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### **Longtime Gardner-Webb Supporter Bill Masters Receives 2012 Heritage Award**

Office of University Communications

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# Longtime Gardner-Webb Supporter Bill Masters Receives 2012 Heritage Award

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May 29, 2012

## *Award Presented by the North Carolina Baptist Foundation*

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.— Shelby's Bill Masters, a longtime friend and supporter of the Gardner-Webb baseball program, recently received the North Carolina Baptist Foundation's (NCBF) 2012 Heritage Award for his outstanding generosity to Gardner-Webb University.

The Heritage Award recognizes individuals for their exemplary giving and service to organizations associated with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

A former college and semi-pro baseball player, Masters served in the U.S. Army Air Force before a long career in the textile industry. It was 40 years ago while working at Cone Mills in Cliffside, N.C., that Masters and his wife, Sue, began supporting Gardner-Webb.

In 2008, the University recognized the Masters' years of support by naming the baseball field in Bill's honor. Then in 2011, the Masters made their largest contribution to date, a resounding \$1.3 million gift to endow the Runnin' Bulldog Baseball Program and to provide scholarships for future ballplayers. In recognition of that gift, the University named the Bill and Sue Masters Athletic Facility, which houses baseball and tennis offices.

In his presentation speech at the Heritage Award ceremony, Gardner-Webb President Dr. A. Frank Bonner likened Masters' generosity to what he called his "favorite baseball play," the sacrifice bunt.

"You see, there are times in baseball," Bonner said, "when the best thing for the team is for an individual hitter to make an out on purpose. Sure, it would look better in the box score for him to swing for the fences, try to drive in the run and pad his own stat line. But instead, he intentionally gives himself up so that his teammates can advance."

"Bill," Bonner continued, "you've spent years of your life giving of yourself to advance the people and the institutions you believe in, and you've done so without any thought for cheers or public glory. It's time your teammates stood up to recognize your effort, and to applaud your generosity."

The NCBF's purpose is to generate an increased awareness of Christian estate stewardship principles. The Foundation offers investment opportunities for donors who desire to support Baptist churches, institutions and mission endeavors. For more, visit

ncbaptistfoundation.org.

Gardner-Webb, a private Christian, Baptist-related University, offers a comprehensive academic experience that challenges students spiritually and intellectually and equipping them not only for professional success but for lives marked by empathy, compassion and a commitment to service on the broadest scale, Pro Deo et Humanitate (For God and Humanity).

*Photo credit: Dan Roberts, NCBF Photographer*

*Photo caption, from left to right: Dr. A. Frank Bonner, Bill Masters, and Milton A. Hollifield, Jr. (Executive Director-Treasurer of Baptist State Convention of North Carolina)*