



CATAWBA COUNTY

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PROTECTOR OF COUNTY RECORDS AND HISTORY NAMED CATAWBA COUNTY EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

The Catawba County Register of Deeds Office is a very busy place with attorneys, real estate agents, genealogy professionals and amateurs, engaged couples, and other citizens visiting daily. It holds all deeds and deeds of trust (which involve the borrowing of money), maps, rights of way and all records which have anything to do with real estate. It also creates and holds birth and death certificates from 1913, and marriage records back to Catawba County's founding in 1842.

All employees of the Register of Deeds Office have the detailed job of working with citizens to accurately create and store these records. Each staff member must be able to perform every duty required in that office. A 35 year veteran of the Register of Deeds Office, praised by co-workers for her excellent customer service, for being a patient instructor on the laws involved in her work, and for preserving the County's history, has been named Catawba County's 2011 Employee Of The Year.



Assistant Register of Deeds Rita Beaver was presented with the honor on October 25, at the County's annual Awards Night at the CVCC Multipurpose Facility. Seven County employees were nominated for Employee Of The Year. Beaver was selected by an Employee Committee composed of representatives of each County department. She was nominated by all of her co-workers in the Register of Deeds Office.

"When I first came to Catawba County back in 1989, Rita was the first staff person to welcome me to the county and to the Register of Deeds Office," said Donna Spencer, Register of Deeds. "Being one of the first paralegals in the area, it was a change for many to adjust to. However, Rita has never looked down on the paralegals nor anyone else that has come into this office. After taking office, I have seen her dedication to the county and her work. She has even stated that she is only a phone call away should we need her after she retires at the end of this year. Her knowledge, her ability to explain matters like no other and her kindness can never be replaced."

"Throughout her career, Rita has been the information source for the public as well as her co-workers, not only of information pertinent to our office, but also for the other departments that make up Catawba County Government," said Betty Richards, Deputy Register of Deeds. "Her vast knowledge of the various departments enables her to direct customers to the appropriate departments in order to meet their needs or requests. As well as being an instructor and general information person, Rita has played a significant role in the preservation of the '*history*' of Catawba County, assuring precise records are maintained of marriages, births, deaths, land records, maps/plats and document indexes. The most notable project Rita undertook was the conversion of the 1984-1988 Land Record Indexes. To make these indexes compatible with a new operating system, Rita converted each entry made during the years between 1984 and 1988. Through patience and persistence, a total of 88,133 records, with approximately 352,500 individual entries, were converted."

A Catawba County native, Beaver graduated from Bandys High School and later earned an Associate's Degree in Business Administration from Catawba Valley Community College. During and just after her school years, she worked as a sales clerk with J C Penney, in general office and sales work with Lindy's Furniture and with Epps Printing in Newton, performing office and bookkeeping duties.

Beaver was hired as Deputy Register Trainee in the Register of Deeds Office on June 1, 1976. She was reclassified as a Deputy Register of Deeds I in 1977, then as a Deputy Register of Deeds II in 1979. Her position was further reclassified as Assistant Register of Deeds I in 1981. In 2006, she became a certified Assistant Register of Deeds by successfully completing a certification program for Registers of Deeds through the North Carolina Association of Registers of Deeds.

"Rita's dedication is evident every day on the job," said Christie East, another Deputy Register of Deeds. "She has steadily worked on one big project as long as I've known her, in addition to completing her daily duties and helping out people who come to the counter. How she juggles it all, I don't know. But she does it smoothly and without complaint."

"The fact that she knows the inside and outside of every statute in accordance with the State law is not the only fine quality she has contributed to this office," Kristina Ennis, Deputy Register of Deeds, wrote about Beaver. "Her one-of-a-kind laugh brings the customer coming back with comfort and no hesitance. Rita has a 'matter of fact' way of explaining a situation with ease and clarity to the point I think she could make even the most inexperienced enquirer understand North Carolina laws (which are proven to be difficult to understand at times)."

"I started working for the County back in the middle of July, and in just the few weeks that I have been on the job, Rita has shown exceptional patience," said Belita Anaya, the newest Deputy Register of Deeds. "She has enlightened me with her knowledge and has been a pleasure to know, thus far. I wish I would have worked with her longer. She knows so much about the ins and outs of our office. I am pleased to work with her and to know such a thoughtful and caring person. She seems to go out of her way to help anyone possible and always performs each task in the best manner possible."

Rita Beaver lives in the Maiden area and has a daughter, Amanda.

Six other County employees were nominated for Catawba County Employee Of The Year for 2011. They included: Britt Abernathy, Public Health School Nurse Charge Nurse, Public Health; Christine Cofer, Administrative Assistant I, Garage, Finance; Deborah Johnson, Director of the Children's Advocacy and Protection Center of Catawba County, Social Services; Angela Propst, Office Support Specialist, Public Health; Fred Smith, Paramedic, Emergency Medical Services; and Kim Sue, Code Compliance Technician, Utilities and Engineering.

Another highlight of the night was the presentation of 2011 Team Awards. "These awards honor groups of employees whose combined efforts improve County services," said Catawba County Manager Tom Lundy, who served as Master of Ceremonies for the County's Awards Night. "We certainly appreciate the value of work done by groups of employees who focus their energies on a common goal."

A panel of judges in the government field, independent of Catawba County, selected three teams as winners for 2011: a Medical Emergency Response Team from Public Health; a Distracted Driving Video Contest Team, with members from several departments, and a Parent Child Interaction Therapy Team from Social Services.

Distracted Driving Video Contest Team- Team Leader:

Jennifer McCracken, Health Services Manager, Public Health.

Team Members: John Eller, Social Services Director, Social Services; Sylvia Fisher, Emergency Medical Services Director, Emergency Services; Donna Mull, Extension Agent-4H, Cooperative Extension; Lee Yount, Jr. Programming Analyst, Technology.



Seated left to right: Jennifer McCracken, Health Services Manager, Public Health; Lee Yount, Jr. Programming Analyst, Technology; Donna Mull, Extension Agent-4H, Cooperative Extension. Standing is John Eller, Social Services Director.

The Distracted Driving Committee was commissioned by the Catawba County Child Fatality Prevention Team/Community Child Protection Team to respond to the growing problem of distracted driving. Partnering with the Catawba County Youth Council, this committee developed a Distracted

Driving Video Contest and used social media to bring greater awareness to the issue. As a result of the contest, 43% of students increased their awareness about distracted driving; 57% of students reported encouraging at least one other person to do something different in order to avoid distracted driving and 51% of students reported changing at least one habit to avoid distracted driving.



Medical Emergency Response Training (MERT) Team-

Team Leader: Rhonda Stikeleather, Charge Nurse II, Public Health. Team Members: Rosemary Sermershiem, PHN; Jennifer Moser, PHN; Amy Phillips, PHN; Debra Bryant, PHN; Ella Davila-Hernandez, PHN; Terri Curtis, PHN; Virginia Beisler, PHN; Jennifer Lindsay, Charge Nurse I; Jennifer Sharpe, Charge Nurse I; Jennifer Tuttle, PHN; June Sisti, PHN; Diane Howell, PHN; Kimberly Spaulding, PHN; LaDonna Hodge, PHN; Margaret Monday, PHN; Tracey Paul, Public Health Educator; Margaret Sides, PHN; Marianne Vogel, PHN; Melanie Reese, Charge Nurse I; Rebekah Sprinkle, PHN; Sandy Wilson, PHN; Rachel Knighton, PHN; Tammy Varner, PHN; Britt Abernathy, Charge Nurse I, all of Public Health; Melanie Sigmon, Quality Compliance Coordinator, Emergency Medical Services

Two County agencies have entered into a partnership with each other to make the schools in our county a safer place this year and beyond. Catawba County Public Health School Nurses and the Quality Compliance Coordinator of EMS have implemented Medical Emergency Response Teams (MERTs) in all schools in the county. On August 16, 2011, approximately 175 educators, representing each school, attended a mass training exercise at Shuford Elementary School. These educators were certified in CPR and First Aid in order to participate on a MERT team. MERT Teams will be responsible for responding to emergencies and health needs of students with chronic health conditions while

Kneeling (left to right): Rhonda Stikeleather, Charge Nurse II; Margaret Sides, PHN; Ginny Beisler, PHN; Jennifer Lindsay, Charge Nurse I; Jennifer Moser, PHN, Diane Howell, PHN. Standing (left to right): Marianne Vogel, PHN; Tammy Varner, PHN; Debra Bryant, PHN; LaDonna Hodge, PHN; Kimberly Spaulding, PHN; Melanie Reese, Charge Nurse I. Not pictured: Britt Abernathy, Charge Nurse I; Terri Curtis, PHN; Ella Davila-Hernandez, PHN; Rachel Knighton, PHN; Margaret Monday, PHN; Tracey Paul, Public Health Educator; Amy Phillips, PHN; Rosemary Sermershiem, PHN; Jennifer Sharpe, Charge Nurse I; June Sisti, PHN; Rebekah Sprinkle, PHN; Jennifer Tuttle, PHN; Sandy Wilson, PHN.

at school as well as adults on the grounds. MERT training will continue each year, as new members come on to a team, and as annual certification is needed. Team members will participate in drills conducted by the school nurse throughout the school year. By utilizing Catawba County Government employees and existing programs, the Catawba County MERT

Training Team has not only saved the school system thousands of dollars in training costs, but has potentially saved the precious lives of children and those who teach them each day.

Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) Team-

Team Leader: Janine Szymanski, Clinical Program Manager, Social Services. **Team Members:** Tiffany Parlier, Outpatient Therapist II; Lorraine Saporito, Outpatient Therapist I; Amy Stanley, Social Work Supervisor III; Heather Ball, Business Manager I; Dawn Wilson, Social Work Program Manager, all of Social Services; Karen Brown, Outpatient Therapist II, Child Advocacy Center.



In May 2010 the PCIT Team began participating in a

learning collaborative to be trained in Parent Child Interaction Therapy, an evidence-based therapy for children ages 3 to 6 with behavioral and emotional problems and their parents/caregivers. PCIT is implemented as part of the Child Wellbeing Project for families, post-care, to improve child behavior, the parent-child relationship and the parent's ability to attend to child behaviors. The PCIT team included clinicians who focused on learning an entirely new and very structured way of providing therapy, in that PCIT involves the therapist observing the parent and child play through a one-way mirror while providing live coaching to the parent through a "bug in the ear" following a step-by-step sequence of behaviors. At the same time, the Collaborative required participation by a senior leader to address sustainability and barriers to implementation. The team completed the training portion in January 2011. Clinicians are each currently working two PCIT cases and, once completed, will be "rostered" as PCIT therapists. The team continues to meet weekly to assure fidelity to the model.

Front row (left to right): Tiffany Parlier, Outpatient Therapist II; Janine Szymanski, Clinical Program Manager, Social Services; Heather Ball, Business Manager I. Back row (left to right): Lorraine Saporito, Outpatient Therapist I; Amy Stanley, Social Work Supervisor III; Karen Brown, Outpatient Therapist II, Child Advocacy Center; Dawn Wilson, Social Work Program Manager

Twenty-eight employees who have retired in the past year were saluted during the Awards Night event, along with County employees who have served for five, ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five, thirty and thirty-five and forty years (Bill Little of the Tax Office). Three County employees who passed away in the last year were remembered: Wilbur Ennis, who worked with Public Health; Tinette Travis, retired from Social Services and P J Stanley, who worked with Emergency Services.

"Our Employee Awards night is one of the most important events we have each year," Lundy said. "The high quality of services delivered to our citizens is a reflection of the fine work done by our employees. It is always a privilege for members of the Board of Commissioners and me to spend an evening recognizing many of our employees for outstanding work, and thanking each and every one for the part they play in helping make Catawba County a great place in which to live and work."