

September 18, 2013
EDUCATION Award
Presenter: Tom Crawford

I feel very fortunate to present this year's award in the Education Category. These 3 outstanding nominees are ALL leaders in their field. Together, they represent the highest level of commitment from the early years to higher education and research.

Our winner this year is someone whose career spans multiple fields and leadership roles. In every instance, this individual personifies the Leadership Character Model. I'm extremely proud to announce the 2013 winner - **JIM MCGARRAH** – Chief of Staff of GA Tech Research Institute.

As you may know, Jim received multiple nominations, but that wasn't the reason for his selection. It was the extraordinary CONTENT of his nominations that sealed the deal. Prior to his recent promotion, Jim was a Lab Director at GTRI. Before that, he was on ACTIVE DUTY with the Navy, was Deputy Commander of the Naval Facilities Engineering Command, and retired as an ADMIRAL in the Naval Reserve.

Jim also had a successful management career with BellSouth for many years. As a volunteer, he serves as the State Chair for the Employer Support of the Guard & Reserve and chairs the Trustees at Embry Hills United Methodist Church.

All of Jim's nominators described him as a role model of integrity. One said, "He understands the word 'confidential' – is always able to serve as a wise sounding board – and chooses the ethical course of action, not the most convenient." Another said, "Jim meets the highest standard for 'impeccable' integrity – can be trusted in every situation – and never demonstrates self interest."

The nominators also gave examples of Jim's humility; his emotional intelligence; his ability to build consensus; his finely-honed interpersonal and communication skills; and how he treats everyone with dignity. Summarized one nominator, "The respect Jim gives is returned to him in the form of loyalty, cooperation and collaboration by those with whom he works."

Accountability and getting the job done are additional strengths for Jim. One nominator explained, “I’ve enjoyed working with Jim not just because of what he gets done and how he does it, but because of who he is.” From commanding a Seabee Battalion in Desert Storm, to serving on the military tribunal for the Guantanamo detainees, to helping lead major realignments within GTRI – Jim has made hard decisions but also involved others upfront and in carrying out the work. Another nominator said, “He’s a role model for supporting the greater good - not just his own objectives.”

Finally, one nominator summed up his ultimate respect for Jim this way: “Jim is a life boat in a storm to whom I would trust my life and reputation.”

On that note, I’d like to ask Jim to join me on stage as we congratulate him as our 2013 Leadership Character Award winner in the Education category.