

NEWS RELEASE

Heath Waldrop

Director of marketing and public relations

P.O. Box 7010, El Dorado, AR 71730

(870) 864-7111

hwaldrop@southark.edu

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HOWARD RECOGNIZED FOR “SPIRIT OF SOUTHARK”

Local philanthropist William R. Howard has been selected as the Spirit of SouthArk President’s Award winner for 2020. He received the award in a ceremony at the plaza named for him and his late wife at the college’s West Campus this morning.

Howard has supported college efforts via financial donations and activities with the SouthArk Foundation for several years. In addition to William R. and Cacilia Howard Heritage Plaza, an endowed scholarship also bears his name, and he provided a major gift to help fund construction of the Charles A. Hays Advanced Manufacturing Training Center.

Howard is in fact the top donor to the foundation. His gifts total nearly \$1 million.

Retired from Lion Oil in El Dorado, Howard is a native of Hampton. He served in the 3rd Army Headquarters in England under Gen. George Patton in World War II and crossed the English Channel 12 days after D-Day. Shortly after the war, in Germany he met the woman who would become his wife. He lived in Germany for three years before returning stateside to attend the University of Arkansas, where he graduated with bachelor’s and master’s degrees in accounting. Following his graduation, the couple relocated to El Dorado. Mr. and Mrs. Howard both worked at Lion.

Avid water skiers, scuba divers and hunters, the Howards spent many years traveling the world. One of their scuba dives of a shipwreck off the coast of Mexico was featured in a documentary, “Five Fathoms to a Ship’s Grave.” Mr. Howard donated a coral collection to SouthArk, which he retrieved while diving in the Caribbean Sea.

At age 96, Mr. Howard still is active, frequenting the college’s campuses and attending events. “Mr. Howard knows no boundaries in his contributions and support to the college, and has been a fine example of generosity, kindness, advocacy and commitment for education in our region,” SouthArk Foundation director Cynthia Reyna said. “His gifts have allowed many students to complete their education, go to work, and support their families.”