

# Davis to speak at GED graduation

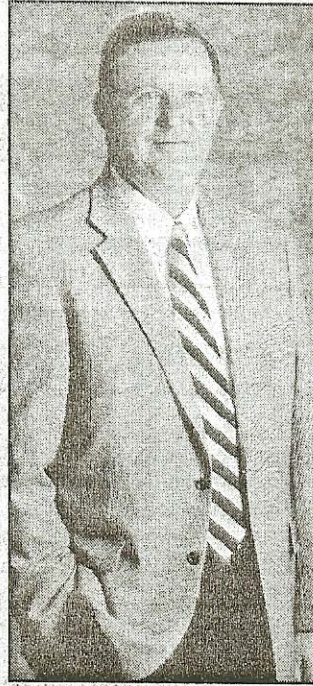
Graduation ceremonies for the Patrick County 2006 GED graduates will be held at 7 p.m. Friday, June 16, at the Reynolds Homestead in Critz. Thirty Patrick County residents will receive their high school diplomas, recognizing successful completion of the tests of General Educational Development (GED tests).

This year's graduation speaker will be Dr. James A. Davis, president of Shenandoah University in Winchester. Dr. Davis, a native of Southwest Virginia, received an associate's degree from Ferrum College, a bachelor of arts degree in history from Randolph-Macon College, a master of arts in history from Virginia Tech and a doctor of philosophy degree in college administration from Florida State University.

While at Randolph-Macon College, he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's oldest and largest academic honor society. From 1968 until 1982, Dr. Davis served at Ferrum College, first as an assistant professor of history and finally as senior vice president and dean of the college.

Dr. Davis has been president of Shenandoah University since 1982. Under his leadership, Shenandoah has developed into a comprehensive university and doctoral level institution. Since 1982, the university has experienced major growth in student enrollment and today has more than 2,800 students and over 80 programs of study in six schools.

Dr. Davis has also served as a member of the



Shenandoah University president Dr. James Davis

Virginia House of Delegates from 1979 until he retired in 1982 to accept the presidency of Shenandoah. Since 1979, he has served on a number of statewide boards and commissions. In 2005, Dr. Davis was appointed by the governor of Virginia to the Commonwealth Transportation Board and he remains on that board today. Additionally, he has held leadership positions in many professional and community organizations including two terms on the Commission of Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

Dr. Davis is a certified lay speaker with the United Methodist Church and a frequent speaker throughout the Virginia Conference. He and his wife, the former Janet Copple, have three children and six grandchildren.

Past speakers for Patrick County GED graduation ceremonies have included Justice G. Steven Agee, Supreme Court of Virginia; Dr. Phillip C. Stone, president of Bridgewater College; and Chief Judge David V. Williams, 21st Judicial Circuit Court of Virginia.

The 2006 Patrick County GED graduation celebration is co-sponsored by the Patrick County Education Foundation and Patrick County public schools. As in the past, Stuart Rotary Club will provide dinner for graduates and their guests preceding the graduation ceremonies.

Since launching its GED promotion project in mid-2003, the PCEF has committed significant financial resources to the Patrick County GED program to encourage county adults to complete their high school diplomas. During this time, Patrick County has risen from 43rd place among its 44 peer rural Virginia counties to second place in the number of GEDs awarded per 1,000 residents. By the end of the current fiscal year, the foundation will have committed nearly \$200,000 to increasing the county's GED graduation rate.

The GED tests are recognized throughout the United States and Canada and have opened access to education and employment for an estimated 15.2 million people over the program's 60-year history. An estimated one in seven high school diplomas issued in the U.S. each year is based on passing the GED tests and one in 20 first-year college students today is a GED graduate. GED graduates are successful doctors, public servants, office workers, mechanics, technicians, college presidents, military leaders, business people, writers and artists.