

# GENE COLLINS LOGGER ACTIVIST AWARD

## Rudolph A. “Rudy” Ritter & R. A. Ritter Logging Co., Inc. *Moncks Corner, SC*

The 2018 Gene Collins Logger Activist Award is proudly presented to Rudy Ritter and R. A. Ritter Logging Co., Inc. for their sincere commitment to professional timber harvesting, supporting the association, participating in community and industry activities, practicing sustainable timber harvesting, promoting education and positive promotion of professional business practices.

R. A. Ritter Logging Co. 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.

As a thirty-eight year timber harvesting business veteran, Rudy has witnessed the evolution of the professional timber harvesting industry from chain saw felling to total timber harvesting mechanization.

Rudy began his forestry career as a Westvaco forester in 1972 after receiving an Associate of Applied Science in Forestry Technology from Horry-Georgetown Technical Education Center September 1, 1972. He actually graduated with the second Forestry Class because he was drafted into the reserves. He worked as a Westvaco forester until starting his logging business in 1981.

Rudy's son Allen works alongside his dad and is Rudy's right hand man in woods. Rudy's wife Tammy is an integral part of the business attending to all the office administrations for accounting, finances, vehicle registrations and clerical matters. Both Rudy and Allen are Sustainable Forestry Initiative SC Timber Operations Professional Trained for their SFI Trained status.



Rudy and Allen Ritter

R. A. Ritter Logging has witnessed changes in the wood receiving companies they have worked with over the years. They operate a mechanized crew

focusing on thinning and logging on total harvests. Rudy specializes in “Shovel Logging” and was the second such operation working on Westvaco's company owned lands. After the Mead/Westvaco merger and then Plum Creek taking over management of Westvaco timberlands, then Kap-Stone's acquisition of the Charleston paper mill and Summerville sawmill, Rudy continued logging for the companies. Still shoveling now, he works for Weyerhaeuser producing timber products from Weyerhaeuser owned timberlands.



Rudy Ritter & Forestry Grads

Ritter Logging produces roundwood pulpwood and higher valued log products for delivery to WestRock's Summerville sawmill and local chip mill and other wood receiving markets in the region.

Operating a lean, efficient business works very well for R. A. Ritter Logging. The crew's equipment

spread consist of a Tigercat 720 feller buncher, one Tigercat 822 and two 620 grapple skidders, one John Deere 748 grapple skidder, Hitachi 2054 shovel and John Deere 2154 shovel for loading trucks.. Due to labor issues and adverse ground conditions recently, not all the equipment is being utilized on every job.



Allen Ritter

The company's vehicle fleet is comprised of five truck tractors, four Peterbilts and one Mack, double deck log trailers and lowboys and service truck. The company does use two regular contract haulers. Not all of the company trucks are being used due to driver shortage issues.

The company has eight full time employees. Average weekly production is 80 - 85 loads per week with the capability to produce 100 loads, but driver issues limits trucking capacity now.

As a professional logging business, R. A. Ritter Logging has contributed its share of time to educate those that

may not have an understanding of sustainable timber harvesting. Rudy has hosted many groups to visit their logging operations to gain an up close look at how professional loggers operate and are stewards of our forestlands.

Over his years in business, Rudy has hosted Westvaco's board of directors for a shovel logging demonstration, hosted Weyerhaeuser groups, Plum Creek shareholders, a group of timber industry lobbyists and others. Always glad to show off their professional business Rudy takes pride in having an opportunity to display his professional logging operation and educate others about sustainable timber harvesting and sustainable forestry.

R.A. Ritter Logging has been a long standing supporter of Log A Load For Kid and contributes to the Joe H. Phillips Forestry Scholarship Fund for Horry-Georgetown Technical College Forestry students. Joe Phillips was the original forestry professor at the Technical Education Center.

Allen Ritter coaches eleven year olds in baseball in the Berkeley County Recreational League and won the 2018 championship. Allen also coaches the travel baseball team for 11 - 12 year olds in the recreational league. Rudy has served as the "Boat Captain" for a Berkeley High School Bass Fishing Team and is a Berkeley High School Booster Club Sponsor for baseball. Rudy and Tammy attend Wassamasaw Baptist Church in Moncks Corner.

Rudy says, "I am proud to be a long standing professional logger member, for 20 years, of SC Timber Producers Association. I know our industry's segment has a voice for us and I'm glad we have that voice. Our industry has many challenges, from road issues, trucking regulations, local and state government issues, and so on, but our industry has an association that is here for us to take on the issues to

help us operate our businesses as professionals and as good forest stewards and citizens. We as professional loggers must continue to promote and perform our businesses as professionals because the viewing public, regulators, agencies do not understand sustainable forestry practices."

SCTPA's Crad Jaynes says, "I have had the privilege to know Rudy Ritter for over 35 years of my 42-year career. Rudy has always been one of the best profes-

sional loggers I have ever known. His performance on the ground and in his business has been and is today exceptional and his contributions to our professional logging industry are meaningful to promote and improve our timber harvesting industry. One thing about Rudy, he has always had the philosophy of... if you are going to do it, do it to the best of your ability and do it right. And I am proud to say, Rudy has done just that."

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



Vince Bradshaw, Weyerhaeuser Forester and Rudy and Allen



issues to the company's business and operational standards.

As an industry leader with a sincere commitment to professional logging, sustainable forestry, community, family and the principles of outstanding business, SCTPA is proud *Rudy Ritter and R. A. Ritter Logging Co., Inc.* is our 2018 *Gene Collins Logger Activist Award* recipient.

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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.

