The Twelfth Annual
Wilkins Leadership Awards Dinner

Honoring the leadership of
The Honorable Rita Allison
and Hayne Hipp

Hosts
Ambassador David Wilkins
Secretary Dick Riley
Furman President Elizabeth Davis, Ph.D.

Tuesday, January 10, 2017
Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center
Wilkins Legislative and Civic Leadership Awards Dinner

“Our great thanks to SCETV for their generous support, including production of tonight’s video features and live feed. SCETV’s unstinting and ongoing support of this program is invaluable.”

Welcome ...................... Elizabeth Davis
President, Furman University

National Anthem ............... Bell Tower Boys

Invocation ..................... L. Jonathan Holston
Bishop, S.C. United Methodist Conference

Dinner

About the Awards ............... Dick Riley
Former U.S. Secretary of Education
and Governor of South Carolina

Presentation of Awards ....... Paula Harper Bethea
Chair, Wilkins Steering Committee

David Wilkins
Former U.S. Ambassador to Canada
and Speaker, South Carolina House of Representatives

Closing ......................... Elizabeth Davis
Hayne Hipp

Hayne Hipp’s civic and community leadership is far-reaching, but no greater impact has been made in the community than through his vision and creation of the Liberty Fellowship, an incubator for exemplary leadership in South Carolina. The Liberty Fellowship is a program of seminars, service projects and forums conducted in partnership with the Aspen Institute and Wofford College. Drawing from the business, government, and non-profit sectors, Liberty Fellowship is designed to identify and sustain collaborative values-based leadership in South Carolina. This highly successful program, founded in 2003, brings together young leaders with a diversity of perspectives, a wide range of thought, and a passion for moving South Carolina forward.

Hipp is the former CEO of The Liberty Corporation, which owns insurance companies and television stations including Liberty Life Insurance Company and WIS-TV in South Carolina, with additional investments in media, real estate, and technology ventures.

Hipp is a former trustee of Washington & Lee University, his alma mater, and has an M.B.A. from Wharton, University of Pennsylvania. He has served on numerous corporate boards and has been active in civic and non-profit organizations in South Carolina and on a national level.

Representative Rita Allison


Previously, she has served on the House Ways and Means Committee and the Joint Legislative Committee for Families and Children. She also has had leadership roles including chair of the K-12 and Special Schools Subcommittee, vice chair of House Operations and Management Committee, chair of the General Assembly’s Women’s Caucus, chair of the Spartanburg County Legislative Delegation, and assistant majority leader in the House.

A strong, long-time advocate for education improvement in South Carolina, Representative Allison has worked tirelessly for the children of South Carolina, setting aside partisanship to bring people together to tackle important education issues. She continues to work for education, a fair tax structure, economic development, healthcare reform and small business incentives.
Elizabeth Davis

Elizabeth Davis became Furman University’s 12th president on July 1, 2014. She came to Furman from Baylor University, where, as executive vice president and provost, she oversaw the university’s 11 schools and colleges as well as more than a dozen research centers and institutes. A graduate of Baylor, Davis earned her Ph.D. from Duke University in 1992. She has delivered hundreds of addresses throughout the U.S. on issues involving higher education, university leadership, and financial management.

Dick 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 is currently a senior partner in the law firm of Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough and its affiliate, EducationCounsel. Riley is the recipient of numerous education and other public service awards. In 2009, TIME magazine named Riley one of the Top 10 Best Cabinet Members in our nation’s history.

David Wilkins

Ambassador David Wilkins is a partner at Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough. He chairs the firm’s Public Policy and International Law practice group, which focuses primarily on representing businesses on both sides of the U.S.-Canadian border. Wilkins served as the United States Ambassador to Canada from June 2005 until January 2009. Prior to his appointment to Canada, Wilkins served 25 years in the South Carolina House of Representatives, 11 of those as speaker.
The Award for Excellence in Legislative Leadership is presented to a member of the South Carolina House or Senate who best exemplifies the highest principles of leadership, integrity, compassion, vision, and courage. Recipients have demonstrated the ability to collaborate with fellow legislators, regardless of party affiliation, to effect positive change in South Carolina.

Past Legislative Award Winners
2015    Senator Clementa Pinckney (posthumous award)
2014    Speaker Jay Lucas
2013    Senator Paul Campbell
2012    Representative James Harrison
2011    Representative James Smith
2010    Senator Wes Hayes
2009    Representative Dan Cooper
2008    Representative Gilda Cobb-Hunter
2007    Senator Hugh Leatherman
2006    Speaker Bobby Harrell
2005    Senator John Drummond

The Award for Excellence in Civic Leadership is presented to a community leader who demonstrates a long-standing and exemplary commitment to working to improve the lives of South Carolinians. The recipient of this award is a civic leader whose selfless involvement in community is marked by vision, skill, and integrity, and whose efforts to improve the quality of life in the state have required a remarkable investment of personal time, energy, and responsibility.

Past Civic Award Winners
2015    Governor Nikki Haley and Joe Riley
2014    Bill Barnet, III
2013    Steve Morrison (posthumous award)
2012    Anita Zucker
2011    Ed Sellers
2010    Minor Mickel Shaw
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* As of date of publication
The Riley Institute

Furman University’s Riley Institute broadens student and community perspectives about issues critical to South Carolina’s progress. It builds and engages present and future leaders, creates and shares data-supported information about the state’s core challenges, and links the leadership body to sustainable solutions.

Launched in 1999, the Institute is named for former South Carolina Governor and former United States Secretary of Education Richard W. (Dick) Riley. It is committed to nonpartisanship in all it does and to a rhetoric-free, facts-based approach to change.

riley.furman.edu