

Upstate Forever announces awards

Upstate Forever's Annual Awards recognize 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.



In My Own Words

By Brad Wyche

For many years, these awards have been presented at the annual meeting of our members. But because the awards are so important and the winners so deserving, we have long wanted to present them at a separate and more visible event.

This year, with the generous support of Sealevel Inc. and the Community Journals, we are able to do so. The ForeverGreen Annual Awards Luncheon, which is open to the entire community, will be held at the Westin Poinsett in Greenville on Thursday, Feb. 4 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

The 2009 award winners are a diverse and dedicated group who have worked tirelessly to make the Upstate a greener,

cleaner and more sustainable region.

Land conservation champion Dianne Culbertson not only has protected her own properties in the Gray Court area but also conceived with her son, Chad, the idea of the Warrior Mountain Heritage Preserve Corridor.

At the end of last year Upstate Forever was honored to sign a conservation easement with Culbertson, ensuring the permanent protection of a key property in the corridor – the 297-acre Warrior Mountain tract.

Clean water champion Dr. Larry Dyck has been a relentless and compelling advocate for effective measures to address the PCB contamination in Twelve Mile River and Lake Hartwell. He is also leading the charge for the removal of the third and final dam on the river, which would restore the natural free-flowing condition of the entire watershed.

The Mary Black Foundation, our 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 Foundation became one of the

very few foundations in the Southeast to adopt "active living" as one of its funding priorities.

The City of Clemson, our clear skies champion, has shown outstanding leadership on energy and climate change issues. In 2008, Clemson Mayor Larry Abernathy became one of only seven South Carolina mayors to sign the U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement.

Last year the Clemson City Council approved the first climate action plan in the Upstate, which addresses important issues such as energy conservation, waste reduction, green building, greenhouse gas reduction, land use and development, and education and outreach.

Mike Pitts, who represents District 14 in the South Carolina House of Representatives, is our public servant of the year for his outstanding leadership on water quality issues in our region and throughout the state. Pitts has been a strong supporter of Upstate Forever's Saving Lake Greenwood campaign.

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 Web site 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 our rarely given but richly deserved extraordinary achievement award. Shi has been a visionary leader for the sustainability movement in the United States.

In the mid-1990s, before most people had even heard of sustainability, he began laying the foundation for making Furman a national leader in the field. His efforts have been truly transformative – today sustainability is fully integrated into every aspect of life on the Furman campus.

After receiving his award, Shi will deliver the keynote address, The Recession's Silver Lining: More Sustainable Living, a speech you will not want to miss.

Please join us to recognize and congratulate this amazing group of champions. Tickets are \$50 per person and include a delicious lunch; a table can be purchased for \$500. To purchase tickets, contact LinningsmoakCrawford Public Relations at 235-8330 or kate@linningsmoakcrawford.com. ■

Brad Wyche is the executive director of Upstate Forever. He can be reached at bwyche@upstate-forever.org or 250-0500.

1/29/10 The Greenville Journal

Retiring Furman President David Shi will be keynote speaker and award winner for Upstate Forever's first Awards Luncheon at the Westin Poinsett downtown on Feb. 4.

Shi is stepping down as Furman's chief after 15 years. He will be given Upstate Forever's Extraordinary Achievement award for his work transforming Furman's campus into a model of sustainability.

When he took office in the mid-1990s most Americans had never heard of sustainability, today the Furman campus is considered a model for development that is green, sustainable, and integrated into all aspects of the university.

The luncheon will be held from 11:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. at a cost of \$50 per person, or \$500 for a table seating eight.

Other honorees include: Dianne Culbertson, Land Conservation Champion; Larry Dyck, Clean Water Champion; Mary Black Foundation, Sustainable Communities Champion; City of Clemson, Clear Skies Champion; Rep. Michael Pitts, Public Servant of the Year; and Jennifer Kouyoumjian, Volunteer of the Year.

For tickets, contact 235-8330 or kate@linningsmoakcrawford.com.



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