

The Fifteenth Annual Wilkins Leadership Awards Dinner

Honoring the leadership of
The Honorable J. Gary Simrill
and Nella Barkley

Hosts

Ambassador David Wilkins
Secretary Dick Riley
Furman President Elizabeth Davis

Tuesday, January 14, 2020
Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center





Program

Wilkins Legislative and Civic Leadership Awards Dinner

“The Star-Spangled Banner” “The Longest Time”	Furman University Bell Tower Boys
Welcome	Elizabeth Davis, Ph.D. <i>President, Furman University</i>
Invocation	Jim Dant, Ph.D. <i>Senior Minister, First Baptist Greenville</i>
Dinner	
Remarks	Paula Harper Bethea <i>Chair, Wilkins Steering Committee</i>
Video	“Fifteen Years of Wilkins Award Winners on Leadership, Service, and Bipartisanship”
Remarks	Dick Riley <i>Former U.S. Secretary of Education and Governor of South Carolina</i>
Presentation of Civic Award	Minor Mickel Shaw <i>President of Micco, LLC and inaugural winner of the Wilkins Civic Leadership Award</i>
Presentation of Legislative Award and Closing Remarks	David Wilkins <i>Former U.S. Ambassador to Canada and Speaker, South Carolina House of Representatives</i>
Irish Blessing	Bell Tower Boys

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.

Award for Excellence in Civic Leadership

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

2018	Charlotte Berry
2017	Charles Bolden
2016	Hayne Hipp
2015	Governor Nikki Haley and Mayor Joe Riley
2014	Bill Barnet, III
2013	Steve Morrison (<i>posthumous award</i>)
2012	Anita Zucker
2011	Ed Sellers
2010	Minor Mickel Shaw



Nella Barkley

Nella Barkley is co-founder and president of Crystal-Barkley Corporation and chair of BestWork, Inc., where she is a consultant to major organizations and coach to management teams and individuals.

A veteran strategic consultant, Barkley has held board positions for organizations that support a cleaner environment, civil rights, and employing the handicapped. In addition, she has supported elevating education and the humanities across South Carolina by serving as vice-chair of the South Carolina Committee for the Endowment for the Humanities, founding chair of the South Carolina Educational Television Endowment, chair of the South Carolina Governor's School for Science and Mathematics Foundation, and chair of South Carolina Future Minds.

Within her local community, Barkley founded and chaired Charleston Regional Alliance for the Arts, the City of Charleston Commission on Redevelopment and Preservation, and Horizon House, which provided rehabilitation to delinquent boys as an alternative to institutionalization. She has served on the boards of Trident United Way, Engaging Creative Minds, and The Charleston Education Network. In 2005, she was awarded the Order of the Palmetto. A graduate of Sweet Briar College, Barkley has completed the Advanced Management Program at Harvard Business School and is the author of two motivational books.

Award for Excellence in Legislative Leadership

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

2018	Senator John Matthews
2017	Representative Weston Newton
2016	Representative Rita Allison
2015	Senator Clementa Pinckney (<i>posthumous award</i>)
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



J. Gary Simrill

The Honorable J. Gary Simrill has served the residents of York County (District 46) in the South Carolina House of Representatives since 1992. Currently, he is the House majority leader and vice-chair of the House Ways and Means Committee.

Rep. Simrill was the primary sponsor of the Infrastructure and Economic Development Act that went into effect on July 1, 2017. Simrill guided a process of passing the infrastructure bill that was testimony-driven, and thus, people sharing widely divergent views were given the opportunity to speak. The act includes a checks and balance system so that not only are the areas that produce a lot of taxes helped, but also rural areas benefit. Under Simrill's leadership, the passage of the Infrastructure Act was a bipartisan effort, and it received the vote of a supermajority in the House and Senate.

Representative Simrill has received awards for his legislative leadership from several organizations including Behavioral Health Sciences Association of South Carolina, South Carolina Farm Bureau Federation, Clemson University Board of Visitors, the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce, the Maritime Association of South Carolina, and the American Legion. A graduate of Winthrop University, Simrill is president of Carolina Motorworks.

Event Hosts



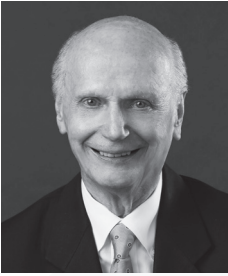
Paula Harper Bethea

Paula Harper Bethea, president of Strategic Synergies LLC and of Dillon Property Holdings LLC, is chair of the Wilkins Award Steering Committee. Bethea is executive chair of the Board of Directors for J M Smith Corporation, and she is vice chair of the Board of Directors of South State Bank and South State Corporation. She is chair emeritus of the United Way of America's Board of Governors.



Elizabeth Davis

Elizabeth Davis became Furman University's 12th President on July 1, 2014. Under her leadership, the university has instituted The Furman Advantage, a distinctive vision for higher education that combines learning with immersive experiences outside the classroom, creating a personalized pathway that prepares students for lives of purpose, successful careers and community benefit. Dr. Davis received her Bachelor of Business Administration degree from Baylor in 1984 and earned her Ph.D. from Duke University in 1992.



Dick Riley

Richard W. Riley, for whom Furman University's Riley Institute 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.

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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



Furman University | 3300 Poinsett Highway | Greenville, S.C. 29613