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GTCC PLANS DEDICATION CEREMONY FOR HEALTH TECHNOLOGIES CENTER

JAMESTOWN -- A dedication ceremony for the \$19 million Hassell Health Technologies Center on the Jamestown campus of Guilford Technical Community College will be held at 2 p.m. Friday, Sept, 25.

The building is named in honor and in memory of Lillian Hassell Benson through the generosity of Steve and Judy Benson James of Greensboro. Lillian Benson, who grew up in Jamestown and taught school in Cabarrus County for 33 years, was the mother of Judy Benson James.

Representatives of the college, Judy James and government officials will participate in the ceremony.

GTCC president Don W. Cameron said, "The people of Guilford County are fortunate that Judy and Steve James, a truly committed community conscious couple, has chosen to honor a mother and an educator with funds to construct a facility that will contribute significantly to health care in the Piedmont Triad Region."

The center, which was completed on March 23, has made it possible for five allied departments to be placed under one roof in the three-story, 73,000-square foot building. In the building are the biology, surgical technology, nursing, medical assisting and physical therapy departments. Those departments formerly were located in four different buildings.

Judy James said that it is befitting for an educational building to bear her mother's name because "she had a real love for education. I don't know what inspired her to become a teacher; nobody else in the family was a teacher but she enjoyed teaching." James also became a teacher, following the path of her mother.

She has fond memories of growing up in the neighborhood where her mother taught at Odell Elementary School in Cabarrus County. "When I was in elementary school, we lived about a block from the school where mother taught the fourth grade. We walked to school together every morning," James said.

The former Lillian Hassell graduated from Woman's College (now UNCG) where she received her teaching degree. She also attended Guilford College for three years.

Judy James said her mother's maiden name was placed on the building because of her roots in Jamestown. She was the daughter of Erie and Oscar Hassell, and grew up in a house near the Hilltop Road-Jamestown Road intersection.

Erie Hassell was a housewife and Oscar Hassell worked in the office of Southern Railway in Jamestown.

Lillian Hassell Benson moved from Cabarrus County to Wellsprings Retirement Community in Greensboro in 1995 after her husband Dick passed away. She lived there for 10 years before passing away at age 89 in 2005.

The amount of the James' contribution, which will be given over a period of years, wasn't announced but a combination of state funds, county bond money and a \$1 million facilities grant from the N.C. Community College System also were used to help build the facility, according to GTCC officials.

A groundbreaking ceremony for the center was held May 14, 2007, and construction was begun by Lyon Construction of King on June 18, 2007. The target date for completion at that time was September 2008. The Freelon Group of Raleigh designed the building.

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