



Photo by Erin Mizelle

Omari Simmons, middle, accepts his award, sponsored by Food Lion and Novant Health. Ernie Pitt, left, helps give the award.

Omari S. Simmons Community Service Award

Through the Simmons Memorial Foundation (SMF) that Professor Omari S. Simmons created, he has provided exemplary and extensive service for the past 20 years to underrepresented students in our community, and in other communities where he was previously employed.

Professor Simmons has worked quietly behind the scenes so many in our community may be unaware of the significant contribution he has made to the lives of our high school age students of color. His program provides information and skill building to prepare students to apply for college, beginning with the freshman year. He has helped students in the development of oral and written communications skills, as well as shown them how to handle themselves in a professional manner, as they prepare for college life after their secondary education.



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Elizabeth Speight, middle, accepts her award, sponsored by Food Lion and Novant Health. Ernie Pitt, left, helps give the award.

Elizabeth Speight Community Service Award

Elizabeth Speight has spent the last four decades of her life demonstrating a commitment to serving others. She epitomizes what it means to be a role model through her faithfulness and humility.

Since 1978, Speight has been the Rupert Bell Singers choir musician and musical director. For over 38 years, she has upheld the mission of the Rupert Bell Singers to minister to the residents of nursing homes, assisted living facilities and adult day care programs, averaging 20 performances a year, both in Winston Salem and surrounding counties.

For over 20 years, she has served her home church, Greater Cleveland Avenue Christian church, as a member of the Leadership Team, President of the Christian Women Fellowship, and has also managed the church bookstore.

Speight was appointed a lifetime member of the Christmount Retreat Center's Administrative Board and Council in Black Mountain, N.C. She has organized a Woman's Weekend spiritual retreat at Christmount twice a year for the last three decades, teaching and leading devotional sessions that allow participants to experience a time of rest for the soul and spiritual renewal. Her many years of performing acts of kindness and compassion far exceeds the requirements of this award.