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Upstate Forever plans honors

UPSTATE FOREVER'S FOREVER-GREEN Annual Awards Luncheon recognizes individuals and organizations for significant contributions in the fields of conservation, air and water quality, sustainable development, public service and volunteer work in the Upstate. This year's event will be held at Embassy Suites in Greenville on Thursday, February 3 at 11:30 a.m. The presenting sponsors are BMW and the Community Journals, whose generous support we deeply appreciate.

Our "ultimate keynote" speaker is Chuck Leavell, the pianist for the Rolling Stones and a well-respected authority on conservation. Following his speech, Leavell will play some of his favorite songs.

Here are the award winners who will be recognized at the luncheon:

Tommy Wyche, Extraordinary Achievement. Wyche's determined, passionate and creative leadership for nearly 40 years is responsible for one of the most significant conservation achievements in United States history—the protection of over 100,000 acres of the Blue Ridge Mountains in South Carolina.

Rick Danner, Public Service. Elected Mayor of Greer in 2000 and now in his third term, Danner has been the visionary leader of the dramatic revitalization of Greer's downtown. Danner's leadership extends beyond Greer—he is an active proponent of regionalism and alternative transportation and recently served as President of the Municipal Association of South Carolina.

Pickens County, Clear Skies Champion. Pickens County now powers its entire truck fleet with biodiesel fuel. The county collects cooking oil from 20 schools and 40 businesses and uses its custom-built facility to convert the oil into a B60 mix for the trucks. The biodiesel produces 78% less carbon dioxide emissions than regular diesel fuel and is free of sulfur and aromatics.

Naturaland Trust, Land Conservation Champion. Established by Tommy Wyche in 1973, Naturaland Trust is the second oldest land trust in South Carolina, and its sole focus has been on protecting the state's spectacular mountains.

Dr. Dave Hargett, Clean Water

IN MY OWN WORDS

BY LEON PATTERSON

Champion. Hargett, an environmental consultant, has worked tirelessly to protect and improve water quality throughout the Upstate. These efforts include leadership of the Saluda-Reedy Watershed Consortium, the Lake Conestee project, and the Partners for Trout initiative. Hargett has also been a key partner in Upstate Forever's work on protecting and improving water quality in the North and South Saluda Rivers.

Dr. Frank Powell, Sustainable Communities Champion. Powell, professor of health and exercise science at Furman University, has been the pioneering advocate for environmental sustainability and conservation at the university for over 30 years. His accomplishments include Furman's first environmentally sensitive building (the Eco-Cottage), expanded course work on the environment, the Cliffs Cottage, and the construction of all new and renovated buildings on campus in accordance with LEED standards.

Rick Huffman, Volunteer of the Year. Huffman is the founder and president of Earth Design Inc., which specializes in cost-effective and environmentally responsible landscaping. He is also one of the country's leading experts on native plants. Despite a full schedule with his business and other nonprofit work, Huffman has done it all for Upstate Forever, including speaking at many of our events without charge, maintaining the native plant landscaping and green roof at our office in Greenville, and lobbying in Columbia for conservation-friendly legislation.

Tickets are \$50 per person and include a delicious lunch, and sponsorships are also available. To purchase tickets or become a sponsor, contact Kate McHugh at Crawford Strategy, kate@crawfordstrategy.com, 232-2302.

Leon Patterson is Chairman of the Board of Directors of Upstate Forever. He can be reached at lpatterson@palmettobank.com.



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