Sam Watkins Award Presentation

Our award winner has been volunteering on just about every level of local community service since his retirement: a supporter of area youth programs, an advocate for improved education, a civic leader, a promoter of the arts, a financial backer for non-profit causes, and a champion for quality medical care in our community.

Our award recipient is an active member of the Henderson Rotary Club. He has served as Club President and taken an active role to raise funds for club projects, including scholarship awards to high school seniors.

He believes that education is the key to success for our young people and volunteers his time to work with our area schools. He is heavily involved as a volunteer with the Vance County Public School Foundation. Stepping in as Chairman of the Foundation Board as a critical time, he has continued in that volunteer leadership role for over 15 + years. He has been instrumental in making sure the Foundation’s primary fundraiser, “Arts Alive” became a reality and continued each year. Under his leadership and with his active involvement, the Vance County Public School Foundation has supported and awarded student achievement, scholastic growth in the schools, teacher recruitment and retention efforts, and advanced innovative programs such as STEM. His education endeavors also involve being active in the support and promotion of the Henderson Collegiate School.

In other areas of youth volunteerism, our Sam Watkins Award Recipient, was heavily involved in the Boy Scouts of America organization. He has given many hours of his time to further the advancement of scouting by serving on the board of directors of the Boy Scouts Occoneechee Council. Not only was he an advisor in this role, he was hands-on and active with his efforts to raise needed funding, and offered a personal approach to helping start new cub scout and boy scout units in Vance County. Our recipient was awarded one of scouting’s highest honors from the Occoneechee Council with the George Watkins-Awahili District Citizen of the Year.

He has a community spirit that is like no other. He is truly concerned about the welfare of our Vance County citizens and works tirelessly to serve on community boards and committees to further the work necessary to ensure that our quality of life is improved. One particular area that he works to keep viable in our community is Maria Parham Health. He has seen first-hand the importance of having a quality local hospital remain in our small, rural county to serve our citizens health needs. Because of his strong push for available medical care, he volunteers his time to serve on the Maria Parham Health Board of Trustees, serving in leadership positions. He has volunteered on the hospital’s medical staff credentialing committee and the patient safety and clinical quality committee.

He is a friend to the arts in our area. He volunteers his time to offer guidance and leadership to the Embassy Cultural Center Foundation and supports the McGregor Hall Performing Arts Center by being a patron, a financial contributor, and by his attendance of the performances offered there.

He is a retired military officer and retired businessman who currently serves on the Vance County Board of Commissioners.

The requirements for the Sam Watkins Award state that the participant must be a Vance County resident, have a clear passion for Vance County, visible proven leadership, a visionary, strong supporter of Vance County and provide diverse support to Vance County and its citizens. All of these things express how Sam Watkins supported the community himself. Every year we look at candidates who Sam would look down and say “Well Done, My Friend.”

I know that all of you today will agree that our recipient qualifies in all respects of the award’s specifications. Formerly named the 2020 Citizen of the Year by the Henderson-Vance Chamber of Commerce, I am proud to announce that Col. Archie B Taylor Jr is the deserving recipient of the 2022 Sam Watkins Award.