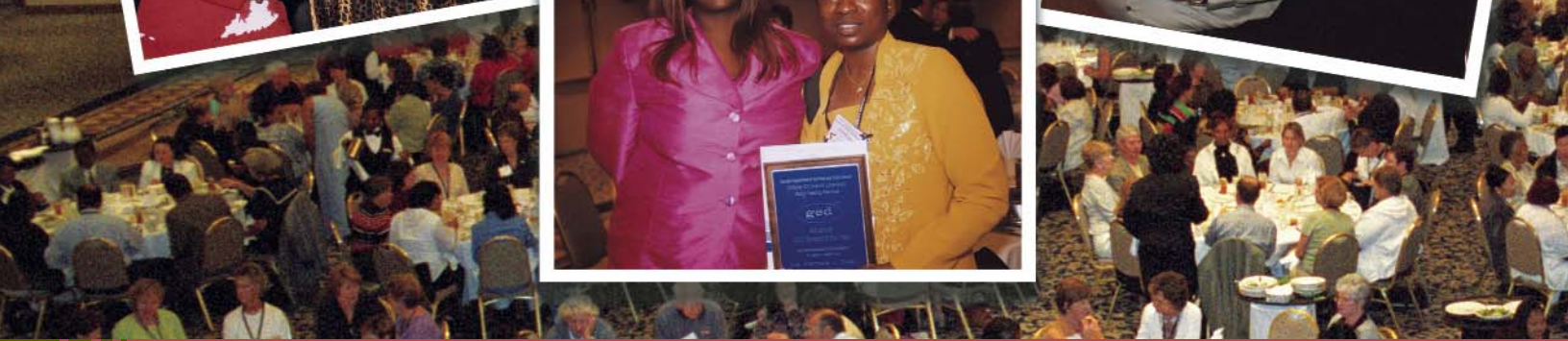


At left, (left to right): Dr. Jean DeVard-Kemp, DTAE assistant commissioner, Adult Literacy Programs, and Tammera Deliford, TANF GED Student of the Year. Below, from left: Kim Lee, OAL director, Assessment, Evaluation and GED Administration, and Pamela Dean, EAGLE GED Student of the Year. At right, (left to right): Ian McMahon, GED Exemplary Performance winner and Coy Hodges, retired technical college president. Far right, (left to right): Dr. DeVard-Kemp, Patrick Gregg, Youth Challenge GED Student of the Year, and Coy Hodges.



# In Praise of P

Annual celebration of adult literacy hails successes and offers

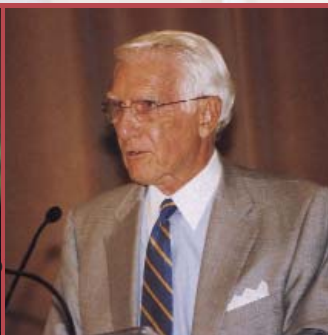
Nearly 1,000 of Georgia's adult literacy professionals gathered recently to focus on the professional development of statewide staff, and to celebrate the accomplishments made during 2004 helping the state's citizens achieve personal goals in education.

"Passion" was the watchword for the annual conference, which was held at Atlanta's Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel, where Hamilton Northcutt, award-winning co-host of *Georgia Business Report*, served as mistress of ceremonies. Opening the conference, Office of Adult Literacy (OAL) Assistant Commissioner Dr. Jean DeVard-Kemp inspired the audience with her call "to move forward in a positive and aggressive manner" to provide

support, guidance and opportunity for Georgia's citizens.

The chief learning officer of Stephenson High School, Morcease Beasley, picked up the theme of passionate dedication in his address, telling the enthusiastic crowd, "Your passion will determine your level of success. I want you to be very encouraged about what you do."

Conference attendees had good reason to be encouraged. Last year, they helped more than 18,000 Georgians earn their GED, which for many people is the first step on a path to new careers, and for others is the achievement of a lifetime's aspiration. The success rate for GED students made Georgia's the sixth-best adult literacy program in the nation in 2004.



# 88-year-old GED Graduate Wins Student of the Year

Seventy years ago, Rock Spring, Ga., resident Lillian Turner let math get the best of her, and she gave up on formal education. In 2004, Turner conquered her fear of numbers, earning not only her GED, but a Student of the Year award in the process.

Turner still remembers the frustrating geometry class that led her to drop out of high school two weeks into her senior year. "I just became discouraged," says Turner, who spent the better part of the next seven decades as a real estate agent and helping her husband pastor a congregation.

Six children, 16 grandchildren and 23 great-grandchildren later, the 88-year-old Turner was working as an adult literacy tutor in Rossville when another teacher, Lila McDonald, approached her about earning her GED. "I didn't really think anything about earning my GED until Lila approached me," says Turner, who was wary of re-entering a classroom.

"It was a challenge," Turner says, "but I went every day. Geometry was one thing I was afraid of, but Lila helped me."

In the end, Turner completed the GED preparation course at Northwestern Technical College in record time. At age 87, Turner earned her GED and at age 88 was named the 2004 Office of Adult Literacy's Golden EAGLE GED Student of the Year. "I was really surprised," says Turner, who plans to begin attending computer classes at Northwestern Tech soon.

And as for geometry? "I'm not afraid of it," laughs Turner, "but I'm still not crazy about it." ■

*Dr. Jean DeVard-Kemp (left) with 2004 Golden EAGLE Lillian Turner.*



# Passion

development for the future

*By Laura Kenney*

That accomplishment did not go unrecognized. Attending one of his first events as the newly appointed commissioner of the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education, Michael Vollmer praised the work of the statewide network of professionals working in the field of adult literacy.

"You are making a tremendous impact on what is happening in the state," Vollmer told attendees.

State Board Chair Harold Reynolds echoed the sentiment. "All of us in the state appreciate you and the work that you do," he said.

And State Board Adult Literacy Committee Chair Tyre Rakestraw noted that he personally could testify to

*Continued next page*

*From left: State Board Vice Chair Rhubarb Jones; former BellSouth Chairman and CEO B. Franklin Skinner; Stephenson High School Chief Learning Officer Morcease Beasley; State Board Chair Harold Reynolds; and mistress of ceremonies for the closing session, Hamilton Northcutt.*





*Continued from previous page*

the quality of the state's adult literacy efforts. "I have seen first-hand the outstanding job that you do," he said.

"I have looked forward to the opportunity to be with you here today," GED luncheon keynote speaker and retired BellSouth Chairman and CEO B. Franklin Skinner told attendees. "In spite of the challenges, you have continued to persevere and you have succeeded," said Skinner. "My challenge to you today is to build on your success and set goals to build on your mission and take you to new heights."

The conference's convener, WSB-TV reporter Tom Jones, encouraged the educators at the conference to keep up their good work.

"You are all vital to the adult literacy equation in Georgia," Jones said.

***"The vision of teaching everyone in Georgia, one adult at a time, is laudable."***

***– Sharon Rigsby,  
Gwinnett Tech President***

*From top (left to right): State Board Chair Harold Reynolds, retired technical college president Coy Hodges, and DTAE Commissioner Michael Vollmer; presenter Tammy Frohling of the Georgia Student Finance Commission (HOPE); conference attendees at a professional development workshop; literacy professionals at a discussion session.*

# 'You deal with challenges every day... You're changing those challenges into opportunities.'

– Harold Reynolds,  
State Board Chair

## Promoting professional development

To guarantee that work in adult literacy continues at a high level, a large part of the annual conference is dedicated to a wide range of staff development sessions. During the workshops, adult literacy professionals update and learn new skills in areas ranging from managing document review processes to maintaining quality standards, developing programs for younger adult learners and incorporating citizenship in the adult literacy classroom.

"The staff development sessions are designed to be interactive, motivational and give you the tools you need to maintain your level of excellence," explained DeVard-Kemp.

Such tools helped adult literacy professionals maintain high standards for GED graduates statewide, standards that were celebrated at the GED award winners luncheon, where top GED students from across the state were honored.

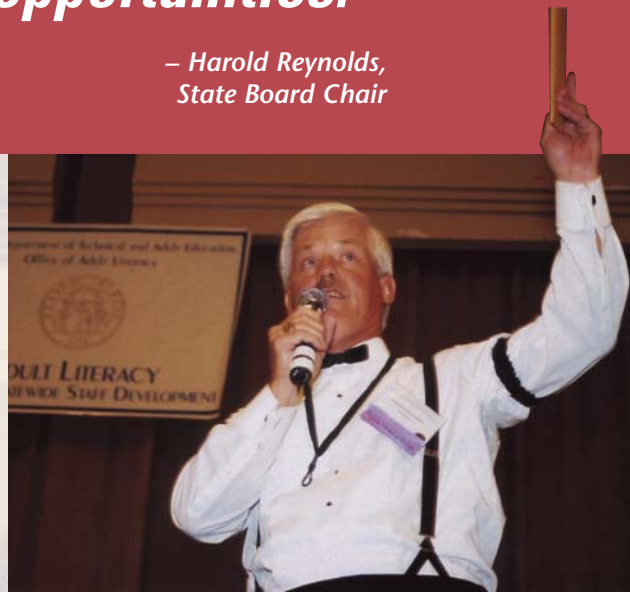
Some of the GED students who achieved new heights in 2004 were recognized during the luncheon. They included Golden EAGLE GED Student of the Year Lillian Turner from Rock Spring (*see sidebar, p. 23*), who earned her GED at age 87, and GED Exemplary Performance winner Ian McMahon from Austell, who was just 70 points shy of a perfect GED score.

In addition to their professional passion, attendees also showed their enthusiasm for the ever-popular conference silent auction, which raised money for the Adult Literacy EAGLE program.

"We've just had a blast," said auctioneer and Adult Literacy Director of the Savannah-Chatham County Board of Education Patrick Rossiter, who helped auction off such "heavy-duty items" as a Callaway golf retreat and an overnight stay in Savannah.

During the final luncheon, DeVard-Kemp praised attendees for their diligence and dedication to the cause of adult literacy. "We are an organization destined for greatness," she said. "Although we have many voices, we are one organization and are united by a single purpose: to give every Georgian a chance at success.

"We can continue to move forward one step at a time," DeVard-Kemp added. "In this way, we can shape a future worthy of our great past." **R**



From top, at right: Patrick Rossiter, auctioneer and chair of the Silent Auction; 2004 State Literacy Ambassadors Simone Young and Keith Jones do the honors at the ribbon-cutting ceremony to mark the opening of the Exhibitors' Gallery and Silent Auction; auction items on display, with proceeds benefiting the EAGLE Awards program; conference convener and WSB-TV reporter Tom Jones opens the program.

