Anderson honored for lifetime of LaGrange service

Renowned businessman and environmentalist Ray Anderson was awarded the Fuller E. Callaway, Jr., Award for Lifetime Service to LaGrange College on April 12. Anderson is founder and Chairman of Interface Inc., the world’s leading producer of modular carpet and related products.

In presenting the honor, College President Stuart Gulley termed Anderson “a wonderful supporter of LaGrange College and a stalwart friend.”

The award memorializes the service of its namesake, according to Dr. Gulley.

“One would be hard-pressed to identify another individual who has had a greater impact upon this institution,” he said.

In accepting the honor, Anderson also pointed to Callaway as a mentor and source of inspiration.

“That this award is named for Fuller E. Callaway is especially meaningful to me,” he said. “He was perhaps the smartest businessman I have ever known.

“It was Fuller Callaway who lit the entrepreneurial spirit in me that led to the founding of Interface.”

An honors graduate of Georgia Tech, Anderson learned the carpet trade through 14 years of manufacturing experience with Deering-Milliken and Callaway Mills. In 1973 he founded Interface, a company which was the first to produce free-lay carpet tiles in America.

Twenty years later, he was given a copy of Paul Hawken’s “The Ecology of Commerce,” a book that changed his life—and the mission of Interface.

Today, Anderson is recognized as one of the world’s most environmentally progressive leaders on sustainable commerce, having served as co-chairman of the President’s Council on Sustainable Development during the Clinton administration and having been recognized by Mikhail Gorbachev with a Millennium Award from Global Green in September 1996 and as the Georgia Conservancy’s Conservationist of the Year in 1997.

At LaGrange College, he has been a champion for sustainability efforts and serves as a member of the institution’s Sustainability Council.

He also has served as a trustee of the college from 1983 to the present and is currently serving as chair of the Academic Affairs Committee. In 2002, he was inducted as a Fellow of LaGrange College for his generous financial support of the institution.

Hodges elected new board chairman

After a five-year stint as chairman of the LaGrange College Board of Trustees, George W. (Buddy) Darden has passed the gavel to William M. (Bill) Hodges, who was elected as the new chairman during an April 20 board meeting held at the College.

“We are most fortunate to have as board chair a person with Bill’s background, experience and commitments,” said College President Stuart Gulley.

“He is a graduate of the College, a phenomenally successful business person, and a person of faith and conviction. Bill embodies the challenged mind and inspired soul we seek to achieve with our students, and I look forward very much to working with him as we fulfill our vision of becoming Georgia’s premier private liberal arts and sciences college.”

Originally from Morrow, Ga., Hodges earned his B.A. in history in 1972 from LaGrange, where he was a member of the Kappa Sigma Fraternity.

In 1975, Hodges was one of two founding partners of Hodges Ward Elliott, a fully integrated hotel brokerage and investment banking firm. Today, he serves as the firm’s chief executive officer.

In addition to his role at Hodges Ward Elliott, Hodges also served as president of Diversified Innkeepers Inc. from 1983 to 1991. Diversified, which specialized in acquiring and repositioning undervalued hotel real estate, operated up to 27 hotels and employed more than 1,000 people. The company merged with Amerihost Properties Inc. of Chicago in 1991.

Over the years, Hodges has spoken to or appeared on a number of panels at the New York University Hotel Investors Conference, the Phoenix Lodging Conference and the REIT Finance Conference. He also has been an Entrepreneurial Studies guest lecturer for the Emory University MBA program.

Since 1996, Hodges has participated in the successful completion of 42 transactions involving 60 hotels, 14,000 rooms and $1.485 billion in sales.

A member of the LaGrange College Board of Trustees since 1998, Hodges was named to the College’s Wall of Outstanding Alumni in 1999. He and wife Sheila are the parents of a daughter, Julie Melton, and a son, Clint Hodges.
Chambers honored at commencement

During the May 19 commencement ceremonies, alumnus Donald L. Chambers Jr. ’77 was presented one of the College’s highest honors, the Distinguished Service Alumni Award.

The award is given each year at commencement to a LaGrange graduate who has provided continuous and devoted service to the College.

Chambers has been an active member of the Alumni Association and has served as a class coordinator for his graduating class for 30 years. A current member of the College’s Board of Trustees, he also has donated his time as a scholarship coordinator, a member-at-large of the Alumni Executive Council, a member of the Leadership Council and president of the Alumni Association.

A juvenile program manager, Chambers works for the state of Georgia’s Department of Justice. He is active in his church, First Baptist of Covington, Ga., and he serves on the Newton County Community Partnership Executive Board and the KidsNet Newton Policy Council.

A history major while at LaGrange, Chambers went on to earn his Juris Doctor degree from John Marshall Law School in Atlanta. He and wife Joan have four grown children: Jessica Dial, Jared Chambers, Marcia Abernathy and Nancy Etheredge.

Donald Chambers, left, accepts the Distinguished Service Alumni Award from Alumni Association President Joe Ragland.

Effort supports women in ministry

Over the past few years, the College’s Religion and Philosophy Department has produced a number of women graduates who have gone on to serve the United Methodist Church in the Atlanta area. To provide support for these women, and role models for current students, the department has introduced LC Women in Ministry.

“LC Women in Ministry is basically an opportunity for our present young women students and young women graduates who are in Atlanta and the extended Atlanta area to gather in conversation not only about the work they do, but also in conversation and in support of each other as women in the field of ministry,” said Alvin Lingenfelter, Assistant Professor of Religion and Church Leadership Program Director.

At its inaugural meeting on March 22 at Druid Hills United Methodist Church in Atlanta, the group had 20 women attend: 12 graduates and eight students.

“Everyone in the ministry needs to find a group of supporters on their journey of ministry, and women face some particular hurdles,” Lingenfelter said. “It seemed like an obvious gesture for our department to gather these women in community and in support of each other and their ministries.”

He explained that current students were included in the mix for a couple of reasons.

“It provides an opportunity to develop mentoring relationships and also allows our students to see what their futures will look like in the church as women and as leaders.”

Jessica Terrell, a 2003 LaGrange graduate, is one of the young church leaders the group was designed to reach out to. Currently associate pastor at First United Methodist in Covington, Ga., Terrell said she was excited to learn of LC Women’s establishment.

“I think it’s a fantastic idea because women in ministry is a trend that’s climbing,” she said, “and to be able to have contact with one another strengthens our bonds and gives us the experience of one another’s experiences so that we’re able to understand what it’s like to be a young woman in the ministry, the opportunities that are out there and ways to help one another grow.”

Lingenfelter said the group’s next meeting will likely take place in the fall.
Regional receptions reunite alumni, friends

Panther pride brought alumni and friends together for three springtime events. Hosted in Orlando, Fla., and Atlanta and St. Simons, Ga., the receptions featured remarks by Head Football Coach Todd Mooney, who talked about the newest addition to the LaGrange College athletic program.

“I couldn’t be more proud of our team,” he said of football’s inaugural season. “It was tough; it’s not easy to line up against upperclassmen when you’re a team of all freshmen and sophomores.”

In the off-season, his players are working on a conditioning and weight-training program—and his coaches are busy evaluating prospective players.

“Last count, we film-evaluated 510 prospects,” he said.

Mooney also announced the team’s move to the St. Louis Intercollegiate Athletic Conference as a football-only affiliate starting with the 2008 season.

“This means we’ll have the benefit of beginning with seven games already scheduled,” he said. “It also gives us a chance to play for a conference title and gives our players more opportunities to receive recognition for their accomplishments on the field and in the classroom.”

Mooney was quick to point out that LaGrange is home to exceptional athletes in many sports.

“Football is not unique,” he said. “There are lots of hardworking athletes and coaches—and all of them need your support.”

Leadership Council elects new head

At its final 2006–07 meeting, the LaGrange College Leadership Council recognized outgoing president Sally Curtis AsKew ’62, H’06 and elected a new president, Stan Moor ’72. An award-winning educator who was named to the College’s Wall of Outstanding Alumni last fall, Moor currently works as the community service coordinator for The Westminster Schools in Atlanta. With a mission to advance the College, the Leadership Council selects three annual priorities on which to focus its attention. Above, AsKew passes the president’s gavel to Moor as President Stuart Gulley looks on.
Campus leaders become Seekers

LaGrange College officials have for years exhorted students, faculty and staff to embrace the tenets of servant-leadership, and now, through a program led by the Rev. Dr. Quincy Brown, the teachings are being offered to other groups closely tied to the College.

This fall and spring, several members of the Alumni Executive Committee, President’s Advisory Council and Leadership Council met together to plumb the depths of a subject that receives great emphasis on the Hill.

Edward Smith was a member of the group dubbed Seekers for Leaders. He explained his interest in the program, saying, “I originally decided to take the course for two reasons: One, I’m familiar with the servant-leadership initiative at the College and how that has grown through the years. And two, I’m also familiar with the Rev. Dr. Quincy Brown and what good work he’s done at the College.

“I thought it would be a good opportunity to learn more about servant-leadership. That’s one of those ambiguous phrases you think you know what it means, but this class has really given us the opportunity to discuss and read about and explore this subject.”

Dr. Brown, Elizabeth Walker Lanier Campus Minister and Director of Servant-Leadership, said the program is a spin-off of the Seekers course he’s offered to faculty and staff for several years.

“We’re kind of branching out and testing the waters with other groups,” he said. “We’re using some of the same books and some of the same teaching as Seekers, but this is more of a condensed version.”

In between their meetings in the fall and spring, group members read a book from an assigned reading list. According to Dr. Brown, the topics they perused and discussed were somewhat recognizable.

“As the participants have come to realize, they are familiar with these principles, and they know it when they see it,” he said. “I’m just giving them a way to frame it so that it makes sense to them and it becomes a part of their regular thinking.

“Our program basically talks about integrating one’s personal strengths and weakness in order to lead by serving others. My hope is that they begin to piece together certain threads so they can have a large tapestry of what it means to be a servant-leader.”

Though Dr. Brown has taught the precepts of the program for a number of years, he said it’s a topic that he never grows tired of revisiting.

“My belief is that Jesus is the ultimate servant-leader,” he said. “I look at the way he listened to people to offer compassion, forgiveness, and healing by affirming their strengths and helping with their weaknesses as well as how he began to galvanize a movement based on God’s amazing grace available for all to receive.”

*Seeker* Lori Medlock Anderson ’83, second from the left, helps raise money for the American Cancer Society.