

An Independent Newspaper Founded in 1885

In our view

World Champions

When Upstate Forever, a non-profit organization that promotes sensible development, sustainable resources, and land protection, announced its annual Forever Green Awards earlier this month in Greenville, they handed two of them to Laurens County residents.

Dianne Culbertson of Gray Court was declared a Land Conservation Champion after she and her son, Chad, agreed to grant a conservation easement for their 297-acre Warrior Mountain property — protecting it from commercial, industrial, and residential development. South Carolina Rep. Mike Pitts of Ware Shoals was named Public Servant of the Year for his support of Upstate Forever's Saving Lake Greenwood campaign in 2009 and for his leadership statewide on water quality issues.

These individuals — our neighbors — are testament to the commitments that are essential to preserving our environment. In other words, they don't just preach that we ought to recycle or scold if we drive large gas-guzzling automobiles. They walk the walk.

When the Culbertson family began purchasing land in recent years, they did so as an investment. But instead of investing in land in order to develop it and make money — which they would have every right to do — they did so to invest in a future whereby the land would be a refuge for wildlife and the wilderness.

When Pitts got involved in the Saving Lake Greenwood campaign, he did so knowing he would have to expend some political currency bringing attention to water quality issues not only in the area where his constituents live but also throughout the state. By doing so, Pitts likely had to step on the toes of more development-friendly interests. However, by embracing water quality as a somewhat non-negotiable commodity, he is taking up the cause of an essential ingredient for life itself — H₂O.

We are justifiably proud to be home to these environmental champions — defenders of the land and its resources. We are especially proud that they are, again, people who practice what they preach and have taken action for the causes they espouse.

We are also thankful that all they have done benefits us, as well. What they do for Planet Earth they do right here in Laurens County. They are an inspiration to us and hopefully to more local residents who share their vision for sensible growth and a sustainable community.