

AT COMMUNITY BANQUET

Phifer Honored As Man Of Year For College Movement

By J. W. LONG
Managing Editor

"Some say that I received this award for my work on the community college. If this is the case, I must say that I accept it on behalf of the many who have worked so diligently — sometimes sacrificing their own primary interests—to bring this

institution into our midst. And one step further. This effort has also had solid, bed-rock support from the great mass of people of this county who are usually smart enough to recognize a bargain when they see it." Dr. Edward W. Phifer Jr. made the statement in his brief acceptance speech of the Man

of the Year award at the Morganton Community House.

The Morganton surgeon had heard himself praised for his part in getting approval for a community college for Burke County for which a \$1 million bond election will be held March 21.

The Lincolnesque figure of a man towered over the others at the speaker's table as he modestly accepted the giant Man of the Year trophy from the 1962 Man of the Year, James F. McGimsey.

W. Stanley Moore, editor of The News-Herald and himself Man of the Year in 1960, was the principal speaker at the banquet honoring Dr. Phifer. A capacity crowd heard Moore say that Dr. Phifer had been the moving spirit in the community college endeavor, starting over two years ago when he suggested a junior college for Burke County on his inauguration as president of the Kiwanis Club.

"Without Ned Phifer's dogged perseverance and his unrelenting and fastidious attention to detail in the harnessing of this widespread public interest, Burke County would not now be having the opportunity to obtain by its vote on March 21 one of the comprehensive colleges which the State of North Carolina is in the act of establishing. Without Ned Phifer, I am convinced we would still be sitting on the sidelines, hoping that perhaps in another decade or two or in another generation we might make up for our failure in the years 1962-63-64 to get in on the ground floor," Moore said.

"The fact that the State Board of Education, through its Department of Community College, approved Burke County as a site for one of the five college units in this tremendously worthwhile concept of education is the greatest personal tribute that can be paid to Dr. Phifer. It is an accomplishment of a rare order," Moore added.

Moore mixed humor with the serious in telling of his association with Dr. Phifer in the drive to obtain the community college. He delighted the audience with little stories of incidents which happened during their travels to Raleigh, Asheville and other places during the campaign for the college.

Moore called Dr. Phifer an idealist who at the same time is a very practical, down-to-earth realist, a man with a spirit personality in being an intellectual but also naive — so naive that "he hasn't allowed a cynical or negative outlook to color his personality."

"If a thing needs doing, his See PHIFER Page 6-A

Phifer Honored

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simple philosophy is: Let's do it. If something is desirable, his attitude is: Let's try it, even though people said it's impossible," Moore said.

Moore declared that even without his promoting the idea of a community college, Dr. Phifer deserved the Man of the Year honor for his accomplishments as a historian.

In addition to his recent appointment as a member of the N. C. Board of Archives and History, Dr. Phifer, he said, won during 1963 the coveted Ramsdell award of a plaque and cash prize given by the Southern Historical Association for the best article published during a two-year period by the Journal of Southern History. He has recently been elected to membership in the Historical Society of North Carolina, a select group of professional historians and professors of history. Burke County has been the subject of his considerable historical writings, Moore pointed out.

Moore also chronicled Dr. Phifer's professional memberships which include being a fellow of the American College of Surgeons and a diplomat of the American Board of Surgery, chief of staff at Grace Hospital, and one of the founders of the North Carolina Surgical Association of which he is a past president.

Dr. Phifer's civic interests are extensive and varied, Moore said, including being a trustee of the Morganton-Burke Public Library, a director of the Morganton Community Concert Association, elder in the First Presbyterian Church, a trustee of Davidson College, a member of the college's executive committee and of the board of visitors.

"It may be a strange thing to say," Moore said, "but I have always thought that his sponsorship of organized baseball was for him, something of a beach-head for other community interests, those extra activities outside his profession."

According to Moore, Dr. Phifer's civic leadership did not begin to show itself suddenly and dramatically, but was a slow and gradual development, and Morgantonians saw him undergo a process of personal evolution and development well after he was a mature man, well established in his profession and in his native community.

Moore's reference to baseball was Dr. Phifer's interest in the old Morganton Aggies along with H. L. Shuey, J. Walter Beach, Holman Sigmon, Carl Duckworth and a few others.

"So here is our Man of the Year," Moore said, "An intellectual without being an introverted hermit; a scholar without

being preoccupied solely with dusty tomes; a perfectionist without losing patience with those who fall far short of perfection; a man of action without believing physical energy alone will take the place of brainwork; a respecter of the dignity of the human spirit without being disillusioned by the foibles and frailty that the flesh is heir to; an historian whose study of yesterday makes him more aware of the opportunities of today and the needs of tomorrow; a possessor of a keen sense of civic responsibility who, somehow, hasn't come to realize that most of his fellow citizens measure their own community contributions by volume of talk rather than deeds; a gregarious, social creature who likes to be with people but who thinks when two or three are gathered they might just as well be thinking or acting constructively for their own benefit and for the common good."

This was the 16th year the Morganton Rotary Club has sponsored the Man of the Year award, and Rotary president M. L. Adler said in his opening remarks that the idea was started by J. D. Fitz, publisher of The News-Herald.

Adler presided at the banquet. After the singing of "America," Rev. Earl Brendall, pastor of the First Methodist Church, gave the invocation.

Adler recognized special guests, including Mrs. Phifer, the "four little Phifers" and William F. Davis, president of the Morganton Jaycees and the Young man of the Year for 1963.

Former Men of the Year were introduced by Adler. They were E. A. Kirksey in 1948, H. L. Riddle Sr. in 1952, W. R. Williams in 1953, R. O. Huffman in 1955, J. O. Barbour in 1958, Dr. W. H. Kibler in 1959, Moore in 1960, Frank C. Patton in 1961, J. F. McGimsey in 1962.

Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr., Man of the Year in 1954, had planned to attend but was called back to Washington.

Adler introduced Moore and McGimsey. Rev. Mr. Brendall presented McGimsey with a permanent cup.



GIANT TROPHY PRESENTED—Dr. E. W. Phifer Jr. (third from right) joins his wife and four of their daughters in admiring the Man of the Year trophy which the prominent surgeon received last night in a community awards banquet sponsored by the Rotary Club. Left to right: Susan, Mary

Wells, Martha Avery and Nancy Phifer, who were presented as "the four little Phifers;" Mrs. Phifer, Dr. Phifer, the Man of the Year for 1963; M. L. Adler, president of the Pottery Club and toastmaster for the dinner; and W. Stanley Moore, who was speaker. (Staff photo by F. H. Dixon).