

Shining Stars Honored at Banquet

The “shining stars” of soon to be high school graduates were honored with various scholarships awarded during a banquet held at the School House Inn in Benham.

“Today, knowledge and education are more important than ever, and that is why an event like this, the launching of the entry into higher education of some of our best and brightest is so important,” said Dr. Bruce Ayers, president of Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College.

Ayers delivered the keynote address to approximately 125 people who gathered for the scholarship presentations from the Harlan County Community Scholarship Fund, the Harlan County Soil Conservation District and various other individuals and organizations. The banquet is held each May providing a venue for students to be recognized for their outstanding accomplishments during their K-12 education.

“The world is a different place from when I graduated high school,” said Ayers. “Back then, an individual armed with a high school diploma could still find a good paying job,” he said. “But our economy and world have undergone profound changes. Technology has revolutionized every aspect of our lives, including what we learn and how we learn it, where we work and how we work, and how we think and how our brains are wired.”

Ayers told the audience that America is part of a world-wide marketplace requiring Americans to work with their brains instead of hands.

“This is a revolution transforming the world,” he said, “and those of you who will be receiving scholarships here will be at the core of this revolution through the medium of education.”

He quoted statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Labor which looked at the median income in 2009 of people with different levels of education attainment.

“A high school dropout earns a little over a million dollars in his or her life,” he said. “A high school graduate earns \$1.46 million. An associate degree holder earns almost \$2 million. And, a person with a bachelor’s degree earns \$2.4 million.”

“These differences in income, based on education, are only going to become larger,” he added. “In fact, it is predicted by the year 2020 – nine years from now – that more than 85 percent of the jobs in Kentucky will require some type of college.”

Ayers stressed that now, more than at any other time in the history of mankind, “individuals, young and old alike, need an education. They need the advantages that education will provide for them and their families.”

Ayers urged the audience to be supportive of the graduates in their higher education endeavors.

“I suggest to the families and friends of our scholarship winners, these young people are going to need you along the way. Indeed, a supportive family and friends often become the lifeline that makes college success possible. As the African proverb states, ‘It takes a village to raise a child.’ The modern version of this proverb might read, ‘It takes a village to raise a college graduate.’”

Ayers offered best wishes for the graduates that “your higher education years will be equally as successful and rewarding as were those you spent in high school. May God be with you as you launch this new chapter in your lives; and may He guide and direct you until it is completed.”

A special presentation was made in honor of longtime Harlan County Community Scholarship Board of Director and treasurer Dawn Nunez. Nunez was unable to attend, but the award was received by her daughter, Donell Busroe.

Harlan County Community Scholarship Board of Directors Wallace Napier and Reecie Stagnolia made the presentation.

Stagnolia noted that Nunez had been the “workhorse” for the scholarship program for many years, going back to its origins in the mid 1980s. Stagnolia noted Nunez was always willing to work to help others in any way she could.

Scholarship recipients included:

The GWFC/Kentucky Tri-Cities Woman’s Club Scholarships presented by Mary Jo O’Bradovich to Haleigh L. Feltner, daughter of Donald and Lynn Feltner of Lynch, and Teresa Kate Watts, daughter of Teresa Watts and Thom Watts, Lynch. The recipients are seniors at Harlan County High School.

The Mountain Trail Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution Scholarship presented by Shirley Dodd to Damien Keener, son of Johnny and Krystal Keener of Wallins. The recipient is a senior at Harlan County High School.

The Susan Moody Memorial Scholarship presented by Ken and Bettye Moody to Christyn LeAnne Housley, daughter of Jerry and Kim Housley, Cawood. The recipient is a senior at Harlan County High School.

The Cumberland Lions Club Scholarship presented by Michael Corrison to Taylor Ryan Evans, son of Shane and Sherri Evans, Loyall. The recipient is a senior at Harlan County High School.

The East Kentucky Social Club Scholarship presented by Carolyn Sundy to Joseph Holland, son of Bertha Holland, Cumberland, and James Holland, Lynch. The recipient is a senior at Harlan County High School.

The J. Clark Metcalfe Scholarship presented by Susie Mavinidis of the Harlan County Soil Conservation District to Chelsea Marie Clem, daughter of Will and Emily Clem, Harlan. The recipient is a senior at Harlan High School.

The Harlan County Soil Conservation District Scholarships presented by Will Clem of the Soil Conservation District and Brent Roark, assistant superintendent of Harlan County Schools, to Chelsea Clem, Harlan High School, daughter of Will and Emily Clem, Harlan; Stephanie Cole, Harlan High School, daughter of William and Lisa Cole, Wallins; and Patrick Cole Trigg, Harlan High School, son of Michael and Hollie Trigg, Harlan; Hogan Matthew Goowdwin, Harlan County High School, son of James and Shelia Goodwin, Benham; Bernard Graham, son of Bernard Graham and Maggie Perkins, Cumberland; Hayley Lynn Helton, Harlan County High School, daughter of Gary and Michelle Helton, Evarts; Brent Roy, son of Bobby and Teresa Roy, Baxter.

The Harlan County Community Scholarships were presented by Clem and Roark to Sarah Elizabeth Haywood, Harlan High School, daughter of Allen and Peggy Haywood, Baxter; Danielle Brock, Harlan County High School, daughter of Silas and Tammy Brock, Putney; Danielle Middleton, Harlan County High School, daughter of Mary Middleton of Evarts; and Jacob Thomas Whitaker, son of Elizabeth Lewis, Smith, and Tom Whitaker, Harlan.

The 2012 Scholarship Banquet has been scheduled for Thursday, May 3.