

LOUISBURG COLLEGE NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 24, 2012

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DE HART FAMILY DONATES BOTANICAL GARDENS TO LOUISBURG COLLEGE

Louisburg, NC — The Louisburg College Board of Trustees is pleased to announce that the Allen de Hart family has donated the 91-acre De Hart Botanical Gardens and its estate to the College.

A dedication ceremony and reception will be held on Thursday, April 26, at 2:00 pm at the entrance to the Gardens, adjacent to 3585 U.S. Highway 401 South in Louisburg. The dedication will include opening remarks from Louisburg College President Mark La Branche; an invocation by Louisburg College Chaplain Shane Benjamin; greetings from the faculty by Martha Bragg, chair of the College's mathematics and science department; and greetings from the student body by freshman Ashley Walls '13. The public is welcome to attend this event.

“The gift of the De Hart Gardens will mark one of the greatest historic developments in the 225-year history of the College,” says Louisburg College President Dr. Mark La Branche. “It represents an extraordinary legacy created by God, and fashioned through the mind, heart, and hands of Allen de Hart. This gift will more than double the land mass of our campus, and significantly expand our learning environment.”

The De Hart Botanical Gardens are one of two owned by the family (the other is a 165-acre wilderness area near De Hart's birthplace and the Blue Ridge Parkway in Virginia). The Gardens' forests, lake, and open areas provide protection to a wide range of botanical species, and host prominent areas of Paleozoic granite, deciduous and evergreen forests, natural springs and streams with cascading sections, a 1.5-acre lake, and more than 375 flora species and 100 fauna species.

De Hart and his family will continue living in the property's ranch-style home and serve as caretakers of the Gardens' forests, trails, lakes, and historic sites, and will monitor events such as concerts, weddings, and special educational tours.

De Hart is a well-known author and is the founder of the Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail Inc., a non-profit organization whose mission is to design, construct, and maintain North Carolina's Mountains-to-Sea Trail. When completed, the trail will be nearly 1,000 miles (of which more than 500 miles are finished) from Clingman's Dome of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park to Jockey's Ridge State Park at the Atlantic Ocean. (See attached story, *A Natural Gift*, for detailed information about De Hart and his lifetime of service to Louisburg College and the natural environment).

Mr. De Hart and President La Branche will be available for interviews immediately following the dedication ceremony.

A free community concert in celebration of the gift will be held in the Gardens on Sunday, April 29, from 2:00 – 4:00 pm.

For more information, please contact: Bill Cross at (919) 787-4944 or bcross@cross-a.com or Amy Scoggin McManus at (919) 604-5051 or amcmanus@louisburg.edu.

Related by faith to The United Methodist Church, Louisburg College is committed to offering a supportive community in which young men and women mature intellectually, culturally, socially, and spiritually. As a two-year residential institution, we provide a bridge for students to make a successful transition from high school to senior colleges and universities.

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