

# Upstate Forever

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## UPSTATE FOREVER'S ANNUAL AWARDS HONOR CONSERVATION, SUSTAINABILITY CHAMPIONS

David Shi to Deliver Keynote Address at Upstate Forever Event

WHO: Upstate Forever and seven award winners, detailed below

WHAT: The ForeverGreen Annual Awards Luncheon

WHERE: The Westin Poinsett, 120 S. Main Street, Greenville, SC 29601

WHEN: Thursday, February 4, 11:30am-1:00pm

COST: \$50 per person, \$500 for a table of 8

Upstate Forever presents the ForeverGreen Annual Awards Luncheon, an event that honors individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions in the fields of conservation, air and water quality, sustainable development, public service and volunteer work in the Upstate. The luncheon takes place on Thursday, February 4 at the Westin Poinsett from 11:30am-1:30pm. The program will include lunch, the award presentation, and a keynote address from award winner Dr. David Shi. This year's award winners are:

- Land Conservation Champion: Dianne Culbertson
- Clean Water Champion: Dr. Larry Dyck
- Sustainable Communities Champion: Mary Black Foundation
- Clear Skies Champion: City of Clemson
- Public Servant of the Year: Rep. Michael Pitts
- Volunteer of the Year: Jennifer Kouyoumjian
- Extraordinary Achievement: Dr. David Shi

Land Conservation Champion Dianne Culbertson has not only protected her own properties but also advocated for the protection of additional significant lands in her area. Culbertson and her son Chad conceived of the idea of the "Warrior Mountain Heritage Preserve Corridor" that would connect the 180-acre Timber Creek Farm which she owns with the Burns tract, an 800-acre farm. The latter is protected by a conservation easement

held by the Upper Savannah Land Trust, while Upstate Forever holds the easement on Timber Creek Farm. This year she took a huge step toward completing the corridor by acquiring the 297-acre Warrior Mountain, a historic monadnock known locally as the Little Knob. At the end of the year Upstate Forever was honored to sign a conservation easement with Culbertson, ensuring the permanent protection of the Warrior Mountain tract.

Clean Water Champion Larry Dyck has worked tirelessly and effectively in advocating for the restoration of Twelve Mile River and the cleanup of PCB contamination in Lake Hartwell. Dyck, a former professor of biological sciences at Clemson University, is a member of the board of directors of both the Lake Hartwell Association and the Pickens Soil and Water Conservation District.

Mary Black Foundation, the Sustainable Communities Champion, has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to improving the design, livability and quality of the built environment. In 2002, recognizing the critical link between lack of physical activity and public health, the MBF became one of the very few foundations in the Southeast to adopt “active living” as one of its funding priorities.

Clear Skies Champion the City of Clemson has shown outstanding leadership on energy and climate change issues. In 2008, City of Clemson Mayor Larry Abernathy became one of only seven South Carolina mayors to sign the U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. In so doing, he publicly committed the City to reducing its carbon footprint. Mayor Abernathy appointed a Green Ribbon Committee to generate a plan for sustainability for the City of Clemson, with particular attention to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and to develop civic policy recommendations for the City related to energy conservation and waste reduction, greenhouse gas reduction, green building, land use and development programs, and education and outreach programs.

Michael Pitts, a member of the South Carolina House of Representatives representing District 14, is Public Servant of the Year for his outstanding leadership on water quality issues in our region and state. Pitts was a strong supporter of Upstate Forever's Saving Lake Greenwood campaign throughout 2009.

Volunteer of the Year Jennifer Kouyoumjian enthusiastically volunteered her talents in design and layout to assembling a collection of the best writings of Upstate Forever board and staff members. The beautiful finished product, "The Best of Upstate Forever," was published last year and is available on our website and at The Open Book.

Dr. David Shi, who is retiring as President of Furman University after a 15-year term, is the recipient of Upstate Forever's Award for Extraordinary Achievement. Shi has been a visionary leader for the sustainability movement in the United States. In the mid-1990s, before many had heard of sustainability, he began laying the foundation for making Furman a national leader in the field. His efforts have truly been transformative—today sustainability is fully integrated into every aspect of life on the Furman campus.

Tickets are \$50 per person or \$500 for a table of 8. To purchase tickets, contact LinningsmoakCrawford Public Relations at (864) 235-8330 or [kate@linningsmoakcrawford.com](mailto:kate@linningsmoakcrawford.com).

Upstate Forever is a non-profit, membership-based organization that promotes sensible growth and the protection of special places in the nine-county Upstate region. They have three main programs: Land Trust, Clean Air and Water, and Sustainable Communities. Visit [www.upstateforever.org](http://www.upstateforever.org) for more information.

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