

## SoCon Announces Distinguished Service Award Winners

Written by SoCon Sports Information  
Friday, 18 May 2012 05:29

---

The Southern Conference announced Thursday the 12 recipients of the league's 2012 Distinguished Service Award. Each member institution selects an honoree based on that person's contribution to the institution. Each award winner will

be honored for their contribution at the Southern Conference Honors Dinner in Asheville, N.C. on May 30. The Distinguished Service Award program was started in 2002 as a way for the Southern Conference to recognize individuals from its member institutions who have contributed to all aspects of the university. This year's honorees include **David Allen Vaughn**

**(Appalachian State),**

John M.

Rivers, Jr. (College of Charleston), Thomas R. Culler (The Citadel), William D. Vinson (Davidson), Cecil and JoAnna Worsley (Elon), James M. and Carol N. Ney (Furman), Richard T. Evans (Georgia Southern), Jim and Betty Allen (UNCG), Dr. Larry W. Cox (Samford), Dean and Mary Jane Heavener (Chattanooga), Fred Q. Cantler (Western Carolina) and Dr. Mack C. Poole, III and Dr. Melvin D. Medlock (Wofford).

**Vaughn**, a 1976 graduate of Appalachian State, currently serves as the Vice President of Merchandising at Lowe's Companies, Inc. and is a Mountaineer supporter. His generous contributions have helped provide scholarships and state of the art facilities for not only student-athletes, but also coaches and staff. He serves on the Yosef Club Advisory Board, which is responsible with raising private support for Appalachian State athletics. Vaughn's volunteer efforts have helped establish annual fundraisers such as large scale golf tournaments, corporate solicitation events, silent auctions and in-kind program support.

For four decades, Rivers has made an impact for the College of Charleston as a leader and philanthropist. Not only has he generously supported scholarships, but his support for the Rivers Communication Museum and the Addlestone Library building effort will benefit students for years to come. In 2003, he spearheaded the creation of the College of Charleston Cougar Classic, a women's golf tournament which is held annually at the Yeamans Hall Club in Charleston. The tournament, which is approaching its tenth anniversary, has raised over one million dollars. Rivers led the effort to purchase a new Mercedes van for the women's golf program and within a few months he had secured the needed pledges to purchase the van for the 2011-12 season.

Culler has made generous contributions in time and resources to his alma mater. He was named The Citadel's Alumnus of the Year in 2006 for his continued support of the institution. Since his graduation, he has been a prominent supporter for The Citadel's football, basketball and baseball programs, as well as women's soccer, wrestling, rifle and cheerleading. The 1950 graduate is a World War II veteran and was a wrestler during his career at The Citadel.

Vinson enrolled in Davidson College in 1942, but left shortly after to serve in the United States Navy during World War II. He served over 25 years as the chair of the Annual Fund Class as well as being a part of Davidson's Athletic Foundation. Labeled as one of Davidson's most avid Wildcat enthusiasts, Vinson is among the first to provide support whether its capital and facility projects such as the Baker Sports Complex or athletic scholarship programs. He is also a generous supporter of Davidson academics and the arts as he established the William Daniel Vinson award in mathematics and the Porter Paisley Vinson chemistry award in honor of his

## SoCon Announces Distinguished Service Award Winners

Written by SoCon Sports Information  
Friday, 18 May 2012 05:29

---

father and grandfather, who are also Davidson graduates.

Behind generous gifts, the Worsley's have provided Elon University with Worsley Golf Training Center. The state of the art facility includes an indoor practice area with hitting bays and a swing analysis center along with a putting area and a player's lounge. In the fall, the Worsley's issued the Worsley Family Match to encourage former student-athletes to give back to Elon and benefit student-athlete scholarships. The Elon graduates matched any gift made to the Phoenix Club by a former student-athlete during October and will repeat this challenge for the next two years.

The leadership and commitment from James and Carol Ney has earned the couple numerous awards across the Furman campus, including the Bell Tower Award, one of the highest honors presented by Furman University. The Ney's have also been recognized in the Furman Benefactors Circle, which honors those donors who have exceeded one million dollars. The Atlanta natives have built the Atlanta Furman Club into a model of an active Furman Club, which generates scholarships. The Ney's have supported the university from capital projects to donations for athletic scholarships and taken on leadership roles on several committees.

Evans has been an active part of Georgia Southern since his children enrolled at the university. The president and founder of Evans General Contractors has spent time raising and giving philanthropically to the construction management program, student-affairs scholarship program and the Georgia Southern University Athletic Foundation. Evans currently serves on the Athletic Foundation's Capital Campaign Steering Committee and is actively involved in the development and construction of the proposed 55,000 square-foot football operations facility at Paulson Stadium.

As the first Presbyterian Campus Minister and Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Allen was essential in mapping the future of UNCG. In 1985 he was charged with administrative oversight of the Intercollegiate Athletics program to move athletics from NCAA Division III to Division I in five years, which at the time was a feat never attempted. Allen and his wife, Betty, who are lifetime members of the Spartan Club, have two endowed scholarships which were created in honor of Allen following his retirement in May 1996. The Allen's have continued to support UNCG athletics through their time, talent and treasure.

Dr. Cox was recruited to play football for Samford in 1967, where he would be a member of the team for the next five years. He was the tight end on the 1971 Bulldog team that won the NCAA Division II National Championship. Since his graduation, he has been involved in the annual giving program in athletics through the Bulldog Club. Dr. Cox has also provided two major gifts toward the completion of the new nine million dollar Football Field House. He made one gift in honor of his family and the other in honor of the 1971 championship football team. The 1972 graduate is a charter member of the Executive Council of the Samford Athletic Foundation and has served as the president of the Lettermen's "S" Club.

During basketball season, the Heavener's calendar revolves around the Chattanooga women's basketball team. The couple never misses a home game at McKenzie Arena and has even travelled the country with the Lady Mocs. In 2007, the Heavener's created The Dean and Mary Jane Heavener Women's Basketball Scholarship Endowment. The scholarship funds fifth year seniors who are finishing their education and funds summer school for current Chattanooga women's basketball players. The couple was one of the first contributors to the Support-Her Campaign, which is a five-year initiative seeking to raise \$60,000 annually to fill gaps in the team's travel, equipment and operating costs.

Cantler devoted over 33 years in athletics administration at Western Carolina. He served as the Senior Associate Athletic Director for Internal Relations before retiring in March of 2011. In late

## SoCon Announces Distinguished Service Award Winners

Written by SoCon Sports Information  
Friday, 18 May 2012 05:29

---

October, Dr. Belcher, Chancellor of the university, asked Cantler to serve as the interim director of athletics as the institution conducted a national search, where he served for just over two month before returning to retirement. He was the primary administrator for football, women's soccer, men's basketball and baseball as well as serving as the department's compliance and eligibility officer. In 1999, Cantler helped develop the Catamount women's soccer program from the ground up. He also served on the conference's official committee and the basketball tournament committee along with numerous NCAA committees.

Dr. Poole and Dr. Medlock have served the medical needs of Wofford students, student-athletes and the greater Spartanburg community for years. The Wofford graduates established the Family Medical Center in Spartanburg in 1963 and within five years were devoted to the needs of Wofford College. Both have been honored by the Wofford Lettermen's Club, the Wofford National Alumni Association and the Wofford student's Captain's Council. In 2010, Dr. Pool and his wife created the M.C. Poole Endowed Scholarship Fund in the memory of Poole's father, Mac Collier Poole, Jr. (Class of 1926) and their son, Mark Collier Poole (Class of 1982).