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Phil Kirk Named Recipient of the 2007 Jay Robinson Leadership Award

RALEIGH, N.C. (June 11, 2007) - The Public School Forum of N.C. announced Phillip J. Kirk, Jr. was named the seventh recipient of the Jay Robinson Leadership Award and was awarded a \$5,000 cash prize given by BB&T and an anonymous donor on June 4. The award honors the extraordinary leadership and service of Dr. Jay Robinson, former school superintendent and State Board of Education Chair.

“Phil, like Jay Robinson, was deeply committed to helping all children achieve higher levels of performance,” comments former Representative Gene Arnold, chair of the Jay Robinson Leadership Award Committee. “Phil persevered, as Jay would have done, to see that all children have equal opportunities and that resources, both instructional and financial, are provided to assist them in the learning process. Jay was instrumental in Phil’s choice as State Board Chair, knowing that he would do everything he could to bring North Carolina school systems to the highest level of achievement.”

Kirk’s service on boards and commissions is as lengthy as the list of his many honors. His devotion and commitment to a strong system of public education has always permeated his decisions.

He was particularly deft at convincing the business community in North Carolina that strong public schools were an economic development issue and that corporate North Carolina should be at the table as stakeholders when issues affecting public schools were being addressed.

“Phil has been preaching the connection between quality public education and economic development long before most of us fully understood the implications of a knowledge-based global economy,” writes Erskine Bowles, president of the UNC System. “He has spent almost 40 years working on multiple fronts to improve our schools. Balancing public school funding needs with the interests of the business community took diplomacy and courage, but Phil never hesitated to do the right thing for our children.”

Kirk’s rich career ranges from radio announcer, newspaper reporter, teacher, state senator, secretary of the Department of Human Resources, chief of staff and administrative assistant to two governors and head of the state’s Chamber of Commerce, where he also served as publisher of North Carolina Magazine. Kirk followed Robinson as Chair of the State Board of Education, and served for six years in that role. Kirk is currently the vice president of external relations at Catawba College, where he was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Laws.

In addition to Kirk, the other finalists for this year’s award were Dr. Terry Holliday, superintendent of Iredell-Statesville Schools and Dr. Anthony Parker, superintendent of Johnston County Schools. Each of the finalists is an exemplary education leader in North Carolina and embodies the leadership traits personified by Dr. Jay Robinson.

About Phil Kirk:

Phil Kirk is the vice president for external relations at Catawba College in Salisbury and owner of a speaking and consulting firm. In 1970, Phil was elected as the youngest state senator in North Carolina. In 1989, Phil became president of North Carolina Citizens for Business and Industry and was consistently ranked among the top 25 most effective N.C. lobbyists. As politician, government official, president of NCCBI and chairman of the State Board of Education, Phil has delivered more than 6,000 talks. For

more information or to book a speaking engagement, visit www.phillipkirk.com or e-mail bookings@phillipkirk.com.

About the Jay Robinson Leadership Award:

The Jay Robinson Leadership Award was created to honor Dr. Jay Robinson, a distinguished educator, UNC vice-president and former chairman of the State Board of Education, who best remembered as the architect of the states ABC's of Accountability plan. Previous award winners include Laura Bilbro-Berry, 2000 NC Teacher of the Year, a NC Teaching Fellow and current Director of Federal Programs, Beaufort County Schools; Dr. Tom McNeel, retired Superintendent of Caldwell County Schools; Dr. Jim Causby, former Superintendent of Johnston County Schools and currently Executive Director of the North Carolina School Administrators Association; Dr. Bob Bridges, former Superintendent of Wake County Schools and former chair of the Closing the Achievement Gap Commission; Judge Howard E. Manning, Jr., Resident Superior Court Judge in Wake County; and Dr. Ann Denlinger, former Superintendent of Durham County Schools and currently President, Wake Education Partnership.

About the Jay Robinson Leadership Award Committee:

Members of the Jay Robinson Leadership Award Committee, in addition to Gene Arnold, Chair; included Barbara Allen, Consultant; Margaret Hyatt, 2005 Wachovia Principal of the Year; Debra Horton, President NCPTA; Dr. Bob Bridges, Dr. Jim Causby; Dr. Ann Denlinger; Gerry Hancock, former Forum Board Chair; Kathy Taft, State Board of Education; Carr Thompson, Senior Program Officer, Burroughs Wellcome Fund; Richard Urquhart, Investment Management Corporation; and Rep. Doug Yongue.

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