



# GENE COLLINS LOGGER ACTIVIST AWARD

**BILLY MCKINNEY**  
**McKinney Brothers Logging, Inc.**  
*Union, SC*

The 2009 Gene Collins Logger Activist Award is proudly presented to Billy McKinney, McKinney Brothers Logging, Inc., for his sincere commitment in his advocacy for professional timber harvesting as well as his participation in association, community and industry activities, sustainable forestry practices, education, and positive promotion of a professional business.

Billy is conscientious about his profession, understands the value of relationships with customers, employees and industry, practices environmental stewardship and promotes a positive image as a professional logger.

Billy says, "Being a professional means treating landowners, employees and others with respect and treating them like they want to be treated. You have to promote your professional business image and translate that down to your on-the-ground harvesting operations. During wet weather we consider the landowner's position and will not harvest if there is potential for environmental damage. That makes it hard for us, but Ricky and I firmly believe this is the right approach and will benefit us in the future."

Currently operating two conventional first thinning jobs with one job run by Billy and the other by brother Ricky. McKinney Brothers has been working with Piedmont Pulp, Inc., Laurens since 1989. Pulpwood is the primary product delivered mainly to AbitibiBowater and then Norbord South Carolina with higher value log products, when available, delivered to Georgia Pacific, West Fraser Lumber Company and Chester Wood Products.

Billy and Ricky started their shortwood business in 1973 and moved into a longwood operation in 1976 contracting with Canal Wood and Georgia Pacific until moving to Piedmont Pulp. Nine woods workers and four truck drivers are employed for the two harvesting operations.

Billy states, "This is a tough business sometimes, but we enjoy logging and have been doing this for thirty-six years. It's been a challenging economy making it hard to keep going, but because you love what you do and know how important your business is to the economy, your employees and their families, our own families and our forest resources, you hold your head up proudly and find a way to keep going."

Billy serves as the company's Vice-President and Ricky is the President. Billy's wife Hazel handles administrative duties along with Ricky's wife Jeannine. It's a family company believing in what they do as professionals. As Billy has

become more involved in advocacy work, serving on the association board, attending American Loggers Council meetings, he knows his brother Ricky will keep the daily operations running productively and smoothly.

Nominated by Jim and Susan Curry, Piedmont Pulp, Inc., Jim says, "Billy and McKinney Brothers Logging are an excellent business. They always provide the best job possible for the landowner, maintain a high level of sustainable practices in their operations and operate with integrity and professionalism. We have landowners that specifically request McKinney Brothers Logging harvest their timber because of the high quality work they provide."

Elected to the board in 2005, he now serves as Secretary-Treasurer. He and Ricky are active in the Piedmont and District 3 Areas, attending Union and Richburg district meetings, supporting the American Loggers Council, Wood Supply Research Institute and the company is a SC Forestry Association member. A strong association advocate, Billy has recruited new loggers and wood dealers into the association in his areas.

In 2009 Billy felt it was time to become more involved in helping his local community and unsuccessfully ran for the Union County Council seat in his district.

He has been actively involved in association activities by attending the American Loggers Council Spring Board Meetings in Washington, DC since 2005 and visiting SC's Congressional delegation to promote issues affecting timber harvesting. He has attended the last four American Loggers Council annual meetings in Montana, Florida, Alabama and Arizona.

Believing strongly education is vitally important Billy participated with SCTPA in visiting Jonesville Elementary School's career day to discuss sustainable forestry, professional timber harvesting and wood products. He has participated in the SC Teachers Tour as a board member at the timber harvesting tour stop. McKinney Brothers Logging has hosted several teacher education visits to their jobs to enhance education about the profession and sustainable forestry.

A member of the Tabernacle Baptist Church, Billy serves on the Hostess Committee and in the choir and until recently



*Jonesville Elementary School Class*



Visiting SC Congressman John Spratt (l-r) Billy, Crad Jaynes, Congressman John Spratt, Tommy Barnes & Clyde Brown

served on the Property Committee. He is also a Mason, Shriner and Union area Gideon delivering Bibles to local motels and establishments.

The company is a Union County Chamber of Commerce member and sponsors Dixie Youth Softball and was involved in developing the new Union County baseball and soft-

ball complex.

Ricky holds a local Tuesday night singing at his shop and hosts local cookouts for foresters, their crews, loggers and others in the local area.

As SFI Trained loggers, Billy and Ricky emphasize sustainable harvesting practices, following BMP's and meeting landowner expectations by maintaining high environmental and harvesting standards.

Billy, Ricky and McKinney Brothers Logging believe promoting professional timber harvesting and sustainable forestry principles are important. Understanding the responsibilities and importance associated with how professional loggers contribute to their local and state economies, how professional loggers must work with landowners, wood

*The South Carolina Timber Producers Association's Logger Activist Award recognizes a logger member who has demonstrated an exceptional desire to promote and represent the profession by actively participating in association state and district activities, promoting and participating in educational efforts, community action projects and association projects to positively promote timber harvesting's image, conducting business activities in the best interests of the timber harvesting profession to engender the public's trust by meeting and exceeding the American Loggers Council Loggers Code of Practices and has displayed a professional commitment to sustainable forestry practices.*

*SCTPA's Logger Activist Award was named in honor of Gene Collins of Gene Collins Logging, Inc, Georgetown, because of Gene's dedication to his profession, his unselfish endeavors to promote the integrity of the logging industry within his community, his volunteer work educating children, his use of business practices that engendered the public's trust and his support for professional timber harvesting and sustainable forestry.*

dealers and wood receiving companies in cooperative partnerships, promoting and practicing sustainable forestry and educating the critical public to better understand the professional timber harvesting industry is concerned about our sustainable and renewable forest resources and our environment is what drives Billy to be the advocate and activist he is.

Billy says, "There are still too many loggers who don't understand the true value SCTPA brings to the table. Our association is representing us, partnering with allied organizations to improve the logging industry, and serves as our voice for our best interests. More loggers need to be members, and recognize the real value our association provides versus the small price of membership."



SCTPA display at Jonesville Elementary School

As an association and industry leader with a sincere commitment to professional logging, sustainable forestry, community, family and the principles of outstanding business, SCTPA is proud *Billy McKinney and McKinney Brothers Logging, Inc.*, is our 2009 *Gene Collins Logger Activist Award* recipient.

## PREVIOUS GENE COLLINS LOGGER ACTIVIST WINNERS

- 1999 - Dennis Wall, W. V. Wall & Sons, Inc. ■ Edgefield
- 2000 - Larry Cromer, W. A. Cromer & Son, Inc. ■ Newberry
- 2001 - Gene Collins, Gene Collins Logging, Inc. ■ Georgetown
- 2002 - Tommy Barnes, Ideal Logging, Inc. ■ Edgemoor
- 2003 - Jim Curry, Piedmont Pulp, Inc., & Pulpco Inc. ■ Laurens
- 2004 - Joe Young, Low Country Forest Products, Inc. ■ Georgetown
- 2005 - Crawford Wilks, Wilks Logging, Inc. ■ Chester
- 2006 - Tim, Reg & Martha Williams, Log Creek Timber Company, Inc. ■ Edgefield
- 2007 - BoBo Seckinger, Seckinger Forest Products, Inc. ■ Hampton
- 2008 - Norman Arledge, Arledge Logging & Timber, Inc. ■ Landrum