



You Won an Award!

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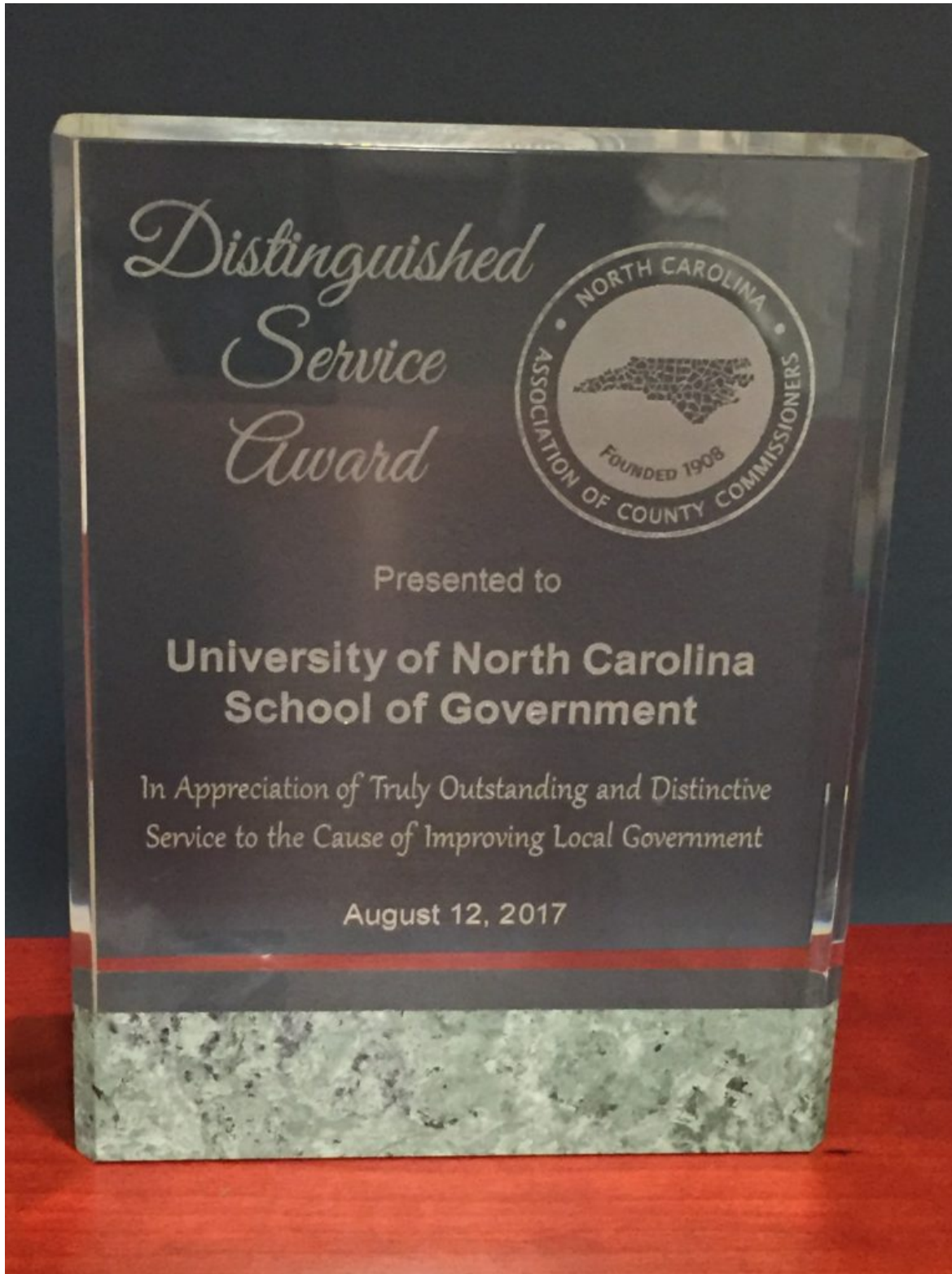
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The North Carolina Association of County Commissioners concluded their annual conference on Saturday night with the President's Banquet at the Durham Convention Center. It is an important occasion for NCACC. The outgoing president, Fred McClure (Davidson County), presided and the dinner was attended by many current commissioners and a number of retired commissioners who had been past presidents. Brenda Howerton (Durham County) was sworn in as NCACC's new president by Congressman G.K. Butterfield.

The dinner also included an awards ceremony. They recognized someone as a Friend of the Counties (Mike Sprayberry, Division of Emergency Management) and they also recognized new inductees into the NCACC Hall of Fame (Delilah Blanks, Bladen County; David Thompson, former NCACC Executive Director; and Danny Wright, Vance County). The NCACC Board of Directors also recognized President McClure as the Outstanding County Commissioner for the past year.

The School received the NCACC Distinguished Service Award. I accepted it on your behalf. The award reads: "In Appreciation of Truly Outstanding and Distinctive Service to the Cause of Improving Local Government." It is intended to honor faculty and professional staff at the School for all of your work for counties over the years. You deserve it, and so do many of our former colleagues.



I had people come up to me before and after the dinner to say how much they value the work you



do for them, and how they appreciate your commitment to their success. People talked about the work of the Development Finance Initiative, and they mentioned the valuable work that Frayda and Norma do in teaching ethics (“and they make it fun”). They mentioned how much we have helped them on strategic planning. In addition to understanding and valuing the range of work that we do with their county staff, they appreciate everyone who contributes to Essentials of County Government.

For many of them their most direct experience with the School is through the Local Elected Leaders Academy (LELA) because it is targeted for the commissioners themselves. Many of those in attendance last night had attended the Advanced Leadership Corps (ALC), which is a one-week leadership program for elected county and municipal board members. In fact, it was striking that all of the leaders of NCACC are graduates of ALC, and many of them told me after the dinner how important the experience was in preparing them for their leadership roles. It was great that Donna Warner was at the dinner because she, along with Vaughn Upshaw, deserve enormous credit for putting together ALC and other excellent leadership programs for elected officials. Peg Carlson was there as Director of the Center for Public Leadership and Governance, and it was nice for the commissioners to see our commitment to growing our leadership programs.

We will find a nice place in the building to display the award. As a hockey fan, I've always loved the tradition of allowing each player from the winning team to have the Stanley Cup for a day. So maybe we'll figure out a way to pass it around to everyone. Our partnership with NCACC is important and strong, and it is wonderful that they recognize and appreciate all of your hard work. Congratulations!

