

Q&A: Cooper lauded for leadership

What do you expect from the tax realignment committee (which is studying reforming S.C. tax law)?

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State Rep. Dan Cooper, R-Anderson, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, will receive the Wilkins Award today. Given annually by Furman University's Riley Institute, the award, named for former House Speaker David Wilkins, is made to the lawmaker who best displays "the highest principles of leadership, integrity, compassion, vision and courage." The State newspaper talked with Cooper about being budget chairman during tough economic times and his father, who was also a state lawmaker.

What did you learn from your father (the late state Rep. Dolly Cooper) about "leadership, integrity, compassion, vision and courage?"

I learned a lot of that from him, from everything he did the whole time I was growing up and hearing him talk about World War II service.



State Rep. Dan Cooper, R-Anderson
/The State

How do you view public service?

I'm trying to do the best I can to make the right decisions for the state ... to make it a better place to live. Sometimes those things aren't the most popular things.

Can you point to a particularly unpopular decision?

Cutting the local government fund (to save \$50 million in the state budget this year). I introduced the bill and was the only sponsor. It was something that really had to be done. That wasn't particularly popular.

What was your reaction when you heard you won the Wilkins Award?

I was surprised. I certainly wasn't expecting it. I don't know who nominated me. It was a surprise and an honor.

What do you expect from the tax realignment committee (which is studying reforming S.C. tax law)?

I don't think we'll see anything from TRAC this year. We'll have to follow up on it in

2011. I hope they come up with some good ideas with ways to improve our tax structure.