

Hamrick helps foster GHC's growth, on

BY MARK ANDREWS

mark.andrews@daily-tribune.com

For Carolyn Hamrick, pursuing a career in education and finding her role as campus dean for the Georgia Highlands College Cartersville campus has been a natural process throughout her career, which has spanned more than 35 years.

"I began my teaching career in [South Carolina] as a special education teacher for students who were mentally challenged," Hamrick said. "After staying home with my young children for several years, I returned to education as a learning disabilities teacher. We moved to Georgia in 1987 and I taught at Cass Middle School.

"I had always loved teaching reading and I began teaching part time at GHC, although at that time it was Floyd College. After teaching part time for four years I was offered a full-time position. At that time GHC had only three campuses and I was often teaching on all three campuses each semester.

"In 1997 I was asked to go to our campus in Acworth and I served there for seven years. GHC began phasing out the operations in Acworth and I was asked to become director at our Marietta campus. I served as director for one year and then I was asked to come to the Cartersville campus. The campus had only been at its present location for about a year and had only around a thousand students. We now have over 2,200 students."

Occupation/title: Campus

dean for the Georgia Highlands College Cartersville campus

City of residence: Cartersville

Family: Married to Bill for 40 years; son Ben and his wife Theresa and grandson Luke; daughter Elizabeth and her husband Brad and two grandsons, Will and Brogen

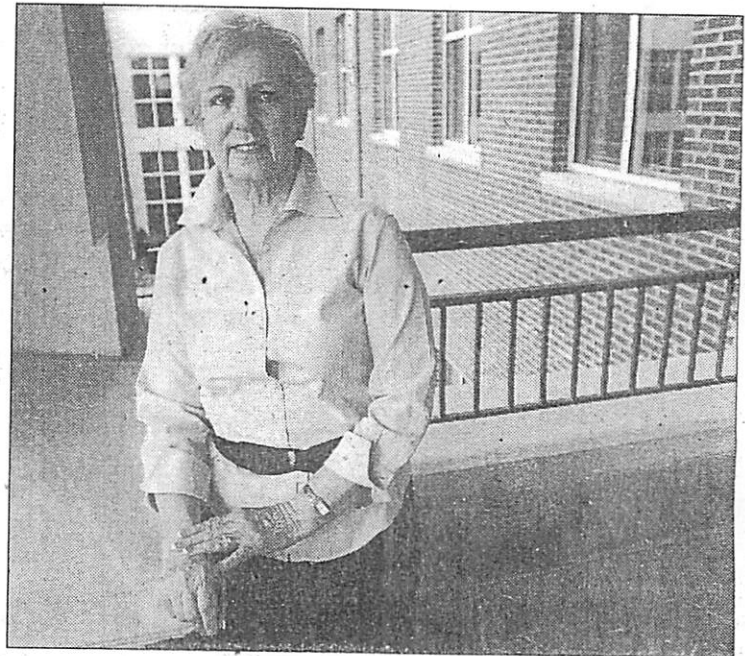
Education: BS and Masters degree from Winthrop University in Rock Hill, S.C., and Education Specialist degree from University of West Georgia, Carrollton

At what point in your life did you realize you wanted to pursue a career in education?

A: My parents have often told me that they knew I would go into education. I am the oldest of three girls and I would sit my sisters in chairs and read to them. I would give them assignments to complete. I had an aunt who was mentally challenged and I wanted to work with that group of students.

Could you explain the role you feel GHC plays in Cartersville's ongoing efforts for economic development as well as the role GHC plays in community education?

A: Georgia Highlands College is an access institute. Many of our students come to us underprepared. Many of our students are non traditional students. Many are first generation college students. Statistics show that in today's global economy some kind of postsecondary education will be required. Our mission is to help students take the first step toward that goal. We offer a schedule that allows students to attend either



SKIP BUTLER/The Daily Tribune News
Carolyn Hamrick is the Cartersville Campus Dean for Georgia Highlands College.

day or evening classes and also weekend classes. We now have a four-year nursing program. This was the result of local hospitals telling us that they needed more nurses with baccalaureate degrees.

Other four-year programs will be based on community needs. In addition to our credit level classes, we offer a large Continuing Education program. These classes are non-credit and are based on community input. We offer beginner computer classes, leadership training classes and other classes requested by our local companies. We have over 100 full-time employees based at the Cartersville campus. Many ... live in Bartow County. They do their grocery

shopping here, they shop locally for other items. They eat at the local restaurants. They are treated by local doctors.

How would you like to see GHC Cartersville grow?

A: We opened our Student Center in August 2012. This has changed the culture of our campus. Students no longer have to leave campus for lunch. The student center gives students additional space for labs and organizations. Before the student center opened, many of our students came to class and then left. Now they stay on campus. They eat in the cafe, they work out in the weight rooms, they play flag football and basketball. They par-

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ticipate in service learning and community projects. Students who are involved on campus are more focused and more focused on learning.

We are currently in the design phase for a second academic building. The focus of this building will be math and science. We do not have a chemistry lab. There will be a chemistry lab in this building. Many of the majors required for our global economy will require math and science classes. We will be able to expand our course offerings in these fields. We would like to expand our involvement in the community's arts program. This fall we are hoping to expand our music program with the addition of a choral music class. We are expanding the involvement of our faculty and staff in community projects and organizations.

What do you consider your greatest personal or professional achievement?

A: Without doubt my greatest personal accomplishment is my wonderful family.

What is the most rewarding aspect of your position at GHC and in the community?

A: There is nothing more rewarding than seeing students succeed. Many of our students come in scared and underprepared. People have told them they shouldn't go to college or that they weren't smart enough. To see those students walk across the stage at graduation or to have a student come into your office and tell you that GHC made a difference in

their life makes you feel great. I have also been fortunate to participate in a number of community organizations. I am currently a member of Leadership Bartow and serve Cartersville-Bartow chamber of commerce board of directors. I am also a member of the Etowah Rotary Club. I also volunteer at my church, Sam Jones United Methodist. These activities allow me the opportunity to be involved and to give back to my community. Cartersville is a great place to live and it's because of the people. I want to be able to give back to my community.

Where is your favorite place to be in Bartow County?

A: Anywhere that I am with my family — especially my three grandsons.

What is the best advice you've ever been given?

A: Treat everyone with respect and courtesy.

Do you have a personal philosophy?

A: My philosophy would be one of helping. I enjoy my interactions with students where I can help them come up with academic plans. I think that you treat everyone fairly. Everyone can be successful. I often tell students that there is more than one way to accomplish a goal. We just need to find the way that works best for you. I give them the example that there are several ways I can go from the Cartersville campus to downtown Cartersville. All the ways will get me there. I just need to find the way that is best for me.