Safford honored by colleagues

By Jennifer Frew
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MORGANTON—When Western Piedmont Community College President Dr. Jim Burnett called a Monday morning meeting for all deans Mary Charlotte Safford didn’t know what to think.

“I thought we were all either getting fired or getting raises,” said Safford, dean of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Instead, the meeting was set to lure the unsuspecting Safford in for a special announcement from friend Beverly Carlton, president of Business and Professional Women (BPW). Surrounded by colleagues, Safford was surprised to hear the news that she is the 2010 BPW Woman of the Year.

“I’m really speechless. I’m at a loss for words right now but very honored to be in great company.” Safford said, glancing at Emily Williamson, vice president of Student Affairs at WPCC.

Williamson, who nominated Safford this year, was the 2008 BPW Woman of the Year. Williamson calls Safford a role model for other women in the community.

BPW helps women advance their careers or build businesses. The organization’s Woman of the Year award goes to those who make a difference in their communities.

Safford was raised in Jackson, Miss., and delved into higher education as an undergraduate student at Tulane University in New Orleans, where she earned a bachelor of arts degree in history.

Safford then attended law school at Georgetown University and began her career as an assistant district attorney in New Orleans. But after working for five years as a prosecutor, Safford desired to pursue teaching as a career and began her search for a graduate program in education.

Safford visited Boone with her mother in the height of the fall leaf season and fell in love with Appalachian State University and the surrounding area.

After earning her master's in education, Safford landed in Burke County in 1989 to begin her new career as a teacher. Safford joined the faculty at WPCC as a history and political science instructor.

In 1997, WPCC named her the coordinator of Social Sciences and in 2006 she was...