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Office of University
Communications

April 22, 2015

First GWU Education Hall of Fame Class of Inductees Include Dr. George Litton, Hoyt Bailey, and Ezra Bridges

(Boiling Springs, N.C.) – The induction ceremony for the inaugural GWU School of Education Hall of Fame is planned for June 25 at 6 p.m. at Gardner-Webb University. The event will include a dinner program and the unveiling of the new Education Hall of Fame, located on the third floor of the Tucker Student Center.

School of Education Dean Dr. Doug Eury said that nominees for the Hall of Fame will be Gardner-Webb alumni and others who have distinguished themselves in the field of education as either a practitioner or benefactor locally, regionally or at the state and federal level. “The individuals recognized have each made a significant impact in both their field and in the community at large,” Eury shared. “These folks are role models both personally and professionally.”

The 2015 inductees include Dr. George Litton, Hoyt Bailey, and Ezra Bridges, and each has contributed to education in significant ways.

Litton, former head football coach at Gardner-Webb, served the community for dozens of years as a school administrator and longtime principal at Crest High School. He later became a longtime member and chairman of the Cleveland County Board of Education. He was the recipient of the Raleigh Dingman Award for Most Outstanding School Board Member in 2009 and was an active member of the Communities in Schools Board of Directors and the Cleveland Community College Board of Visitors.

Bailey founded the Boys and Girls Club of Cleveland County and was a former chairman of the Cleveland County Board of Education. He received the Raleigh Dingman Most Outstanding School Board Member award in 1995. He served as a former trustee at Gardner-Webb and received an honorary doctorate from the University in 1997. His philanthropic commitment to children of the community is evident. The building that houses the Shelby City Park Carrousel is named for his wife, Anne Dover Bailey. His leadership as a board member of the Dover Foundation, started by his wife’s family—owners of Dover Mill in Shelby—has been

instrumental in providing thousands of dollars in college scholarships to high school students. The board has also supported countless other educational endeavors in Cleveland County.

Ezra Bridges (1905-2010) was a devoted educator who tirelessly served the Cleveland County community in immeasurable ways.

She worked for former North Carolina Governor Oliver Max Gardner and his wife, Fay Webb-Gardner, the namesakes of Gardner-Webb University. An African-American woman, Bridges was not allowed to attend Shelby High School after she completed the eighth grade. She attended Scotia Seminary for teachers and taught for 46 years in the Shelby schools, many of those at the segregated Cleveland School. A lifelong learner, Bridges earned a bachelor's degree from Hampton Institute in Virginia in 1942 and a master's from Columbia University in New York in 1946. She served for 20 years on the Cleveland County Planning Board, and on the Board of Trustees for Cleveland Memorial Hospital. She also helped found Holly Oak Park in Shelby.

The Hall of Fame induction ceremony will include remarks from inductees Litton and Bailey. Friends and family members of Ezra Bridges who are interested in sharing memories of her legacy during the event should contact Barbara Hildreth at 704-406-3030 to register for the induction.

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).