

WPCC building dedicated

By RAE BEASLEY
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Western Piedmont Community College honored Johny Edison Hildebrand and Abby Seals Hildebrand by dedicating the college's Student Services building in their name on Friday.

"The college takes great pride in honoring the Hildebrands. They will long be remembered for education," WPCC President Jim Richardson said.

In December of 1990, the Hildebrands donated a tract of land to the college to be used for educational, historical and environmental studies.

The tract of land, known as "The Hildebrand Forest" contains about 414 acres of mountainous terrain yet is only minutes from the college campus off Old Highway 18.

According to Charles T. Henson, chairman of the trustees at WPCC,

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Photo by Mark Hannan

Charles Henson unveils Hildebrands' portrait at ceremony.

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the tract of land is, "One small case in point where the Hildebrands saw a need and filled it."

Both Hildebrands are natives of Burke County and have spent years dedicating their lives to education.

Abby Hildebrand taught school in Burke County for 39 years. She attended Lees McCrae College and Greensboro Women's College. From 1936 to 1956, she and her husband operated the Jonas Ridge Community School during summer vacations.

This school provided an education for children in the Jonas Ridge community who did not adopt the regular August-May calendar until 1956.

"The Hildebrands have dedicated their lives to getting people started right... and have done the upmost to allow students to strive for excellence," attorney Bob Byrd said at the dedication.

In 1936, local educator R.L. Patton declared Johny Hildebrand as "Best School Man" for the decade.

According to Patton, he contin-

ually worked to improve local schools, raising money for a teacherage, buying and donating equipment, landscaping schools and the teacherage and providing funding for other projects.

He also kept close tabs on the welfare of the students by sponsoring free medical clinics, supplying meals and providing haircuts for students in need.