

Hill for his leadership at a retirement dinner on Saturday, August 15, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. at the Columbus Country Club and at a retirement program on Sunday, August 16, 2015 during the 11:00 a.m. service at the church.

A native of Columbus, Georgia, Willie L. Hill was born to the late Hollis and Dora Hill. He was educated in the public school system of Muscogee County. Reverend Hill then served our nation honorably in the United States Army during the Vietnam War. After completing his service, he attended Chattahoochee Valley Community College in Phenix City, Alabama, where he earned an associate's degree, and later attended Troy University to complete a bachelor's degree in Criminology. It was then that Rev. Hill heard God's call to preach and enrolled in the American Baptist College to study theology.

Rev. Hill pastored the Greater Beallwood Baptist Church for 28 years, faithfully carrying out his vision for the church and leading its members in the fulfillment of a God-first life. In the years after Rev. Hill became pastor, Greater Beallwood expanded greatly, growing from a century-old church that was facing financial hardship to a spiritual praising center serving almost 350 people weekly. Not only did Rev. Hill's leadership grow the congregation in number and in spirit, but it also was instrumental in the building of a new sanctuary that would accommodate the numerous church services and meetings.

A strong advocate of access to Christian education, Rev. Hill founded Children's Church, a separate training and worship service for children ages 5 through 12 to grow in their faith. Children's Church serves as a valuable resource for members of the Greater Beallwood Baptist Church and has helped children learn about the word of God in a way that they can relate to and understand.

Throughout his pastoral career, always seeking to improve the craft of Christian ministry and discipleship, Rev. Hill has served as President of the Inter-Denominational Ministerial Alliance for eight years and Vice President for four years. He served as President of the Fourth District Congress of Christian Education for two years, and he also co-founded the Columbus Ministerial Association. An avid golfer and fierce competitor, Rev. Hill served on the Golf Authority of the Columbus Consolidated Government for ten years.

Jeremiah 3:15 says, "Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding." Reverend Willie Hill is one such shepherd and a man of integrity who exudes the genuine principles and values of Christian discipleship. A charismatic evangelical leader and pioneer, his spiritual zeal is both infectious and highly contagious.

Rev. Hill is surrounded by the love and support of his congregation, but also his family—his wife of 52 years, Helen; their two sons, Daren and Brandon; and three beloved grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me, my wife Vivian, and the more than 730,000 residents of Georgia's Second Congressional District in thanking the Reverend Willie L. Hill for his service to our nation, the Columbus community, the Greater Beallwood Baptist Church, and the Kingdom of God.

HONORING DR. R. SCOTT RALLS,
RETIRING PRESIDENT OF THE
NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY
COLLEGE SYSTEM

HON. DAVID E. PRICE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 31, 2015

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Scott Ralls, the seventh president of the North Carolina Community College System, who stepped down as president of the system this summer after seven years of service.

North Carolina's community college system is one of the state's greatest educational assets. It is one of the nation's largest community college systems, and its reach is extensive, with most North Carolinians residing within 30 miles of one of its 58 colleges. The system serves more than 850,000 individuals annually, with 321,000 students in degree, certificate and curriculum programs and almost 500,000 students taking continuing education classes. Some 40 percent of the state's wage earners today have received some education or training at a North Carolina community college in the past 10 years.

Dr. Ralls was an exemplary president, carrying on the fine tradition of leadership of his predecessor, and our former House colleague, Martin Lancaster. Taking the helm in 2008, President Ralls' tenure began just as the recession hit and the state's unemployment rate began to soar. During the first three years of his presidency, displaced workers flocked to the state's community colleges; the system's enrollment grew 28 percent from 2007 to 2010. At the same time, the system weathered a budget crunch, all the while embarking on a strategy to revamp curriculum, improve completion rates, and forge new transfer agreements with the state's university system.

Even with these challenges, Dr. Ralls helped the System obtain international recognition for its efforts to foster economic and workforce development. Ralls's efforts included expanding health care programs, reenergizing technical education, strengthening the connection between economic and workforce development, and furthering strong partnerships between public schools, community colleges and the University of North Carolina System to promote seamless education pathways.

President Ralls also focused efforts on improving student success. He was an early champion for early college high schools, and today, North Carolina hosts one-third of all early colleges in the U.S.—the vast majority located on the campuses of community colleges. In addition, in 2009, under Dr. Ralls's leadership, the North Carolina Community College System initiated a comprehensive set of strategic initiatives focused on student success and program completion entitled SuccessNC, consolidating curriculums into 32 critical growth areas for North Carolina's economy and providing students with opportunities to earn industry-recognized, stackable credentials, resulting in a more competitive workforce. The Brookings Institution and the Rockefeller Foundation recognized this model in describing one of the most "forward-thinking economy-shifting efforts underway in America's state and metropolitan areas."

During his tenure, President Ralls was elected by national peers to be the President of the National Association of Industry-Specific Training Directors. He also led a state task force responsible for creating policies and procedures for the New and Expanding Industry Training Program, which resulted in a 16% reduction in expenditures and 11% increase in total training projects. Further, he chaired a task force on workplace safety training and generated new policies for administering the NC Worker Training Tax Credit Program.

Dr. Ralls serves on several national and state boards and commissions and is the Chair of the National Council of State Directors of Community Colleges. He has earned a number of awards and honors, including a Certificate of Appreciation from the U.S. Department of Commerce (1995), and a Certificate of Appreciation from the NC Rural Prosperity Task Force (2000). He was also awarded the 2006 Freedom Fund Award from the Craven County NAACP, and was dubbed a 2007–2008 Impact Business Leader by the Charlotte Business Leader Magazine.

Prior to serving as the North Carolina Community College System President, Dr. Ralls was president of Craven Community College in New Bern and Havelock. This makes him only the second former North Carolina community college president to hold the System presidency, and he is leaving to once again assume the presidency of a fine institution, the Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC). While at Craven, he led efforts to support college enrollment growth, while facing significant impacts of military deployment. At Craven, Ralls led in establishing workforce development programs in targeted industry sectors; helped create Craven Early College; initiated University Connections to foster on-site and on-line degree completion opportunities, and fostered an Undergraduate Engineering Education partnership with N.C. State College of Engineering.

Dr. Ralls, a leader of national distinction, is also an approachable, collaborative person who has been a delight for me and others to work with personally. He guided North Carolina's community colleges through the economic downturn and state budget cuts and oversaw a period of remarkable growth. Thanks to his tireless efforts, thousands of North Carolinians have had the opportunity to obtain the education and training they need to realize their full potential. I thank Dr. Ralls for his years of service to the state of North Carolina and wish him the very best as he assumes the helm at NVCC.

RECOGNIZING RECIPIENTS OF THE 2015 BEST OF BRADDOCK AWARDS

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 31, 2015

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the recipients of the 2015 Best of Braddock Awards, presented by the Braddock District Council of Community Associations. These awards are given annually to deserving individuals, organizations, and companies in the Braddock Magisterial District of Fairfax County, Virginia, who have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to our community.