



For Immediate Release: June 1, 2010

Two (2) Pages

For more information, contact: Kara Sproles Mock, APR, 803.231.7732 or [mockk@heathwood.org](mailto:mockk@heathwood.org)

## **Heathwood Hall Honors Teacher with First-Ever 'Gasque Award'**

***Recipient Stan Wood is Director of School's Pursuit of Environmental Adventure and Knowledge (PEAK) Outdoor Program***

**(Columbia, S.C.)** – Heathwood Hall Episcopal School has honored longtime educator Stan Wood with its inaugural James H. Gasque Award for Teaching Excellence.

Named for Heathwood Hall English teacher Jimmy Gasque, who has taught for 50 years, the award will be presented annually at Commencement to members of the school's community who have exhibited "through passion, devotion, inspiration and expectation" the highest ideals of the teaching profession.

In his 27th year as a Heathwood Hall faculty member, Wood has served as director of the school's Pursuit of Environmental Adventure and Knowledge (PEAK) outdoor program for 13 years. His work touches every student on the school's campus of nearly 800, and he serves as an advisor and teacher of Environmental Science, World Geography and Wilderness Exploration in the Upper School. Wood previously served as the school's athletic director and coached several varsity sports including boys' basketball and track. He is a past recipient of the school's Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching and a three-time basketball Coach of the Year in the Palmetto Athletic Conference. He is a two-time graduate of the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) and a certified Wilderness First Responder. In 2001 Wood was named the Richland County Conservation District's Conservation Teacher of the Year. He is an experienced kayaker, mountain and road biker, backpacker, mountaineer and adventure racer.

Established in 1997, Heathwood Hall's PEAK program offers environmental education, environmental stewardship, wilderness exploration and leadership development opportunities not only to its students, but to groups of all ages outside the school. Its programs include ecology field trips for students at all grade levels, multi-day adventure outings and expeditions, corporate leadership training and summer camp experiences.

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Located on 133 acres bordered by rich farmland and the Congaree River, Heathwood Hall is home to a one-acre pond, a healthy stand of loblolly pine, native plants, a considerable field habitat and a stretch of old-growth deciduous trees. A large area of wetlands is located less than one mile from its campus where wildlife is abundant. The PEAK program utilizes this outdoor environment, an Alpine Tower and Odyssey high ropes courses and a variety of on-the-ground initiative elements to create challenging and educational experiences.

“Stan Wood is a dedicated and focused educator and environmental steward who has helped create a program that harnesses the natural beauty on and around our campus into an outdoor classroom,” said Heathwood Hall Head of School Chuck Jones who announced the award at Friday’s Commencement service. “It is absolutely fair to say that Heathwood Hall was ‘green’ long before the need and became widely adapted, and Stan Wood helped lead and establish a cultural understanding and respect for our environment that has allowed our school to be a nationally-recognized pioneer in this field.”

Wood will receive a monetary award from an endowment of funds contributed by alumni, parents and other members of the Heathwood Hall community specifically to honor Gasque and teaching excellence.

*Heathwood Hall Episcopal School is an independent school in Columbia, S.C. offering a rigorous college preparatory curriculum, a faith-centered experience and individual attention to students from nursery school through grade 12. For more information, visit [www.heathwood.org](http://www.heathwood.org).*

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