

HORIZONS

SOUTH CAROLINA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION DEPARTMENT

Federal judge addresses ITTP graduates

U.S. Circuit Court Judge Dennis Shedd drew upon personal experience as he delivered the keynote speech Nov. 18 to graduates of SCVRD's Information Technology Training Program.

Shedd, a native of Cordova, serves on the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals. His brother was a VR employee for many years, his sister has a disability and his mother changed careers in her early 40s. He stressed three points to the graduates.

First, he said, circumstances do not define who you are; how you respond to them does.

"You are not disabled persons who know things about computers; you are computer specialists with a disability," he said.

Second, life really is a journey.

"Do not look for ultimate satisfaction in life out of any one achievement," Shedd said. "Simply take pride in your accomplishments and continue toward the next goal."

And third, endings are worth celebrating.

"They close a story and mark an achievement that no power in the universe can ever diminish. You are, and always will be, a successful graduate of this program," he told the graduates.

He also praised the economic success of the program. The 42 graduates will make a projected average starting salary of \$25,143 a year. Based on those earnings, they will pay an estimated \$228,092

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Judge Dennis Shedd, left, receives a plaque from SCVRD Commissioner Larry Bryant.

Sumter office to be named for Lowder

The S.C. State Agency of Vocational Rehabilitation will name SCVRD's Sumter area office after the board's chairman, Derle A. Lowder Sr.

"This is a well-deserved honor," said Larry Bryant, SCVRD commissioner. "Derle has been involved with this agency in one way or another for almost 50 years."

Lowder, who fell from a grain elevator and landed in a wheelchair with paraplegia in 1957,

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Enabling eligible South Carolinians with Disabilities to prepare for, achieve and maintain competitive employment

DDS presents PRIDE awards

SCVRD's Disability Determination Services honored its own Oct. 20 at the annual PRIDE celebration.

Implemented in 1985 by the Social Security Administration, the PRIDE program recognizes positive contributions made by DDS employees.

South Carolina award winners included:

Sarah McGlone, Rookie Examiner of the Year; Connie Hollingsworth, Examiner of the Year; Sheila Dobson, Support Staff Person of the Year; Beth Cale, Staff Person of the Year; Dr. Lisa Varner, Medical Consultant of the Year; and Susan Vlahos, Staff Supervisor of the Year.

Also, Hugh Clarke and Pat Pressley, Special Acts of Service; Bob Tugwell and Mark Hayden, Thomas M. Leahy Creative Achievement Award; and Glenda McMichael, Carl Fulbright Exemplary Service Award.

DDS is part of the Social Security Administration's Atlanta



McGlone



Hollingsworth



Dobson



Cale



Varner



Vlahos



Clarke



Pressley



Tugwell



Hayden



McMichael

Region, which includes South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Tennessee and Kentucky.

Varner, Vlahos, Clarke and Tugwell won Regional Pride awards, which were presented Dec. 1 in Tampa, Fla.

Mentors, students explore career choices

SCVRD was the lead state agency again this year for Disability Mentoring Day, a nationwide event promoting career development for youth with disabilities.

On Oct. 18, both public and private employers provided one-on-one mentoring for students to learn

about the preparation necessary to qualify for a range of job opportunities.

Students came from high schools, technical colleges and SCVRD training programs.

This year, 31 students participated and 15 employers provided mentoring opportunities on job sites. Selection of



Brandon Henderson and Kareme Powell, both students at Swansea High School, were two of the participants in Disability Mentoring Day. Henderson spent part of the day with Deputy Bryan Hinz of the Lexington County Sheriff's Department and his dog, Polly. Powell visited ClearChannel Radio and learned about promotions procedures from promotions assistant Kathryn Williams.



employers was based on the career interests of the students.

Those interests were as diverse as teaching, automotive service, graphic arts, cafeteria work and technology-based jobs.

Participating employers included American Tool and Die, Bateman Senior Meals, Bi-Lo, ClearChannel

Radio, Colonial Supplemental Insurance, Graphics Factory, Jiffy Lube, Lexington County Sheriff's Department, Lexington Medical Center, Love Chevrolet, Rockhaven Community Care, Springdale Elementary School, S.C. Commission for the Blind, S.C. Retirement Systems and SCVRD.

39 employees celebrate service anniversaries

Thirty-nine SCVRD employees celebrated their state service anniversaries at a ceremony in November.

Celebrating 30 years are:

Kathleen Allen, Rock Hill; Daisy Alessi, Spartanburg; Sarah Black, State Office; Glenda Brooks, Greenwood; Dot Byrd, Hartsville; Jan Campbell, Richland; Thomas Chapman, Charleston; Sandy Craven, Walterboro; Grady Decell, Lexington; Johnny Dewese, Sumter; Birt Dowling,

Evaluation Center; Carol Edens, Holmesview Center; Sonny Harper, Georgetown; Susanne Hill, Walterboro; Kevin King, DDS Columbia; Lan Bonno Lebozec, Richland; Melvin Owens, Sumter; Debbie Pell, DDS Charleston; Cheryl Rich, Anderson; and Joyce Robinson, Greenwood.

Celebrating 20 years are:

Alan Altman, Marlboro; Gloria Clunan, DDS Columbia; Jack Cole, Palmetto Center; Jane Emerson, Oconee-Pickens; Jackie Greene,

DDS Central Office; Dianne Hoffman, State Office; Dean Huey, DDS Charleston; Harry Jordan, Florence; Paul Mears, Walterboro; Joyce Pringle, Beaufort; Faith Raymond, State Office; Marilyn Roberts, Holmesview Center; Kenneth Robison, DDS Greenville; Tammy Simmons, Lexington; Joyce Small, DDS Central Office; Penny Smart, Lancaster; Debra Streetman, DDS Greenville; Tina Stuber, Lancaster; and Tony Vincent, DDS Central Office.

Graduation

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a year in combined taxes.

"Who could believe a government program could achieve such a worthwhile goal and still pay taxpayers a premium?" he said. But, he said, the true success of the program is reflected in the graduates.

"You are important to everyone in our society," Shedd said.

"Everyone needs to see you take your rightful and deserved place as equals in the workplace.

"Your presence there reforms and informs ideas about people's individual, innate value.

"In the workplace, we all gain from the success of any one of us," he said.

"You have transformed the word 'disability' into 'this ability.'"

Brenda Jackson, a Business Applications Plus graduate, was the class speaker.

To her fellow classmates, she said, "My wish is that you take

what you learned here, utilize it to your advantage and get all the things you desire, need and deserve in life."

Speaking of souvenirs of the



Jackson

"life-altering trip" she had taken at VR, she said, "I don't need a T-shirt to know that I've been blessed.

"I no longer feel like a patient. I am a professional who was in need of rehabilitation."

Jackson is manager of the Corner Store and Grill in Elgin and plans to buy the business next year.

Lowder

Continued from page 1

came to VR in 1959 when his GI Bill payments ran out and he was three months short of a business administration degree.

VR helped him finish his degree and he went on to become a successful accountant and has his own firm in Sumter.

He has been chairman of the Sumter office advisory board and chairman of the S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Association. He has been a member of the agency board since 1997 and has served as its chairman since 2001.

"He's always there when we call," Bryant said. "He really



Derle A. Lowder Sr.

cares about our clients and our staff."

"It's a very rewarding honor," Lowder said. "I appreciate the agency thinking

that much of me."

A dedication ceremony will be held at the Sumter office in the spring.

The South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department reports that it printed 5,000 copies of this newsletter at a cost of \$610, or about \$.12 a copy.

NEW

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