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Press Release

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"Georgia Northwestern Technical College Athletic Coordinator David Stephenson, left, presents Georgia Northwestern Technical College Director of Institutional Advancement Jason Gamel with the fund's first check."

Leaving A Legacy: Arming The Future Of Industrial Technology

Tommy Wilson Scholarship To Help Buy Tools For GNTC Industrial Students

(Northwest Georgia) – A successful life and career in a tech field in the Tennessee Valley inspires the family of Tommy Wilson to give back in a way that would have made him proud. An initial gift from Wilson's family will be the foundation of the Tommy Wilson Tool Scholarship Fund benefitting Georgia Northwestern Technical College's (GNTC) Industrial Technology students.

Wilson, after working 35 years with Eureka Foundry in Chattanooga, Tennessee, retired at the beginning of 2016. Just 10 weeks later, he passed away. Wilson's nephew just happens to be David Stephenson, GNTC's Athletic Coordinator. In Wilson's name, Stephenson presented a check to the Georgia Northwestern Technical College Foundation on September 29. GNTC Director of Institutional Advancement Jason Gamel accepted the gift on behalf of the Foundation at the Walker County Campus in Rock Spring, Georgia.

"Uncle Tommy graduated from the old Kirkman Technical High School in Chattanooga," said Stephenson. "It led him to a great career with Eureka (Foundry). He worked in drafting and architecture design in regards to industrial systems technology. He would want to give back to those just starting their new careers in the same area of work."

Wilson, with no children of his own, would often tell others that Stephenson was his son. "He was my 'cool' uncle," added Stephenson. "I believe this scholarship would be a great way to honor his life of working successfully in a technical career. He was very helpful to others within his field. Just seems fitting to do this in his name."

His alma mater, Kirkman Technical High School, was located in Downtown Chattanooga, Tennessee. The high school closed its doors forever in 1991. It was located on a piece of land affectionately known as "Hawk Hill." If you look high atop Hawk Hill these days, you'll find yourself watching the Chattanooga Lookouts play minor league baseball on their home turf, AT&T Field.

"With Kirkman long gone, the family just felt giving to the college's industrial technology programs may be the perfect way to continue his legacy," said Stephenson. "After speaking with the instructors, it wasn't the tuition funds that the students were having the toughest time coming up with. It was tougher for the students to get the money to buy the tools to help them start their careers." Wilson's family is starting the fund in cooperation with the Georgia Northwestern Technical College Foundation with a promised commitment of at least \$500 dollars every year.

"We try to encourage private contributions in order to build and maintain outstanding academic and support programs at the college," said Gamel. "Donations to the Foundation support areas of institutional need including scholarships to deserving students, equipment purchases, materials for the library, and staff development." To give to the Tommy Wilson Tool Scholarship Fund, contact the Office of Institutional Advancement at 706.764.3810. You may also e-mail the office at jgamel@gntc.edu.

For more information on the Georgia Northwestern Technical College Foundation, you can contact GNTC at 866.983.4682 (GNTC). For information online, visit them at GNTC.edu, as well as on their Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, WordPress, and YouTube channels. GNTC is a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) and an equal opportunity institute.

Since 1962, Georgia Northwestern Technical College has provided degrees, diplomas, and certificates in business, health, industrial, or public service career paths. This past year, 13,734 people benefited from GNTC's credit and noncredit programs. With an annual credit enrollment of 7,876 students, GNTC is the largest college in Northwest Georgia. GNTC has an additional enrollment of 5,858 people through adult education, continuing education, business and industry training, and Georgia Quick Start.

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