

Press Release
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Patrick County Education Foundation Announces \$100,000 Gift

A retired Stuart physician with deep family roots in Patrick County has contributed \$100,000 to the Patrick County Education Foundation, Jerry Hughes, executive director of the organization said Tuesday.

Dr. John R. Clark, who practiced urology in Martinsville and Stuart for many years, said he decided to support the educational efforts of the foundation out of a sense of obligation.

“Many years ago my parents, and many others in this area, donated what they could to the local schools to help pay teachers salaries and keep schools open at a time when I and many other children faced the possibility of not having access to education, and I never forgot that,” Clark said. “The education I received served me well all my life. I felt it was time to give back.”

“Patrick County’s future wellbeing lies in the ability of its residents to access and obtain a higher level of education, and I believe that this foundation is doing good work that will help reach these educational goals,” Clark said.

Foundation chairman, Gerald Baliles, a Patrick native and former Virginia governor, praised Clark’s contribution.

“I am very grateful for Dr. Clark’s generosity and support of the foundation’s efforts to improve the educational achievements of our citizens and to enhance the marketability of this area for economic growth,” Baliles said. “His commitment to Patrick County’s future is quite evident and very much appreciated.”

Hughes said Clark’s gift is important beyond the inherent dollar value of the contribution.

“Dr. Clark made a conscious decision to seek out the organization which could best realize his desire to give a gift of lasting value and major importance to the residents of Patrick County,” Hughes said. “We are very grateful for that.”

The Patrick County Education Foundation, established just last year, has already assisted Patrick County High School seniors in acquiring more than \$450,000 in financial aid, and more than \$17,000 in direct, need-based scholarships, Hughes said.

“We have also established scholarship programs at Ferrum College and Shenandoah University worth more than \$80,000 annually to Patrick County students,” Hughes said.

Baliles said Clark’s donation would be used to further the foundation’s mission of moving Patrick County from near the bottom to the top five rural counties in adult education attainment within ten years, thereby enhancing the County’s future economic prospects.

“These funds will help us enhance our prospects and promote economic growth in Patrick County,” Baliles said. “We think the way to do that is to increase access to higher education for our graduating seniors, to increase educational opportunities for our adult citizens, and to provide them with value-added workforce training programs.”

The Foundation’s GED Promotion Project is a collaborative initiative with the Patrick County Public School’s Adult Education program, Hughes said.

“This initiative is designed to increase by 50% over the next 10 years the number of Patrick residents who have a high school education,” Hughes added.

For more information about the Patrick County Education Foundation or its programs and services, please call Jerry Hughes, Executive Director, at (276) 694-6542.