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New Bladen Community College Scholarship Honors Second Chances and the Power of Education

Dublin, N.C. — Bladen Community College is proud to announce the establishment of the Kerry L. Shipman College Readiness Scholarship, designed to support students who have earned a high school credential through the college's College Readiness Program and are continuing their educational journey at Bladen Community College.

Established by Dr. Kerry Shipman, the scholarship will provide financial support to a student who has recently earned a high school credential through Bladen Community College's College Readiness Program and chooses to continue their education at BCC in a certificate, diploma or degree program. The College Readiness Program provides students with multiple pathways to earning a high school credential, including the GED, HiSET and credit-based options.

For Dr. Shipman, the scholarship is deeply personal. Bladen Community College was an important turning point in his own educational journey. After taking a nontraditional path through school, earning his GED at BCC opened the door to what came next—including college, graduate school, law school, public service, teaching and ultimately earning a Ph.D.

The scholarship also honors Ms. Mary Cole, who served as Dr. Shipman's GED instructor at Bladen Community College and remains an important part of that chapter of his life. Her role in his journey reflects the profound difference one educator can make by providing encouragement, opportunity and a second chance.

"I wanted to honor Ms. Mary Cole and the role she played in helping me move forward," said Dr. Shipman. "Sometimes one educator, one opportunity or one second chance can completely change the direction of a student's future."

The scholarship is intended to help a newly credentialed College Readiness Program graduate take the next step in their education, particularly a student who may be balancing financial hardship, employment, parenting, caregiving or other significant responsibilities while pursuing an education.

For Dr. Shipman, the scholarship represents a simple but powerful belief: A GED does not have to be the end of an educational comeback—it can be the beginning of the next chapter.

Bladen Community College is grateful to Dr. Shipman for investing in the future of BCC students and for creating a scholarship that recognizes not only academic achievement, but also determination, resilience and the courage to begin again.

“Stories like Dr. Shipman’s remind us that an educational journey does not always follow a straight line,” said Dr. Amanda Lee, President of Bladen Community College. “We are incredibly grateful for his generosity and for his desire to help another student discover what is possible when they are given an opportunity to take that next step.”

Through scholarships such as the Kerry L. Shipman College Readiness Scholarship, the Bladen Community College Foundation works to remove financial barriers and help students turn educational opportunities into brighter futures.

For information about scholarships available through the Bladen Community College Foundation, or to learn more about establishing a scholarship to support BCC students, contact the Bladen Community College Foundation at 910-879-5500.

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