear in his mind in all of his roles. His belief was that if we can improve the quality of education we can improve the quality of life for the people of our region, and that's been the case over and over again. So many of his philanthropic efforts are aimed at improving the quality of education and opportunities for young people. He is a special person, and we'd be hard-pressed to find anyone who's made as many commitments to so many organizations with the primary purpose of education.”

Bailey credited other community leaders for establishing a devotion to educational excellence, praising people such as Malcolm Brown for his work to create programs and Eddie Holbrook for his work to develop facilities and programs to benefit people through education.

“We have community leaders who came along far before me and saw a need for education,” Bailey explained. “We're very fortunate to have what we have in our community. What is better than education? I'm proud to be a part of it.”

Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University's purpose is to advance the Kingdom of God through Christian higher education by preparing graduates for professional and personal success, instilling in them a deep commitment to service and leadership, and equipping them for well-rounded lives of lasting impact, Pro Deo et Humanitate (For God and Humanity).