

Wilkins Legislative Award Dinner Program

WelcomeDavid E. Shi
President, Furman University

“America the Beautiful”Belltower Boys
Furman University

National AnthemJazmin Black '11
Furman University

Invocation Virginia C. Barfield
*Associate Academic Dean,
Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary
Columbia, South Carolina*

Remarks Richard W. Riley
*former United States Secretary of Education
former Governor of South Carolina*

Introduction of
Keynote SpeakerRobert W. Harrell, Jr.
*Speaker of the South Carolina
House of Representatives*

Keynote Address David H. Wilkins
United States Ambassador to Canada

Award Presentation.....Minor Mickel Shaw
President, Micco Corporation
Paula Harper Bethea
*Director of External Relations,
McNair Law Firm, P.A.*

ClosingDavid E. Shi

“God Bless America”Belltower Boys

*Special thanks to Siobhan McLaughlin from the
South Carolina Governor’s School for the Arts
and Humanities for providing the music during the
reception.*

David H. Wilkins



David H. Wilkins was nominated by President George W. Bush in 2005 to become the U.S. ambassador to Canada and was confirmed unanimously by the U.S. Senate on May 26, 2005. As the 21st United States Ambassador to Canada he has made it a priority to accentuate the positive relationship shared between the U.S. and Canada by emphasizing the nations' roles as NATO partners in fighting the war in Afghanistan and their longstanding and significant alliance in NORAD.

Wilkins has traveled throughout Canada, and he makes it a point to stop at every Canadian Forces Base to personally thank the troops for their service. He has also made it a priority to ensure Washington understands Canadian concerns by working tirelessly to encourage high-profile visits to Canada. He has welcomed to Canada such notable dignitaries as President George W. Bush, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Senators Hillary Clinton and John McCain.

Wilkins was elected to the South Carolina House of Representatives in 1980 and served for 25 years. He quickly rose through the ranks in the House of Representatives, serving six years as chairman of the House Judiciary Committee and two years as speaker pro tem before being elected speaker, a position he held for 11 years. He was the first Republican elected speaker of any legislative body in the South since the 1880s and retired as one of the longest serving speakers in the country.

A native of Greenville, South Carolina, David Wilkins graduated from Greenville High School and received his undergraduate degree from Clemson University and his law degree from the University of South Carolina School of Law. After service in the Army, he returned to Greenville where he practiced law for more than 30 years. David and his wife Susan have two sons, James and Robert. James teaches at Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina where he resides with his wife, Marnie. Robert practices law also in Greenville where he resides with his wife Stephanie and their newborn twins, Whit and Clary. The Wilkins are members of Greenville's First Baptist Church.

Gilda Cobb-Hunter



Representative Gilda Cobb-Hunter is an innovative and dynamic leader who has dedicated her life to helping people and standing up for what is right. Elected to the South Carolina State House of Representatives in 1992, Gilda Cobb-Hunter was the first African American woman in Orangeburg County elected to a statewide office and the first freshman representative appointed to the powerful House Ways and Means Committee. In 1997 she became the first person of color to lead a legislative caucus when she was elected house minority leader, a position she held for three years.

Cobb-Hunter has received numerous awards for her legislative leadership. She served as vice-chair of the African American History Monument Commission and led the effort to erect the first monument to African Americans on the grounds of any state capitol. She represents South Carolina as the national committeeperson to the Democratic National Committee, where she also serves as a member of the DNC's Executive Committee. Cobb-Hunter is the chair for both the National Black Caucus of State Legislators Youth Committee and the South Carolina Legislative Black Caucus' Health Committee.

Since 1985 she has been the executive director of CASA Family Systems, an agency serving victims of family violence and abuse in Orangeburg, Bamberg and Calhoun counties. She has worked at the state, regional and national levels on a variety of progressive issues aimed at making communities better places for working families to live.

Cobb-Hunter holds a B.S. in African American History from Florida A&M University, an M.A. in American history from Florida State University and is a licensed master social worker. She is a 1986 graduate of Leadership South Carolina, a 1996 graduate of the Arthur Flemming Leadership Institute and a 2001 Eleanor Roosevelt Global Leadership Fellow. In May 2007 she received an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from the Medical University of South Carolina.

She is married to Dr. Terry K. Hunter, executive director of FACETS, and they reside in Orangeburg.

The David H. Wilkins South Carolina Legislative Program

Former speaker of the S.C. House of Representatives David Wilkins left an indelible mark on the state's political landscape during his 25-year tenure in office. His widely acclaimed leadership and commitment to public service has become a benchmark standard for excellence for state legislators around the country.

Among other significant achievements, David Wilkins was elected president of the National Speakers Association and, in 2004, was awarded the National Conference of State Legislatures' Award for Excellence in State Legislative Leadership.

To honor and sustain his efforts to improve the quality of legislative activity in his home state, Furman University has created and is in the process of implementing the following programs:

Annual Wilkins Legislative Award Dinner

This annual event, held in Columbia, features nationally acclaimed speakers and the presentation of the Riley Institute's David H. Wilkins Award for Excellence in Legislative Leadership in South Carolina.

Recipients of the award are selected by a non-partisan/bi-partisan panel of distinguished scholars, former legislators and leaders from the public and private sectors. The award is presented to a member of the South Carolina House or Senate who best embodies the highest principles of leadership, integrity, compassion, vision and courage.

Wilkins Fellowships in South Carolina Legislative Affairs

The Wilkins Fellowships in State Legislative Affairs provide 12 to 15 Furman students with the opportunity to work in the South Carolina General Assembly or with an interest group or agency associated with the legislature. Wilkins Fellows live in Columbia and work Tuesday through Thursday for a twelve-week period while the legislature is in session. In this immersion experience, students meet South Carolina elected officials, listen to presentations made by legislative staff, agency personnel, and lobbyists, and attend receptions. They also enroll in courses taught by Glen A. Halva-Neubauer, a state politics specialist, which focus on state politics, legislative politics, and South Carolina public policy. Wilkins Fellows gain a sophisticated and nuanced understanding of the legislative process that comes from integrating theory and practice.

David H. Wilkins Chair in South Carolina Politics

This endowed professorship will enable Furman to offer more courses in state and local politics and provide a leading scholar as a resource for the development of legislative initiatives in South Carolina.

Past Award Winners

- 2007 Hugh K. Leatherman, South Carolina Senator
- 2006 Bobby Harrell, Speaker of the South Carolina House of Representatives
- 2005 John Drummond, South Carolina Senator and President Pro-Tem Emeritus

Richard W. Riley



Richard W. Riley, for whom the Riley Institute at Furman is named, is the former U. S. Secretary of Education (1993–2001) and former Governor of South Carolina (1979–1987). Secretary Riley currently is a senior partner in the law firm of Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough and its affiliate, EducationCounsel, with offices in South and North Carolina, Georgia, Boston, Chicago and Washington, D.C. He counsels clients and works with partners on complex business, governance, financial, legal, education, government process and advocacy matters for local, national and international clients.

With the full support of the firm, Riley remains an ambassador for improving education in the United States and abroad. He has been appointed distinguished professor at Furman, and serves as Advisory Board chair of the Richard W. Riley Institute of Government, Politics and Public Leadership. Riley has been named distinguished professor at the University of South Carolina, and the College of Education at Winthrop University bears his name, as does the College of Education and Leadership at Walden University. He also is a distinguished senior fellow at NAFSA: Association of International Educators in Washington, D.C. In addition, Riley serves in an advisory and collaborative capacity with several other entities across the nation and overseas that promote progressive education improvement.

Riley earned his bachelor's degree, *cum laude*, in political science from Furman in 1954 and received a J.D. from the University of South Carolina School of Law in 1959. He is the recipient of numerous education and other public service awards, as well as honorary degrees from universities and colleges in the United States and abroad. In 2008, Riley was named one of the Top 10 Cabinet Members of the 20th Century by *Time* magazine.

Riley and his late wife Ann “Tunky” Yarborough Riley have four children and thirteen grandchildren.

Wilkins Program Sponsors

Platinum Level

AT&T

Furman University

Silver Level

BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina

Duke Energy

Piedmont Natural Gas

Bronze Level

Michelin North America, Inc.

Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough, LLP

SCETV

Table Sponsors

Advance America

BMW

Carolina First

Defender Services, Inc.

McNair Law Firm, P.A.

Clare Morris Agency

RBC Liberty Insurance

SCBIZ News

S.C. Statehouse Report

Time Warner

Wachovia Securities, Ballentine Group

