



Cobb-Hunter recognized for legislative leadership

State Rep. Gilda Cobb-Hunter, D-Orangeburg, has been honored for her leadership in the S.C. State House.

Cobb-Hunter has been named the winner of the fourth annual David Wilkins Award for Excellence in Legislative Leadership. The award is sponsored by the Riley Institute at Furman University.



The award is given annually to a state legislator who "embodies the highest principles of leadership based on integrity, compassion, vision, civility and courage."

The previous winners have been Sen. John Drummond, president pro-tem emeritus of the Senate; Rep. Bobby Harrell, speaker of the House; and Sen. Hugh K. Leatherman, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee.

"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 elected to the S.C. House in 1992. She was the first African-American woman in Orangeburg County ever elected to a state office and the first freshman appointed to the House Ways and Means Committee.

When she was elected House minority leader in 1997, a position she held for three years, she became the first person of color to lead a legislative caucus. She is now the ranking member of the House Ways and Means Committee and a member of the Joint Bond Review Committee.

Cobb-Hunter also served as vice chair of the African American History Monument Commission, leading the effort to erect the first monument to African-Americans on the grounds of any state capitol. She represents South Carolina as a national committeewoman to the Democratic National Committee, where she also serves as a member of the DNC's Executive Committee.

She is the chair of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators Youth Committee and chairs the South Carolina Legislative Black Caucus' Health Committee.

Since 1985, Cobb-Hunter 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 holds a bachelor's degree in African-American history from Florida A&M University and a master's degree in American history from Florida State University.

In May 2007 she received an honorary Doctorate in Humane Letters from the Medical University of South Carolina. She is married to Dr. Terry K. Hunter, executive director of FACETS.

The Jan. 12 award dinner recognizing Hunter begins with a reception at 6 p.m. at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center. Tickets are \$125 per person and can be reserved by calling 864-235-8330.