NWACC Foundation Annual Scholarship Gala a Success

Event garners record donations to help fund educational opportunities

BENTONVILLE, Ark. (April 2, 2012) -- NorthWest Arkansas Community College (NWACC) Foundation hosted the 9th annual Scholarship Gala on March 29 at the John Q. Hammons Center with approximately 500 guests in attendance for the event.

This year’s Gala, with a theme of “Plant a Seed,” raised a record $111,500 for scholarships to support some of the 8,000 credit students attending the College. This year’s Becky’s Book Club Champion, NWACC alumna Meza Harris, was instrumental in raising more than $36,000 for textbook scholarships.

Dennis Smiley, Foundation Board Chair, highlighted the 71 privately-named scholarships to be awarded in the upcoming academic year (2012-2013), which is an increase of 25% over the previous year. He also highlighted the Foundation’s new website found at www.nwaccfoundation.org and invited guests to “Like” the Foundation’s newly redesigned Facebook page.

“This was a record year for us,” said Meredith Brunen, Executive Director for Development, NWACC Foundation. “Scholarships play such a vital role in improving access to a quality education.”

The event featured NWACC students as celebrity waiters, as well as a performance by the NWACC Guitar Ensemble.

Three outstanding honorees were recognized for their vision and leadership in helping to build and sustain the excellent quality of life in northwest Arkansas: Embassy Suites Northwest Arkansas, Donald E. “Buddy” Wray, and McDonald’s of the Ozarks.

Embassy Suites Northwest Arkansas has exhibited a true philanthropic spirit in their generous financial support and sponsorship of NWACC events and has made a lasting impact on the College
and its students through their investment and engagement through volunteer services. Accepting the award on their behalf was General Manager David Lang.

Donald E. “Buddy” Wray currently serves as the Executive Vice President-Special Assistant to the President and Chief Executive Officer of Tyson Foods, Inc. Wray believes in helping others and has served his community in a number of capacities, including board service for the Jones Center for Families, the Endeavor Foundation and the Care Foundation, National Board for the American Studies Institute, as well as Arvest Bank.

McDonald’s of the Ozarks is owned and operated by Bill and Walter Mathews. As successful entrepreneurs, the Mathews are strong contributors to the economic vibrancy of our region. They take pride in investing in projects essential for the community’s growth like NorthWest Arkansas Community College and Ronald McDonald House Charities.

For more information about this event or making a gift to the NWACC Foundation, please contact the Foundation office at 479.619.4184 or foundation@nwacc.edu.

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.