

NEF - NAWIC Education Foundation Press Release

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NEF Awards its 2019 Carol A. Kueker Construction Education Visionary Award to an advocate with a strong passion for the construction industry and education.

ORLANDO, FL, June 18, 2019 – NEF - NAWIC Education Foundation awarded its 2019 Carol A. Kueker Construction Education Visionary Award to Mike Barkett, CEP, President, Mississippi Construction Education Foundation. Barkett received this award for being a passionate leader providing educational opportunities in the construction industry.

Barkett is President of a non-profit organization with a mission of recruiting, training and developing a quality workforce for the commercial construction industry in Mississippi. He joined the staff in 2002 where he served as the State Director of Education and Training. He directs all programs of the Foundation, serving a Board of 26 directors representing the construction industry and ten major construction trade associations.

Barkett spent 25 years in education serving as Business Manager, Teacher, Administrator, Athletic Director and Head Baseball Coach at St. Andrew's Episcopal School in Ridgeland, MS. He also owned and operated his own sporting goods business.

Peggy Downs Harthcock sponsored Barkett's nomination for this prestigious award and states "I have witnessed his passion for the construction industry and NAWIC". She mentions she has worked closely with Barkett since joining the Board of Directors in 2003. She noted "During this time I have seen the difference he has made in our organization".

Each year under Barkett's guidance, MCEF has a Skills USA competition for over 300 students from the secondary, post-secondary and apprentice level training. MCEF offers a hands-on workshop for CTE counselors each year that gives them a better understanding of the requirements of students in the construction and manufacturing pathways. MCEF also hosts a Passport 2 Careers (P2C) Expo for 2,000 eighth graders and provides a booth to NAWIC. "His passion to educate he believes will help to remove the stigma that is often associated with craft workers and career and technical programs" says Harthcock.

Some of Barkett's accomplishments include being instrumental in establishing the MCEF Training Center, a standalone training center used for adult craft training. He also secured NCCER curriculum in all secondary and post-secondary construction pathways which insures quality training and provides national credentials.

The Carol A. Kueker memorial award recognizes individuals for their passion and dedication to NEF programs and the promotion of construction education through a variety of avenues. The special award is given to select individuals meeting the highest caliber of achievements demonstrated by Kueker. It is named in honor of the late Carol A. Kueker, a long-time trustee and volunteer who served as president of NEF. Kueker was instrumental in promoting the core purpose and goals of the organization.

NEF was founded in 1972 by volunteers from the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) who saw a need for quality training programs in the construction industry. Based in Orlando, FL, NEF is responsible for administering a variety of K-12 programs that help educate today's youth to pursue construction careers. In addition, NEF offers a full-range of self-study construction industry programs for adults. NEF maintains partnering agreements with various education-related organizations that allow it to expand its offerings of educational programs, many of which are offered online. NEF is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) non-profit education foundation to which tax deductible contributions can be made.

The core purpose of NEF is to educate the construction industry today...and tomorrow. Its goals are to provide quality education programs for the construction industry and to promote the benefits of a career in the industry. For additional information about NEF, including its educational courses, go to www.nef-edu.org, send an email to nawicedu@gmail.com or call (866) 277-2883.

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