

GENE COLLINS LOGGER ACTIVIST AWARD



Fifty years and still going strong. The 2016 *Gene Collins Logger Activist Award* is proudly presented to William and Linda Wilkerson and Wilkerson Logging, Inc. for their sincere commitment to professional timber harvesting, supporting this association, participating in community and industry activities, practicing sustainable timber harvesting, promoting education and positive promotion of professional business practices.

Wilkerson Logging is a conscientious professional business understanding the value of relationships with customers, employees and their industry, environmental stewardship and promotion of a positive image as a professional logger.

In May 2016, Wilkerson Logging celebrated fifty years of operations starting from humble beginnings in the shortwood business and gradually advancing to fully mechanized timber harvesting.

Wilkerson Logging operates two mechanized tree length crews primarily focusing on thinning and logging private landowner tracts around their area producing 30 to 40 loads per week per crew. Pine and hardwood are harvested and delivered to markets in the mid-upstate such as Resolute Forest Products, Boise Cascade Wood Products, W. M. Deal Sawmill, Associated Hardwoods, International Paper and United Forest Products. Wilkerson Logging harvest timber for local landowners. One local landowner owns a 3,000 acre farm and only allows Wilkerson Logging to harvest the timber because of the company's stewardship and the professional job on the owner's forest lands.

Wilkerson Logging purchases all of their own timber and will occasionally harvest on tracts provided by Boise Cascade and Hancock Forest Management. Their jobs are professionally performed so they do their own operator select thinning.

Operating a lean, efficient business works very well

Wilkerson Logging, Inc.

HICKORY GROVE, SC



for Wilkerson Logging. The two three-man crews' equipment spread consist of two John Deere feller bunchers, an 843 and 643, John Deere grapple skidders, a 648 and 748, and two John Deere 437D trailer mounted knuckle-boom loaders equipped with slasher saws. Two John Deere 648G grapple skidders are available as spares. Road, deck and BMP work is done with a CAT D5 bulldozer.

Their trucking fleet consist of three Macks; one for the lowboy, one spare and one for company timber trucking. The company utilizes C. Belton Trucking as their full time contract trucker.

William says' "I love logging. I wouldn't change a thing for my entire career. The industry has evolved and Linda and I have enjoyed seeing this and being active in our industry."

Linda and William have been married for forty-nine years. Linda said, "After we had been married for a while, I asked William if he ever got tired of logging. He said, No, because every day was different."

Both said their sons love the business just as much as they do. Sons Tommy, Robbie and Billy operate the crews and have learned the business from their father. Just as William loves logging and walking in the woods, so do their sons.

William and Linda's philosophy is simple... "Do the best job for every customer you serve, treat their timber and the forest owner right, be stewards of their lands and be professional, and you can sleep well at night."

Wilkerson Logging has been an active SCTPA logger member since the association's inception in 1999 and attends district meetings in Richburg. SCTPA's Brenda and Crad Jaynes attended the 50th anniversary event on May 25, 2016. SCTPA presented William and Linda a Special Recognition plaque honoring their fifty years in the professional timber harvesting business. The plaque read...



*With Grateful Appreciation
To
William Wilkerson
Wilkerson Logging, Inc.
From the SC Timber Producers Association
For Your Leadership and Services
To the Logging Profession in South Carolina
On the Occasion of Celebrating
Your 50th Year
In the Timber Harvesting Industry*



William's family company Triple W Farms is a Certified Tree Farmer in the American Tree Farm system with over 500 acres planted in pine and 200 acres in pine and hardwood stands. All harvested stands are reforested.

William and Linda and Wilkerson Logging, Inc. strive to educate the public about our sustainable forestry and professional timber harvesting industry. They recognize there is a greater need for the critical public to understand our industry is dedicated to environmental stewardship and maintaining our sustainable, renewable and healthy forest resources for the many products made of wood, wildlife and wildlife habitat, clean water and aesthetic values.

The company emphasizes sustainable harvesting practices, safety, professionalism, SC Timber Harvesting Best Management Practices and works conscientiously to meet landowner expectations through exceptional envi-

ronmental, harvesting and business practice standards.

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 suppliers and wood receiving companies in cooperative, mutually beneficial partnerships, promoting and practicing sustainable forestry, educating the critical public regarding professional timber harvesting, demonstrating a stewardship attitude about our sustainable and renewable forest resources



and our environment are all important issues to the company's business and operational standards.

Both William and Linda say, "We appreciate the SC Timber Producers Association and the American Loggers Council for being the professional loggers' representatives. We need their presence for legislative and regulatory issues, to enhance the logging industry and to provide education and guidance for better understanding of what we do as professional loggers as we harvest our sustainable, renewable forests to provide the wood to manufacture products enhancing our daily lives. And to enhance the industry's image of professionalism and let the public know we truly care about our environment and healthy forests. SCTPA has done a great job for us, we appreciate the association's work and to keep up the good work."

As an industry leader with a sincere commitment to professional logging, sustainable forestry, community, family and the principles of outstanding business, SCTPA is proud *Wilkerson Logging, Inc.* is our 2016 *Gene Collins Logger Activist Award* recipient.

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.

William Wilkerson and Wilkerson Logging's History

This Wilkerson Logging history was read by grandson Thomas to those in attendance at the fifty year anniversary celebration.

William Wilkerson is a hard-working and outstanding man. He set goals at an early age and ventured into an area of life that has blessed him in many ways. After graduating from Hickory Grove High School in 1966, William completed six months of basic training in the National Guard and then remained active for six years. Upon returning to Hickory Grove after basic training, he started his own logging business. He was introduced to the logging field by his father, Tom Wilkerson, who was a timber buyer with Sharon Woodyard which purchased for Canal Wood. William saw the potential of taking his father's interest in the timber business and making a living himself and future generations in logging.

Wilkerson Logging began with three employees who became very committed to William and his new venture. Their first piece of equipment was a Case tractor with a front-end loader, which was soon joined by two Poulan saws and two trucks – a 1958 Ford short axle and a 1954 International single-axle. As time went on, the equipment changed for efficiency and safety, but William's leadership remained the same. Since his beginnings, William has added loaders, cutters and skidders to his company, along with tractor trailers and log trailers.

The three Wilkerson sons, Billy, Robbie and Tommy, have all joined the family business and work full-time for their father. In addition, the oldest grandson, Thomas works for him during school vacations. The youngest grandson, Will, is beginning to learn the trade so that when he becomes of age he too can help in the business. From Tom Wilkerson's work as a timber buyer, the fourth

generation is now partaking in the family business.

Wilkerson Logging began hauling to small woodyards in Sharon and later, Hickory Grove. Over time, the business grew and he acquired his own dealership in order to haul directly to Bowater, Bosie Cascade, International Paper and Deal's Sawmill. What began as a young man's dream, has now become the life-force of the Wilkerson family. For fifty years, logging provided for William, his wife Linda, three sons and their families, which include seven grandchildren. Wilkerson Logging has cut for over 1,000 land-owners, with his first customer being Mr. John Carter, whom he still cuts for today. Through the company's fifty year history, they have never had to file workers compensation – which is a testament to the leadership of William and his focus on safety on the logging worksite. During the fifty years of Wilkerson Logging, they have employed only twenty-one men, which is a testament to William's positive leadership. In addition, the business has grown from one crew to two three-man crews.

Over the years, William has had an interest in introducing others to logging and the timber industry. For a few years, he held the Loggers and Woodcutters Jamboree at the Hopewell School in Hickory Grove where there were opportunities for log rolling and crosscut sawing, among other contests. Twice the past ten years, William has hosted a John Deere Day where visitors can come and see a wide variety of John Deere tractors and equipment.

In 1980, William and Linda opened a store in Hickory Grove to better serve loggers and farmers in the area. Along with feed and seed, they sold Poulan and Pioneer saws and Toro mowers and tillers. They serviced the saws and small engines. Their store grew to include boots, food, oil and gas/diesel. In keeping the business in the family, William's dad had an office in the back where he continued to be a sub-dealer for Canal Wood.

In the 1990's, William participated in the first class of the TOP Logger Program sponsored by the SC Forestry Association. He continues to take classes and maintain his certification in this area, as well as requiring his sons to do the same. William is a member of the SC Timber Producers Association, SC Forestry Association, the South Carolina Tree Farm and the Palmetto Timber Fund.

In addition to running his own business, William is very active in his community. He served on a committee that organized the first ever Hickory Grove Parade, which is now eagerly looked forward to by many in Western York County as the first event to bring in the Christmas season. William has served on numerous committees at Mount Vernon United Methodist Church in Hickory Grove, where he has been a member for over fifty years. He has been involved in the Jaycees, Log A Load For Kids and Relay For Life. William is an active member of the Hickory Grove Fire Department, where he once fought fires and now helps with traffic control and wherever needed. He is always eager to be a sponsor for sports teams and other events in the community. His commitment to youth and sports was

recognized by the YCHS Athletic Department in 2014 when he and his wife Linda received the Cougar Fans of the Year Award. For the past ten years, William holds an annual hay ride each November to provide an opportunity for people to see the country and all that nature has to offer.

During some down time, William was asked about the logging business and how he felt on certain topics. He mentioned that the best equipment would be John Deere and the farthest he has traveled to cut would be forty miles away. When asked what he considered to be the best thing about owning his own logging business, William listed three things – It provided a good living for him and his wife, it provided employment options for his sons, and it has given him flexibility for other things. Hardships related to logging include wood quota, bad weather, breakdowns and unexpected expenses. Finally, advice for those interested in starting their own logging business would be to plan for hard work, long hours and to be ready for challenges.

A 50th Anniversary Message from a Dear Friend, Margaret Pridmore

A man whose success as a hard working logger was evident to those of us who knew him as a high school student. He would stop by school with a trailer filled waiting for the end of the school day to get to the pulpwood yard to unload and go home and get a load ready for the next day.

After high school, William continued his hard work; and, as he moved forward other things were on his mind. He and his high school sweetheart were making plans for a wedding. This proved to be a true partnership. William was not only successful as a logger, he was active in his church and community, serving in various roles and responsibilities.

William, with Linda, built a wonderful business, Wilkerson Logging, Inc. They have three great sons who have joined the business. As their dad did, the sons also “married well” with wives who are supporting and very service oriented, active in church and community. There are seven grandchildren, young men and young women who are carrying on the values they have learned from William and Linda.

Wilkerson Logging, Inc.

