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Cobb-Hunter chosen for Wilkins award

By Tim Smith

CAPITAL BUREAU

COLUMBIA -- Rep. Gilda Cobb-Hunter has been chosen to receive next year's David Wilkins Award for Excellence in Legislative Leadership, the Riley Institute at Furman University announced Wednesday.

Cobb-Hunter, an Orangeburg social work administrator, is the first female and black recipient of the award named for former House Speaker and current U.S. Ambassador to Canada David Wilkins of Greenville.

"Gilda Cobb-Hunter brings a great deal of common sense and energy to her work on issues that are of immense importance to all South Carolinians," said Don Gordon, director of the Riley Institute.

"She has a well-deserved reputation as a keenly intelligent, ethical and highly dedicated public servant, and we believe there could be no more appropriate winner of the Wilkins Award."

Cobb-Hunter was first elected to the House in 1992. When she was elected House minority leader in 1997, a position she held for three years, she became the first African-American to lead a legislative caucus. She now is the ranking member of the House Ways and Means Committee.

The award, sponsored by the Riley Institute, will be given Jan. 12 in Columbia. Wilkins will be the keynote speaker for the event.
