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291 Volunteer awards presented to Johnston Co. residents

Governor and Mrs. James B. Hunt, Jr. presented the annual Awards for Outstanding Volunteer Service for the central region, Tuesday evening, November 22. 222 awards were given to individuals and groups from 31 central

counties, before a large crowd at the Lee County Civic Center.

Judith C. Bell, Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Citizen Affairs, served as Master of Ceremonies. The invocation was provided by The Reverend Eric N. Davidson, Pastor of Cummock Baptist Church of Sanford. Entertainment was provided by the Triton High School Showchoir of Erwin, a group of twenty students. The group was directed by Carolyn Dorman, and Duffy Johnson served as guest director.

Debbie Davidson of the Enrichment Center of Lee County, assisted Governor and Mrs. Hunt in the presentation of the awards. "North Carolina's volunteer force is a great treasure," Governor Hunt said. "Tonight, it is my privilege to honor you and to thank you for your involvement in a wide variety of community and school-based programs. Because government cannot fully address the pressing needs of our people, volunteers continue to lead the way."

The Governor's Awards for Outstanding Volunteer Service were first awarded in 1979 by Governor Hunt; 1994 marks the 16th consecutive year that citizens have been honored for giving exemplary service to their communities on a volunteer basis.



ov. and Mrs. James B. Hunt, Jr. presented the annual Awards for Outstanding Volunteer Service, central region, on Nov. 22. The following Johnston County recipients were on hand to receive their award: (l to r) Richard George Baroody, Evelyn

Ruth Ragan received for Doris Cannon, Sallie Evans of Pine Level, Wanda Johnson of Four Oaks, Preston A. Price, Eula Mae Strickland of Selma and W. Scott Waterhouse of Smithfield. Not shown is recipient M. Durwood Stephenson of Smithfield.

NEWS HERALD
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Respect for ministers has not diminished over time



In recent years the clergy has been the subject of much controversy.

Some people have said they've lost respect for those men of God because of the actions of a few.

Those people who have said such things, I suppose, have never had the benefit of growing up in a rural part of the state where small churches make knowing the pastor easier.

When I say small churches, understand I mean every church located in the confines of the Roanoke-Chowan area, because we're all small enough to be families in our churches.

I am glad to be able to say I haven't lost my respect for the ministry or the men and women God has called to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I guess the main reason for that is the fact that I've had some of the best pastors and staff ministers anyone could have asked for.

When I first started going to church, at age three, the Rev. Raymond Hoggard was pastor of the church we attended which was Ebenezer Assembly of God near Aulander.

Growing up with Rev. Hoggard as my pastor

for more than 10 years, I didn't really even know what it was like to have anyone else as my pastor.

I was taught to respect my pastor and he gave me no reason not to. There was a spirit he brought into that church, even when he returned for a visit after taking another pastorate.

A few times while I was younger and then more as I got older, I attended my grandmother's church in Askewville. There the Rev. R.O. Denton has been pastor since the late 1970's.

He has worked tirelessly, he and his wife, to see the church grow not only in numbers but by adding additional seating in the sanctuary, new Sunday School classrooms and a family life center.

Then, when I was old enough to attend church on my own, I started going to church at Cashie Baptist Church in Windsor.

As I've detailed in this column before, it was there I met one of the men I respect the most in this world, the Rev. Jack W. Byrd.

As pastor of Cashie for nearly 20 years, Rev. Byrd led the church through some of the best and worst times any congregation can face.

He was always a pillar of strength and always did what he thought was in the best interest of his congregation.

After retiring in 1992, Rev. Byrd took an interim pastorate at Center Grove Baptist Church near Powellsville. He remains in that position today.

Also during my stay at Cashie I had the opportunity to work with and know two of the best when it comes to ministering to youth.

The Rev. John McGinnis and the Rev. Joel Langley each had their own unique style of ministry and I learned a lot from each of them.

In addition to these, I will never have respect the work of one man any more than I respect that of the Rev. Eric Davidson, pastor of Cum Knock Baptist Church near Sanford.

When I first met Rev. Davidson, he was Minister of Youth at Jonesboro Heights Baptist Church in Sanford. He was a "part-time" minister and worked full-time.

The energy he gave to the ministry was unmatched. It still is.

So, others can doubt God's use of men today as ministers. They can doubt sincerity and they can doubt calling. I can't.

Thanks to wonderful, God-called men like Raymond Hoggard, R.O. Denton, Jack Byrd, John McGinnis, Joel Langley and Eric Davidson, I know that God can still use ministers and I know they still deserve our respect and support.