

NEWS RELEASE – May 2, 2011

By Marie R. Harris

Danville Community College's Alumni Association honored 2011 Outstanding Alumni honorees after the Foundation Board meeting May 2 in formal ceremonies. One honoree resides in Danville, one lives in Caswell County, NC; a third resides in Pittsylvania County and a fourth was a Danville resident previous to his death. Honorees include Susan A. Escue, Assistant Administrator at Danville Regional Medical Center; Charles Haynsworth III, partner in Office Plus Office Centre; James T. Emerson, benefactor for "J. T. and Minnie Maude" Charitable Trust and former investor; and Ronald Thompson, entrepreneur and owner of Housing Management & Realty, Inc.

Shannon Hair, DCC Foundation Director, commented during the ceremony, "As we honor our Outstanding Alumni today, let us not forget, our Alumni define who we are as a college. These same Alumni represent the integrity of our former and current teaching faculty and last but not least, they have demonstrated in their fields of expertise the support our college staff has made in their lives by their success. Today's honorees are no different."

As the first honoree, Susan A. Escue, Assistant Administrator at Danville Regional Medical Center, attained both an Associate in Business Management and a Certificate in Medical Terminology in 1990 from Danville Community College. In the nominating materials, Escue's dedication to DCC and her family was emphasized, "While a student at Danville Community College, Susan served on numerous committees from professional to personal. Professional committees included Employee Recognition, Board Member of Caswell Family Medical Center and teacher of the children's program with Community Baptist Church. She served as president of North Elementary School's PTA and coached her daughter's softball team for two years.'

Having held a full-time job while attending Danville Community College, Escue continued the practice of full-time work and study as she pursued her four-year degree. In 1999 she graduated from Averett University with a B.S. in Business Administration. Pursuing double master's degrees at Pfeiffer University, Escue completed an M.A. in Health Administration and an M.A. in Business Administration in 2007.

"With me," Escue explained, "healthcare seemed a natural career choice. I chose this multi-disciplinary educational pathway because of the way the areas complement each other. I really enjoy the healthcare industry and feel really blessed to be able to serve my community in this role."

An employee of Danville Regional Medical since 1979, Escue has gained a broad view of the facility's operations, both business and administrative. She has performed duties in Data Processing, Accounts Payable, Accounting, Risk Management, Patient Relations, Physician Services, Physician Recruitment and Volunteer Management. Susan is also a graduate of the Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce Leadership Southside VII and Thomas Sorenson Institute.

Susan is thankful for all the support that she has received from family and friends. "I could not have achieved the successes I have without my constant companion, my Lord and Savior. When times have been difficult he has always been by my side saying 'You can do this.' I am also thankful to my husband and daughter for their support while I pursued my dream while being a wife and mother," said Escue. "My mother taught me to believe in myself, and I could do anything I put my mind to. I am thankful to her for that." Others that have influenced and encouraged her throughout her career are Brad Sexuaer, Dr. Michael Moore and the team at Dan-

ville Regional Medical Center. “I appreciate the support and encouragement that Eric Deaton, Danville Regional CEO, provides me on a daily basis,” said Susan. “I am honored to have the privilege to serve our patients with a servant-leadership team.”

Today as the Assistant Administrator, she has responsibilities for Environmental Services, Laundry, Pastoral Care, Patient Advocacy, Volunteers, Dietary and Childcare. Escue has assisted in the development of the Family Medicine and Internal Medicine Residency Program as well as the Strategy of the Certification of Public Need. With others on staff, she has helped accomplish the transition of Hospitalist Management to Apogee (the hospitalists’ program) and helped with development of Faith-Based quarterly meetings. “The key to life is to serve others,” Escue said. “It is exciting to be a part of a caring team, to serve our patients, families, physicians and employees.”

Beyond day-to-day responsibilities, Escue works with multiple health fairs for community employers and service groups throughout the Danville, Pittsylvania County, and Caswell and Rockingham Counties in North Carolina. As an involved community member, Escue is active in the Danville Pittsylvania Chamber of Commerce while also devoting time to the Alzheimer’s Walk and Relay for Life.

Charles Haynsworth III, a 1978 graduate in Business Administration and a partner in Office Plus Business Centre, is the second honoree from Danville Community College. He entered the family-owned business, Haynsworth’s Inc., as a part-time employee in 1972. By 1979, Haynsworth was selecting audio product lines, conducting promotion events with manufacturers and evaluating sales. Aware of the technology expansion on the horizon for every business and home, he made the decision to eliminate audio sales as Haynsworth’s Inc. entered the computer business, a wise move in retrospect.

This decision was only one of numerous key decisions Haynsworth made over ensuing years for the family business dating from 1937. Office products were continuing to evolve so Haynsworth’s had to evolve with them. By September 1995, after becoming president of Haynsworth’s Inc. in 1994 after his father’s death, Haynsworth and his partner and uncle, William Haynsworth, “made significant investments in the business, which ultimately increased sales and lowered internal costs of doing business without additional staff.” Innovation continued under his leadership.

By 1997 “We had completed re-engineering the business inside and out with a NEW business name to market ourselves as a national image ‘big box store.’” The business name became Office Plus Business Centre.

Integration of a web site with a new building façade continued the transition. With customer incentives, the web site sales moved to almost one-fourth of supply sales. While many home town businesses were in decline, Office Plus Business Centre continued its success story through Haynsworth and his partner’s leadership and the loyalty of long-term employees.

He gives credit for success to “The founding business principles, ethics, and customer service instilled in me early by my father and uncle. My grandfather set standards for his sons, which are now instilled in my sons. As a Christian businessman, I know the best guide for handling myself is through the direction of God’s word in the Bible, which I found was the basis of my grandfather, father and uncle’s characters. It is my goal to continue leading the business with the same character of those prior to me, providing an excellent workplace with staff that care about our customers and workers.”

Caring about customers, which in turn promotes business growth and success, led to local and state honors. In May 2010 he received the Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Com-

merce *Enduring Entrepreneur of the Year* award. In October 2010, he received a finalist award from the Tayloe Murphy Center at the Darden School of Business at the University of Virginia for inspiring success and being a steadfast business in a difficult economic area.

Since that time, the Darden School of Business has been working with Haynsworth on case studies detailing the challenges and decisions that were made during difficult times in the office products industry. These studies will be used for business studies at The Institute for Advanced Learning and Research and the Darden School of Business graduate school at UVA.

Concerning a career path recognized by the Darden School of Business, Haynsworth commented, "I count it an honor and challenge to continue the family business, especially having the opportunity to work with my two sons Charles and John, and wife Lynn who all work at Office Plus Business Centre on Memorial Drive."

Locally Haynsworth is a member of the Danville Rotary Club, currently serving as the club president. Because of his contributions over more than 30 years of membership, Haynsworth has been honored as a Paul Harris Fellow on three occasions and recognized as a Rotary International Benefactor and a Double Sustainer.

Haynsworth currently serves on the Gateway Health Alliance Board and on the Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce where he is the Board Representative for the Business Development Committee. In 2012 he will assume duties of Chairman of the Board.

A Scoutmaster for seven years during his sons' youth, Haynsworth pursues diverse interests including auto racing, barbecue cook offs and road and mountain bike cycling. He currently holds competition licenses for BMW CCA Racing and National Auto Sport Association racing. He is certified as a driving instructor through BMW CCA Tarheel Chapter and NASA. When not competing on the raceway, Haynsworth is competing on the barbeque circuit with his Pig Me Cooking Team sanctioned for competition through the Kansas City Barbeque Society. For the past eight years, he and associates have tried their hands at creating winning barbeque.

The third honoree, James Thomas Emerson (JT), deceased, a Danville graduate of VPI-Danville, has made a contribution to Danville, Pittsylvania County and the surrounding community through the formation of the J. T. – Minnie Maude Charitable Trust, a trust that will continue in perpetuity. He lived a quiet, anonymous life, but his legacy will benefit many lives with educational scholarships and through grants to charitable organizations now and in the future.

Born October 6, 1922, James, who died June 14, 2005, was the third of eight children. After living in Danville for several years, Emerson's father moved the family to a farm in Caswell County, North Carolina, where tobacco farming was the family's main income source.

After a short time on the farm, the untimely death of Emerson's oldest brother and father, eight months apart in 1939-40, left his mother, Minnie Maude, with seven children to rear and a farm to manage alone. During her struggles on the farm and later in the Stokesland area of Danville, Emerson learned to work hard and as his mother said, "Take care of your pennies, the dollars will take care of themselves."

Emerson's first job was at Parrish Johnson Electric Shop in Danville where he worked sixty hours a week for a salary of \$8.00. After finishing Ruffin High School, he voluntarily joined the Army Air Force with the dream of being a pilot. Physical limitations prevented him from becoming a pilot so he trained as an electrician and served at the Marianna, Florida, flight training school during World War II.

Upon returning to Danville, by working and making use of the GI bill, Emerson was able to attend VPI-Danville, now Danville Community College. He furthered his education at the University of Alabama where he graduated in 1951 with an industrial engineering degree.

Emerson started his career as a salesman for Honeywell, later becoming a buyer for Allied Chemical. After Allied, Emerson embarked as an independent contractor, working for companies, including Proctor and Gamble, Kellogg and Mobay Chemical.

During the late 1950s, he became very interested in the stock market, which began developing his lifelong passion for investing. Emerson was a risk taker but always maintained a long term approach. His first rule of investing, as one family member recalls, was to “Play the stock market just like you play poker, don’t risk anymore than you can afford to lose.” Emerson’s success in investing in the stock market was driven by his own extensive personal research, not relying solely on someone else’s investment advice.

Emerson’s ultimate passion in life was the love he had for his family and close friends. He had no personal interest in material things for himself, was oblivious to what others thought of him, but was always there to help family and friends, taking particular interest in their financial fitness, health issues and education. Family members recalled how Emerson “bailed out” several friends and some family members when they ran into financial difficulties. Many often used Emerson as a source of financial advice, knowing he always had their best interests at heart.

Emerson was always very interested in young family member’s educational success and was quick to reward for good grades. His proudest moments were seeing his family members graduate from high school and institutions of higher learning. Emerson’s belief was that education would not guarantee a young person’s success, but it would give him or her the “ability to compete.”

Emerson’s lifetime realization of the importance of having the “ability to compete,” whether collectively or on an individual basis, prompted him, through his final wishes, to form the J. T. – Minnie Maude Charitable Trust. Emerson directed that the Trust’s primary goal be to provide higher educational opportunities through financial assistance to deserving and needy students in our area. Because of Emerson’s generous nature, he instructed that the Trust’s secondary goal would be to assist the residents of Danville and Pittsylvania County through grants to charitable organizations.

After Emerson died, the Trust was formed in October 2007. Fred Webb, Executive Director, explained, “Currently the Trust is working on the fourth cycle of “Traditional” scholarships. These are for students who have not had a break in their educations and are seeking undergraduate degrees. The scholarships are generally renewable for up to four years of total funding if the students do what is required to maintain their scholarships. “Non-Traditional” scholarships are also available for students who are returning to school after a break or for those seeking a post-graduate degree. All scholarship recipients are required to perform twenty hours of community service in order to renew. This requirement, as of April 2011, has accumulated into more than 22,000 hours of service. Since 2007 the J. T. – Minnie Maude Charitable Trust has awarded approximately \$2.2 million in scholarships.

The Trust has awarded another \$2.48 million in local charitable grants through March of 2011. It has provided about \$390,000 for out-of-school services, \$160,000 for basic needs, \$900,000 for various educational programs and services, \$590,000 for emergency services and \$220,000 for healthcare.

The fourth honoree, Ronald Thompson, is also a graduate of VPI-Danville. After graduation, he sold real estate under Hedrick Johnson Realty. In the mid 1970s he went into

business for himself, forming Housing Management & Realty, Inc. Through this company he helped develop properties for lower income and elderly in North Carolina and Virginia.

Locally, in 1982, he was a partner in the development of Heritage Towers, a 100-unit apartment complex for the elderly and handicapped which operates under the Section 8 program. Today he is still the Managing General Partner, overseeing the day-to-day management of the complex.

As an entrepreneur, Thompson applied principles learned early at the local college. He explained, "While attending VPI-Danville, one teacher that was very influential in my life was my Accounting and Economics teacher, Kenneth Neathery. He helped to create an interest that developed throughout the remainder of my career and assisted me in the various businesses that I became involved with."

In 1977 Earl Wyatt and Thompson formed Thompson and Wyatt, Inc., a land development company, which developed several sub-divisions in Danville and Pittsylvania County, an undertaking that added many jobs and income to the local economy. Some of the larger subdivision included in the city are Robinwood and Sherwood Acres. In Pittsylvania County are Mt. Zion Acres, Cedar Ridge and in the Mt. Hermon community, Bridge-Wood.

Thompson has served his community well as a businessman and entrepreneur. As a behind-the-scenes worker for those less fortunate, he has also served his community in various quiet ways.

He served on committees at his children's schools, often helping in fundraising. An involved parent, he made resources available for his children's after-school activities that were beyond the schools' capacities to provide and opened his home with his wife for numerous activities for school organizations. On two occasions, they hosted the full editorial staff of *The Chatterbox* newsmagazine at George Washington High School for meetings and cookouts, which is just one example of their involvement and generosity. Another is their contribution of many items to sell to help underwrite the fall journalism conference in cities far beyond Danville.

In his outside duties he is both a deacon and the church treasurer for Old Mill Primitive Baptist Church on St. Rd. 729 in Pittsylvania County.