

Clayton Lewis, Jack Hassell announce retirements

Tributes were paid during the annual Faculty/Staff Christmas dinner to two veteran staff members who will retire at the end of the current semester after devoting a combined total of more than 62 years of service to Chowan College.

R. Clayton Lewis, director of corporate and foundation relations, will retire on Dec. 31 after 27 and one-half years with the institution. Jack A. Hassell, director of the physical plant who will also retire at the end of the current calendar year, has been associated with Chowan College for the past 35 years.

E. Vincent Tilson, vice president for development, paid tribute to Lewis and reviewed his service to Chowan College and described Lewis' "unceasing devotion and loyalty to the college he had come to love." Tilson also told of the three endowed scholarship funds that Lewis and his wife, Mary Alice, have established and of their "very generous financial support which has continued through the years."

As a complete surprise to Lewis and his wife,

Tilson announced the establishment of the "Robert Clayton and Mary Alice Lewis Student Development Trust Fund" in their honor. The fund, made possible by the contributions of Dr. and Mrs. Bruce E. Whitaker, Mr. and Mrs. Barry Whitaker of Richmond, VA, and Mr. and Mrs. Garry Bruce Whitaker of Winston-Salem, is "in recognition of significant contributions of Clayton Lewis to the college, the town of Murfreesboro and the Murfreesboro Baptist Church."

"The fund will be used to give students an opportunity to grow academically, socially, culturally and spiritually," Tilson said, "and to expand their horizons, experiences, interests and knowledge."

Hassell's service of more than three decades was reviewed by Dr. Bruce E. Whitaker, president emeritus and long-time friend of the Hassells. "During my tenure as president, it was my observation that no other person made a greater contribution to the life and progress of this institution than did Jack A. Hassell,"

Whitaker noted.

The former president said that the "majority of the buildings on campus were constructed under the guidance of Jack Hassell and many others were enlarged or renovated at substantial financial savings to the college."

Both Lewis and Hassell were presented engraved plaques and cash awards based on their years of service.



E. Vincent Tilson, left, congratulates Lewis and his wife, Mary Alice. In addition to presenting the engraved plaque and retirement check, Tilson announced the establishment of an endowed scholarship fund in their honor.



Dr. Bruce E. Whitaker, left, presents Hassell an engraved plaque while Mrs. Hassell, looking proudly on, holds the retirement check given to her husband.

Lewis established three scholarships; was very active in college, community

Lewis joined the administrative staff of Chowan in 1968 as Dean of Students after serving as a high school principal for more than 11 years. In 1990, he assumed the position of Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations in the Office of Development.

A native of Green Sea, SC, and a veteran of military service, Lewis earned his undergraduate degree in history and education at Wake Forest University. He was awarded a master's degree in educational administration and history by East Carolina University, and the advanced principal's certificate by UNC-Chapel Hill.

He has completed additional graduate study at a number of institutions including Western Carolina University, George Peabody College for Teachers and Pennsylvania State University.

Throughout his tenure of service at Chowan, Lewis remained active in the classroom and taught history classes as well as an orientation course for freshmen students. He was instrumental in establishing the campus Rotaract Club and continued as its advisor until his retirement.

He and his wife established three endowed scholarships to help needy and worthy students gain a college education.

Lewis also was responsible for the planting of the "Constitution Tree" in 1987 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the signing of the U. S. Constitution, as well as the "Ratification Walk" in 1989 to commemorate the

Constitution's ratification by North Carolina and the "time capsule" which will be unearthed in November 2089.

Students dedicated the college yearbook, *THE CHOWANOKA*, to Lewis in 1985 and said "he has given unselfishly of his time and energies to promote the development of students as whole persons" and "he recognizes each student as a unique personality with worth and potential for growth and development."

Lewis is a past president of the Murfreesboro Rotary Club and was named "Rotarian of the Year" twice. He served as president of the Roanoke-Chowan Community Concert Association and, at the time of his retirement, was president of the Murfreesboro Chamber of Commerce.

Active in the Murfreesboro Baptist Church, he has been a teacher of the men's Bible class for many years and has served several terms as deacon. The church membership paid special tribute to Lewis and his wife at a church conference in early December at which time a resolution of appreciation was presented for their service and commitment to the church.

The Lewises are the parents of one son and two grandchildren. Their son, Hugh, is a graduate of Chowan, Rochester Institute of Technology, and Campbell University School of Law and is now a magistrate in Charlotte where the Lewises will make their home.

Hassell served as physical plant director for 35 years

Jack Hassell, a native of Washington County, was appointed Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds in August 1960 to supervise a staff consisting of one carpenter, two maids, three janitors and two groundskeepers.

"I have seen a lot of changes at Chowan College," Hassell said as he reflected upon his 35 years of service. "When I started to work there was only one air conditioner on the campus and that was in the Office of the President. Now, all campus facilities have air conditioning."

Twelve of the current buildings were constructed during Hassell's tenure and as well as Lake Vann. He also supervised the construction of Garrison Stadium, several tennis courts, golf driving range, and athletic fields for intramural sports and soccer.

Through the years, Hassell and his maintenance staff have saved the college thousands of dollars in the construction and renovation of buildings. All of the student residence halls, except Parker Hall, have been completely renovated and McDowell Columns has received extensive renovation and remodeling.

"The most significant project I can recall," Hassell said, "was the home of the college president. We removed most of the old house and constructed what is now the Ella Cobb Camp President's Home that is a real 'show piece' of the college."

Hassell is active in community affairs and was recently elected to his fourth term on the Murfreesboro Town Council. He is a member and past president of the local Exchange Club and a member of the Murfreesboro Historical Association.

A member of Murfreesboro Baptist Church, he has served on the Board of Deacons and has been chairman of the church's properties committee for a large number of years.

The students of the college dedicated the yearbook, *THE CHOWANOKA*, to Hassell in recognition of his "loyalty, commitment and unceasing efforts to promote the goodwill of Chowan students."

In December 1992, the Board of Trustees voted to recognize Hassell for his "outstanding and lengthy service" to the college by naming one of the campus streets in his honor. Dedication services were held in the spring of 1993 to name the south entrance street as Hassell Drive.

When asked about his plans for retirement, Hassell said "I'm not worried about getting bored because I have plenty that I want to do. I know that I am going to play a lot of golf but I will probably just 'take it easy' for a while."

Hassell has his wife, Alice, are the parents of a daughter, Linda, a member of the Whitaker Library staff.