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Canton Rotary Announces Community Service Award Winners

Staff reports

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Rotary Club of Canton

Brian Hightower, retired superintendent of the Cherokee County School District, center left, received the Rotary Club of Canton's Jean Harris Award. He is pictured with Canton Rotary President Francisco Lozano, Jo Ellen Wilson and Barbara

The Rotary Club of Canton has presented its annual community service awards to two longtime leaders.

This year's winner of the Lamar Haley Award, which honors exceptional community service, is Jon Collins, who was recognized for his contributions to adult education. This year's Jean Harris Award, which honors a non-Rotarian for outstanding "Service Above Self," was presented to retired Cherokee County School District Superintendent Brian Hightower for his contributions to public education.

The honorees were surprised with the presentations at the club's weekly lunch meeting March 26 at the Cherokee County Conference Center at The Bluffs in Canton.

Rotarians Sonia Carruthers and Clark Corder presented Collins with his award, praising his lifetime of service including a military career followed by an adult education career. Collins began his adult education career as a GED instructor and advanced to director of adult education for Chattahoochee Technical College.

"He's dedicated his life to service," said Carruthers, who has served alongside Collins on community service boards. Corder also praised Mr. Collins' dedication to community service through his church.

Collins said the motto "Duty, Honor, Country" and his belief in supporting others have guided his life of service.

“You are important,” Collins told club members as he accepted the award, “and the people you serve are important.”

Rotarian Barbara Jacoby, a spokesperson for CCSD, presented the award to Hightower, citing his longtime service to public education through his vocation as well as his volunteerism for education and youth-focused organizations including Cherokee County Special Olympics, Cherokee County YMCA and Reinhardt University.

“Over his nearly 40-year career as an educator, from classroom teacher and coach to school principal to district leader to his most recent role as Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Hightower served our community’s children with excellence each and every day,” she said. “He has promised to continue his legacy as a cheerleader for our schools, our educators and our community’s children.”

Hightower, who recently retired, said he plans to be an active volunteer in his retirement to support children and families.

“Thank you for this honor. Thank you for your continued partnership with our community and all you have done for our schools and children,” he said to the club members upon accepting the award.

The Rotary Club of Canton meets at noon on Tuesdays at the Cherokee Conference Center at The Bluffs or at offsite locations for community service projects. For more information visit www.therotaryclubofcantonga.org.