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# Gardner-Webb University Announces Establishment of "Hunt School of Nursing"

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Office of University Communications

July 10, 2014

## *Dr. Jack and Mrs. Ruby Hunt Offer Significant Donation to Nursing Program*

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – Officials are thrilled to announce a significant, undisclosed donation to the top-rated Gardner-Webb University School of Nursing. Dr. Jack and Mrs. Ruby Hunt, noted public servants and staunch supporters of a wide range of community projects, have committed a generous gift to the University to establish the Hunt School of Nursing.

Gardner-Webb University President Dr. Frank Bonner believes the Hunt family represents community service at its finest, and the partnership with the University will benefit both current and future nursing students.

"Jack and Ruby Hunt have had tremendous, positive impact on the quality of life not only in their community and region but throughout North Carolina," Bonner said. "From the wonderful benefits of the Ruby Hunt YMCA in Boiling Springs, to Jack's service as one of the great statesmen in the North Carolina legislature, to nursing education—it is simply impossible to fully describe the positive impact of this couple. The quality of the nursing profession today in North Carolina is largely owing to the support and efforts of Jack Hunt in the legislature and elsewhere. Now that wonderful legacy will continue through the Hunt School of Nursing at Gardner-Webb University."

A portion of the gift will be used to provide program enhancements, renovate nursing facilities, and supply educational technology. In addition, the donation will establish the Hunt Sisters Nursing Scholars Fund to offer scholarship opportunities for students in the Hunt School of Nursing.

"We've always had a passion for helping nurses and have a deep, deep appreciation for their call and their purpose," Jack Hunt shared. "I'd really like to see others join in and assist with funds for the scholarship so that people can help nurses succeed with as little debt as possible."

Dr. Ben Leslie, provost and executive vice president at Gardner-Webb, is confident the investment will yield tremendous results. "The timing of this generous gift is nothing short of providential. The recent acquisition of the Crawley Hospital building provides the University with the opportunity to create a dedicated health sciences facility," he offered. "The Hunt

family gift provides substantial assistance as we begin the work of equipping that building with the technology and labs that today's health care professionals need if they are to be competently trained professionals."

Hunt School of Nursing Dean Dr. Sharon Starr is eager to help facilitate the exciting changes within the program, which include classroom and lab space moving to the new College of Health Sciences building (formerly Crawley hospital), upon completion of ongoing building renovations.

"The School of Nursing is very proud to be the beneficiary of Dr. Hunt's gift and to be named the Hunt School of Nursing," Starr said. "We feel this distinction is a reflection of the quality and excellence of the various nursing programs offered at Gardner-Webb. The nursing profession in North Carolina will be long-term beneficiaries of the Hunt family legacy as talented nursing students are provided with the financial means to attend the School of Nursing, and are educated in its state-of-the-art facilities."

The Hunt School of Nursing will include the undergraduate two-year Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) and four-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN), and graduate nursing programs at Gardner-Webb such as the Family Nurse Practitioner Program (FNP), the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) and the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP). Hunt said he was proud to support degree programs that have given women a chance to exercise their calling and succeed in a corporate healthcare setting.

"I grew up in an era where there were few opportunities for women on a professional level," Hunt explained. "They were either teachers or nurses. When I got involved in politics, I became more sensitive to that. I continued to advocate for both nurses and teachers. And that's why this connection with an educational institution like Gardner-Webb and the School of Nursing is so perfect."

John Jackson "Jack" and Ruby Hunt live in Lattimore, N.C. Jack excelled as a dentist, farmer, entrepreneur and a statesman of Cleveland County. 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. The couple has financially supported many community projects for institutions including Cleveland Community College, the Ruby Hunt YMCA, the Earl Scruggs Center, and Gardner-Webb. In 2012, Hunt was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters by the Gardner-Webb University Board of Trustees. The Hunts are devoted Christians, proponents of education, and advocates for the community in which they live.

"Nursing is a calling," Hunt reflected. "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."

*Gardner-Webb University offers one of the most comprehensive nursing programs in the country and established one of the first DNP programs in North Carolina. The full-spectrum of nursing degrees available at GWU allows students to progress seamlessly to achieve their career and educational goals. GWU maintains productive partnerships with community healthcare facilities, providing students with valuable opportunities for service learning. Patient-centered care, evidence-based practice, and interdisciplinary collaboration are educational priorities at Gardner-Webb.*

*Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University blends a liberal arts core curriculum with more than 55 major and minor professional programs of study, a comprehensive academic experience that flows from our Christian commitment to intellectual freedom, service and leadership.*