Decatur Student Receives Golden Eagle Award
NorthWest Arkansas Community College Honors D’Etta Stephens-Mason

BENTONVILLE, Ark. (Feb. 21, 2012) – NorthWest Arkansas Community College has chosen D’Etta Stephens-Mason, a leader in the college’s service learning project with the Cherokee Nation, as the Golden Eagle Award recipient for February.

Stephens-Mason of Decatur has spent countless hours on the Cherokee Women & Children Advocacy Project, according to Professor Chris Huggard. She coordinated production of a PowerPoint presentation on the history, culture, women and children and psycho-social aspects of Cherokee society, he noted, and she spearheaded numerous service and research trips to Tahlequah, Okla., to do archival research and service at the Cherokee Heritage Center and the Cherokee Immersion School. Huggard said the project raised $1,800 that was disbursed to the heritage center and school and used to purchase school supplies, lunch boxes full of crayons, markers, pens, glue sticks and other supplies for students and teachers. Under her leadership, the project has been expanded into the Native American Project that includes research and service concerning the Quapaw peoples at Tar Creek, Oklahoma.

“She has truly made a difference,” Huggard wrote in a letter of nomination for the Golden Eagle Award. Students may be nominated for NWACC’s Golden Eagle Award by an instructor, administrative staff person or a student organization adviser. Each candidate must have at least a 3.0 grade point average in a minimum of six credit hours of class and demonstrate social awareness, personal development, a diverse interest and involvement in varied activities, interpersonal communication skills and a commitment to education.

Stephens-Mason has a 3.8 grade point average and has earned 30 hours of credit at NWACC toward an Associate of Arts degree. After receiving her associate degree, she plans to attend Arkansas Tech University and Northeastern Oklahoma University to obtain a Bachelor of Arts in history and Native American Studies, respectively. She then plans to earn a master’s degree in history from the University of Arkansas and a doctorate in history from Kansas State University with an emphasis on military history.

In addition to her work with the Cherokee project, Stephens-Mason also brought an anti-bullying campaign project to the service learning program. She and other students present programs in local schools as a part of that initiative.
She is the on-campus president of the Gay Straight Alliance, which has a goal to promote acceptance of all people from every walk of life. She also is a member of Phi Theta Kappa, an international honor society on the NWACC campus.

The Golden Eagle Award recipient is the wife of David Mason and the mother of two children, Kaya Mason and Layne Mason. She is the daughter of Roger and Phyllis Reed and Dale and Linda Stephens.

The award was presented by Huggard at the NWACC Board of Trustees meeting on Monday, Feb. 20.

NorthWest Arkansas Community College is a comprehensive, public two-year college that serves and strengthens the community through learning for living. NWACC's service area is defined by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education as Benton and Washington counties in extreme northwest Arkansas. The commitment of NWACC to life-long learning can be seen in the quality of instruction it offers, and the variety of programs it has designed to move students into the job market in a minimum amount of time, enrich people's lives, and prepare them to further their education. For more information, visit www.nwacc.edu.

Photos of D'Etta Stephens-Mason with Chris Huggard and an image of Stephens-Mason by herself are attached.