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**Association of Florida Colleges Recognizes Award Winners from 66th Annual Conference**

TALLAHASSEE – More than 400 attendees were on hand to celebrate the 66th Annual Meeting & Conference of the Association of Florida Colleges (AFC.) Each year, members of the AFC are recognized for their achieved excellent and role in strengthening the Florida College System. Awards included the LeRoy Collins Distinguished Alumni, Professor of the Year, James L. Wattenbarger Award, and the Chapter, Region, and Commission of the Year. The Association of Florida Colleges Annual Conference took place at the Buena Vista Palace on November 11-13, 2015.

“The AFC annual awards reflect our focus of making the Florida College System the most affordable and highest quality education in the state of Florida. I am pleased that Florida colleges are leading the nation and I congratulate this year’s top-performing award recipients. These awards highlight different individuals and institutions that value academic excellence,” said Michael Brawer, Executive Director and CEO of the Association of Florida Colleges.

**2015 AFC Award Recipients**

These coveted awards were bestowed to the following individuals and institutions:

**Trustee of the Year** – Tim Morris, Lake-Sumter State College. In recognition of the tremendous contribution made by state and community college trustees in meeting the needs of their college and community, the AFC Trustee Commission recognizes one exemplary trustee annually.

**James L. Wattenbarger Award** – Dr. Dennis Gallon, Palm Beach State College. The Council of Presidents’ awards the James L. Wattenbarger Award and it is bestowed upon an individual or individuals who have demonstrated exceptional commitment to the Florida College System.

**Honorary Lifetime Membership Award** – Peter Usinger, 2014 AFC President; Edward L. Woodruff, Jr., St. Petersburg College; Dr. Judith Bilsky, Florida State College At Jacksonville. The most prestigious honor the Association can bestow on an individual, this award is reserved for individuals who have served as either a president of the AFC or someone who has made significant contributions to the Association or the Florida College System that deserve high recognition.

**Distinguished Service Membership Award** – Tracy Glidden, Eastern Florida State College; Raymond Coulter, Palm Beach State College; Professor of the Year-John Gardner, Chipola College, Assistant Professor, Automotive Service Technology

**2015 LeRoy Collins Distinguished Alumni Awards** recognize the many significant contributions of Florida’s community colleges and their graduates. The award is named after Governor LeRoy Collins to acknowledge his contributions to Florida’s community colleges:

* Edwin O. Swift, III, Florida Keys Community College. Hometown Hero Award – is presented to an alumnus who has achieved a measure of success within the nominating college’s district, and has demonstrated notable community involvement)
* Kristina Garcia, St. Johns River State College. Against the Odds Award – is presented to an alumnus who has achieved success despite financial, sociological, or physical adversity.
* Forrest “Max” Gooding, South Florida State College. Rising Star Award – is presented to an alumnus who has begun the process of significant achievement while having demonstrated success because of the impact of his or her college experience.
* Marcia Mayer, North Florida Community College. Lifetime Achievement Award – is presented to an alumnus who has reached state, regional, or national recognition, and represents the highest levels of achievement in his or her field.

**Presidential Leadership** – Dr. Chuck Mojock, President, Lake-Sumter State College; Matthew Holliday, Chair of the AFC Legislative Committee, Florida Southwestern State College. Awarded to persons who exemplify every characteristic of a committed and dedicated Association leader and volunteer.

**Board Member of the Year** – Stephanie Campbell, Polk State College, Co-Chair of the Planning & Development Committee.

**Chapter of the Year** – Indian River State College

**Region of the Year** – Region 5

**Commission of the Year** – Student Development Commission

**Aspen Recognition**: AFC Recognized the Aspen Finalists and Winners since 2011. The Aspen Prize, awarded every two years, recognizes institutions for outstanding outcomes in four areas: student learning; certificate and degree completion; employment and earnings; and high levels of access and success for minority and low income students. Florida has more finalists and winners of the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence than any other state.

* 2011 Finalist with Distinction – Miami Dade College
* 2011 Aspen Prize Winner – Valencia College
* 2013 Finalist – Broward College
* 2013 Finalist – Santa Fe College
* 2015 Finalist with Distinction – Indian River State College
* 2015 Aspen Prize Winner – Santa Fe College

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**About the Florida College System**

The Association of Florida Colleges represents all employees, presidents, and trustees associated within the Florida College System. It has become the most inclusive higher education organization serving any college system in the nation. Today, all 28 of the state's colleges support the work of the Association through institutional dues as do nearly 8,500 regular and retired members through the sharing of their talents, time and energy.