

Leatherman to receive award for legislative leadership

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From local reports

GREENVILLE — State Sen. Hugh K. Leatherman, who represents Darlington and Florence counties in District 31, has been named the winner of the third annual David Wilkins Award for Excellence in Legislative Leadership. The award is sponsored by the Riley Institute at Furman University and will be presented to Leatherman at the annual Wilkins Award dinner in Columbia on Jan. 7. Former Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney will be the keynote speaker for the event.

The awards dinner will begin with a reception at 6 p.m. in the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center. David Wilkins, the former Speaker of the South Carolina House of Representatives and current U.S. Ambassador to Canada, will be in attendance, as will former U.S. Secretary of Education and S.C. Gov. Richard W. Riley. Tickets are \$125 per person, and can be reserved by calling (864) 235-8330.

The Wilkins award is given annually to a state legislator who “embodies the highest principles of leadership based on integrity, compassion, vision, civility and courage.” The winner is selected by a committee of business and community leaders, former legislators, political scientists and members of the South Carolina media. The two previous winners are Sen. John Drummond and Speaker of the House Bobby Harrell.

The Riley Institute at Furman is a non-partisan program affiliated with the university’s Department of Political Science. The institute created the David H. Wilkins Legislative Leadership Program in 2006.

“The selection committee chose Sen. Leatherman because he reflects the kind of quiet, thoughtful and courageous leadership that focuses on the needs of the people of South Carolina rather than on partisan advantage,” Don Gordon, executive director of the Riley Institute, said.

Leatherman, a Republican, was elected to the South Carolina Senate in November 1980. He serves as chairman of the powerful Senate Finance Committee, while also serving on the Senate Ethics, Interstate Cooperation, Labor, Commerce and Industry, Rules, State House and Transportation committees. He also serves as one of five members on the State Budget and Control Board, which oversees the state’s financial dealings on a monthly basis. A native of Lincoln County, N.C., Leatherman moved to Florence shortly after graduating from North Carolina State University. He began his career in public service in 1967 when he was elected to Quinby Town Council. He later served Quinby as mayor pro tempore (1971-76). He still operates several businesses in the Pee Dee, including his home-building construction company, LEACON.

Leatherman has received honorary doctorate degrees from Francis Marion University, the College of Charleston, the Medical University of South Carolina, The Citadel, Coastal Carolina University, the University of South Carolina, Clemson University and Lander University. The science building at Frances Marion is named in his honor and an endowed faculty chair at the university also bears his name. Florence-Darlington Technical College recently named a building on its new Southeastern Institute of Manufacturing and Technology campus in his honor.

He is married to Jean Leatherman and has six children and three grandchildren.

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