

School Officials Receive Awards

Lenora Moody

Rosman High teacher Stacie Dotson and School Superintendent Sonna Lyda both picked up prestigious awards in education this past week.

Dotson, who has been teaching in Transylvania County since 1995, was honored as the 2009 Linda Rader Professional Development Award winner.

Dotson, a 10th grade and AP English teacher, was chosen for her "outstanding pursuit as a professional developer."

The announcement was made at the annual N.C. Association of Educators (NCAE) convention banquet.

"Linda Rader was an NCAE state president as well as an instructional leader in Gaston County," according to a press release.

"She bequeathed to the NCAE, in her will, funds to support NCAE members as they grow and develop their leadership responsibilities and or professional growth."

According to the NCAE, winners of the award can win \$1,500 or \$3,000 depending on their membership standing with the NCAE. Dotson received a \$3,000 prize.

To be considered for the award, the NCAE looks for teachers who advocate for other members in the local area and are active locally, regionally, statewide or nationally with the organization. In addition, the NCAE looks for teachers that continue with learning opportunities, are working toward a degree or have traveled in the United States or abroad seeking educational experiences to take back to their students. In 2008, Dotson was selected to participate in the North Carolina Center for Advancement of Teachers' Holocaust study.

Dotson and 23 teachers from North Carolina had an 11-day all expense paid trip to Holocaust sites in Germany and Poland as part of the study.

"They visited landmarks of Holocaust events and studied about the Holocaust itself," said Dian Brewton, media relation's director for Transylvania County Schools.

"Dotson has developed a presentation which she shares with students in middle and high school to help increase their knowledge about the history and background of this tragic sequence of events," said Brewton

Sonna Lyda

On March 29, Lyda received the 2009 North Carolina Excellence in Education Award at the national AdvanceED conference in Chicago, said Brewton.

"The award is presented to individuals who have demonstrated unparalleled leadership in promoting and advancing excellence in education," said Brewton.

AdvanceEd is the parent organization of the North Central Association Commissions on Accreditation and School Improvements, Southern Association of Colleges, Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement and Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation.

To be an award nominee, the individual must have a "vision and mission for high levels of excellence among students and faculty," verification of accomplishments in education with a positive impact on learning, and be a good role model for students and other educators, said Brewton.

"Lyda has been an educational leader in North Carolina throughout her career."

In 2004, Lyda was named the North Carolina Association of Educators Central Office Administrator of the Year, the 2007-2008 West Region Superintendent of the year and the region's candidate for state superintendent of the year. In addition, Brewton said that Lyda helped Transylvania County Schools become the first school system in North Carolina to achieve district accreditation.

Lyda plans to retire from the school system on June 30.

