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Gardner-Webb Running Group Chases New Scholarship

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Office of University Communications

July 12, 2011

Faculty, Staff, and Students Run Half Marathon for “Doc” Hunt Scholarship Fund

 Gardner-Webb Running Group

Last fall, 18 Gardner-Webb faculty and staff completed the Charlotte Thunder Road Half Marathon as part of Dr. Jeff Hartman’s “Running With a Purpose” fitness group. This spring, the group tackled the Hickory Charity Chase Half Marathon, but their accomplishment was less significant for the miles they logged than for the “purpose” they championed: a new scholarship to honor longtime professor of physical education and wellness, and current Dean of Student Development, Dr. Delores “Dee” Hunt.

Since 1978, Hunt—whom everyone affectionately calls “Doc”—has served several terms as chair of the Physical Education, Wellness, and Sport Studies (PEWSS) department, two stints as GWU’s head volleyball and softball coach, and, most notably, as the first dean of the School of Education, overseeing that program’s inception and accreditation in the mid-90s. Now, her position as Dean of Student Development best symbolizes what she has stood for all along: developing students into capable citizens and faithful people.

As Hunt’s colleague, Hartman was thrilled for her recent promotion, but he sorely felt her absence around the PEWSS department. “When she had to stop coming to department meetings, I felt this huge void,” Hartman said. “It was like the wind was taken out of our sails. I felt like we should do something.”

That something is the “Dr. Dee Hunt Scholarship,” a tribute to Hunt’s passion for students. The scholarship almost never happened because of Hunt’s humility. “You know Doc,” Hartman says. “She never wants to do anything to draw attention to herself, so we’ve had to twist her arm just to let us do this in her honor. But since this will essentially be another way to help Gardner-Webb students for years to come, which is what Doc cares about most, she finally agreed.”

Greg Poe, a member of the running group and director of planned giving at Gardner-Webb, spoke with Hunt about her vision for the scholarship, and came away quite impressed. “Doc has a particular desire to help upperclassmen whose financial situation has changed and who need a little more assistance to continue studying at Gardner-Webb. That attention to detail, and that desire to help a particular group who sometimes can go overlooked, just speaks volumes about how much she cares for this University,” Poe said.

To honor that vision, the Dr. Dee Hunt Scholarship will be a need-based fund intended for students who have completed at least 60 credit hours with a 2.8 grade point average (GPA) or better. The fund must raise \$25,000 before it can be administered, a sum the GWU

runners began chasing this spring. Nine runners completed either the Hickory Charity Chase or other half marathons this spring, raising nearly \$1,000 toward Doc's scholarship, and even more has already been pledged for the fall.

While the group hopes others will pitch in to raise the needed \$25,000, it is fitting that a running group is the primary catalyst for Hunt's scholarship. After all, inspiring people to greater physical, intellectual, and spiritual fitness is Hunt's legacy as an educator. The group has changed numerous lives like that of Dr. Mary Alice Hodge, a professor of nursing at Gardner-Webb. Until this fall, Hodge had never run in her life, but she completed the Charity Chase on her birthday and ran into her family's arms at the finish. "The experience was more rewarding than I could have imagined," Hodge says. "From the minute I arrived at the event the excitement was almost overwhelming, and then when I finished, I loved knowing I had accomplished something so meaningful, and that I had supported such a worthwhile cause as the Doc Hunt scholarship."

The group will train for yet another half marathon next semester—Charlotte's Corporate Cup Half Marathon—but Hartman insists that the group is also open to people who do not aspire to complete long races. "We're not exclusive. Fitness and fellowship are what it's all about. Whether you're an ultra marathoner, or someone who has never run and has no interest in a long race, you can still come out and enjoy the fellowship with other runners and walkers."

"We're out here to achieve things we've never achieved before," Hartman added, "to help people accomplish their fitness goals, but we also want to remember we're running for a higher purpose—for spiritual and physical fellowship with one another, and for whatever specific cause we choose to support. Until we raise all the funds, that cause will be to honor Doc through this scholarship."

For more information about the Dr. Dee Hunt Scholarship fund or to donate, contact Greg Poe at 704-974-1740, or at gpoe@gardner-webb.edu, or [click here](#) to access an online donation form. Simply select "other" in the "Give To" tab, and enter "Dr. Dee Hunt Scholarship."

For more information about the Gardner-Webb running group, contact Jeff Hartman at 704-406-3202, or atjhartman@gardner-webb.edu.