



News & Trending

NEWS

H. MARTIN LANCASTER AWARDED HIGHEST HONOR BY STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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RALEIGH, N.C. – “Relentless,” is how Hilda Pinnix-Ragland, State Board of Community Colleges chair, describes President Emeritus H. Martin Lancaster. “I’m amazed he found time to accomplish so much.”

The latest accomplishment of Lancaster is to receive the prestigious I.E. Ready Award from the State Board of Community Colleges. The award was presented at the Day of Recognition Luncheon on Friday, November 21 at the RBC Center in Raleigh.

“I feel blessed, flattered and honored, especially to receive this from the State Board which hired me,” said Lancaster in accepting the award. He said the time he spent working for community colleges was “the best 11 years in my life and the most significant.” He also praised his wife, Alice, for the role she played in his success. “She is a full partner in everything I’ve ever done.”

Lancaster was instrumental in securing the passage of the 2000 Higher Education Bond Referendum that meant unprecedented capital support of \$600 million for community colleges. He worked closely with Erskine Bowles, president of the University of North Carolina, on numerous initiatives including 2+2 programs that allow students to earn four-year degrees while remaining in their communities. His efforts led to highly coordinated rapid response efforts to help laid-off workers and to strong cooperative relationships that have enhanced the biotechnology industry in North Carolina.

Martin Lancaster is currently Of Counsel with Smith, Anderson, Blount, Dorsett, Mitchell & Jernigan law firm. He is a Wayne County native, and graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with undergraduate and law degrees. In 1967 he became a Judge Advocate in the U.S. Navy, serving three years on active duty and then an active reservist until his retirement in November 1993. He was a member of the N.C. House of Representatives (1979 – 1987) and a member of the U.S. House of Representatives (1987-1995). He served in the Clinton administration as a Special Adviser to the President on Chemical Weapons and as Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) from 1996-1997. Lancaster became system president in July 1997 and retired in May 2008. His government experience served him well in communicating the needs of community colleges with the members of the General Assembly. His emphasis on global education led to an exchange program with colleges in Northern Ireland, the North Carolina Community College System helping to build the community college system in Thailand, and an honorary doctorate degree for himself from the University of Ulster in Northern Ireland. He also holds honorary degrees from Sandhills and South Piedmont Community Colleges. Lancaster established and curated the President’s Art Exhibition, now named after him. In 2003, he was elected Chair of the National Council of State Directors of Community Colleges. Lancaster and his wife, Alice, are members of White Memorial Presbyterian Church in Raleigh. They have two daughters and sons-in-

law, Ashley and Trent Templer and Mary and Christopher Lehrman, and three grandchildren, Ella Kathryn Templer, Elizabeth Pate Templer and Wade Franklin Lehrman.

The award is named for Isaac Epps Ready, the first state director of the Department of Community Colleges. It is the highest honor bestowed by the State Board of Community Colleges. The award recognizes individuals who have made important contributions to the establishment and growth of North Carolina's community colleges. Among the previous winners are James T. Broyhill, William C. Friday, William Dallas Herring, James Holshouser Jr., Phillip J. Kirk, Terry Sanford, and Robert W. Scott.

