

## LOUISBURG COLLEGE NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
April 26, 2012

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:  
Amy Scoggin McManus  
Director of Marketing and Communications  
Phone: (919) 604-5051  
Email: amcmanus@louisburg.edu

### 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, which was held on Thursday, April 26, at 2:00 pm near the entrance to the Gardens, included opening remarks from Dr. Mark La Branche, Louisburg College president, and Dr. John Cameron, chairman of the College's board of trustees; 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 Ashley Walls, a member of the class of 2013. A commissioned watercolor of De Hart with Garden visitors was presented to him during the ceremony.

“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.

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.

*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.*

- END -