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### **CATAWBA COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH HONORS LONGTIME BOARD MEMBER**

HICKORY, NC – After nearly 45 years of service to the health of Catawba County, longtime nurse and public health leader Brenda Watson retired from the Catawba County Board of Health at the board's monthly meeting on June 5.

Watson's employment at Catawba County Public Health began in September 1965 and spanned 35 years. She worked as staff nurse supervisor, nursing director, home health director, served twice as interim health director, and retired in 2000 as nursing director. Watson joined the Board of Health in 2007 and served three consecutive 3-year terms.

"I wanted to continue to be involved with public health issues and work with the outstanding director and staff," said Watson, who was most interested in public health nursing and the services offered through Catawba County Public Health.

Watson helped steer the organization toward a collaborative model that looks at the overall health of the community and allows for private partnerships to assure services.

"Public health has changed over the years, with more involvement in schools and the community and a move toward assuring services instead of directly providing them," said Watson.

Tracey Paul, WIC outreach specialist, served many of those years with Watson.

"She has performed above and beyond the call of duty, both in her role as our nursing director until her retirement, and in her role serving on our Board of Health," said Paul. "During her tenure, we have been blessed to work with an individual with so much knowledge and passion for the work we perform day in and day out at Catawba County Public Health."

Although Watson's official service on the board is complete, she plans to continue her involvement with St. Luke's United Methodist Church and Eastern Catawba Cooperative Christian Ministry.

"Brenda has been a public health ambassador for a long time in our community, and has served Catawba County Public Health with compassion and excellence for more than a quarter of a century," said Health Director Doug Urland.

After serving three terms for a total of nine years on the Catawba County Board of Health, Watson's words are succinct: "It was an honor to serve."

Catawba County Public Health promotes and protects the health of all Catawba County residents through preventive services, innovative partnerships, and community health improvement initiatives. For more information, please call (828) 695-5800 or visit [www.catawbacountync.gov/phealth](http://www.catawbacountync.gov/phealth).

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**PHOTO CUTLINE:** Brenda Watson was honored for her longtime service to Catawba County's residents at the Catawba County Board of Health meeting on June 5. Watson served three consecutive 3-year terms on the board after completing her working career at Catawba County Public Health.

*"Leading the Way to a Healthier Community"*