Conant Will Speak on Thursday at NWACC

Former Campbell Soup executive part of SIFE Shewmaker Lecture Series

Bentonville, Ark. (March 12, 2012) – Former Campbell Soup executive Douglas R. Conant will speak this week as part of the spring SIFE Jack Shewmaker Business Leaders Lecture Series on the campus of NorthWest Arkansas Community College.

Conant will be speaking at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 15, in the Walmart Auditorium of the Shewmaker Center for Workforce Technologies. The event is open to the public.

Conant, a New York Times bestselling author, was appointed President and CEO of the Campbell Soup Company in 2001. He was the 11th leader in the company’s 141-year history and dramatically improved the company’s financial profile by delivering quality sales growth, 10 straight years of adjusted earnings per share growth, strong cash flow and record high Return on Invested Capital. During the decade of Conant’s leadership, employee engagement went from being among the worst in the Fortune 500 to being consistently among the best. He began his career in 1976 in marketing at General Mills, and ultimately moved to Kraft, where he held top management positions in marketing and strategy. Immediately prior to arriving at Campbell, he was President of the $3.5 billion Nabisco Foods Company, where he led his unit to improved marketplace performance and five consecutive years of double-digit earnings growth.

NWACC’s Students In Free Enterprise team established the Business Leaders Lecture Series when Jack Shewmaker suggested a platform designed to bring in business professionals and entrepreneurs to the college campus so that students and the community at large would have the opportunity to learn from them. Shewmaker, a retired Walmart officer and a strong supporter of NWACC, was the inaugural speaker for the event first held in 2004. Shewmaker ultimately agreed to allow the college’s SIFE program to name the series in honor of him in 2006. Shewmaker died in 2010.

This spring’s lineup continues the tradition of bringing prominent business leaders to the NWACC campus. Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art founder Alice Walton and Don Bacigalupi, executive director of the museum, spoke at the college in February as part of the series.

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.