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Learning First Alliance Honors Governor James B. Hunt with its 2014 Education Visionary Award

Gov. Hunt recognized for his decades of work and advocacy for the improvement of public education in North Carolina and across the nation

Washington, D.C. – May 15, 2014 – The Learning First Alliance (LFA), a partnership of leading education organizations representing more than 10 million parents, educators and policymakers, has named Governor James B. Hunt as its 2014 Education Visionary Award winner. For more than 35 years, Gov. Hunt, the former Governor of North Carolina and foundation chair of The Hunt Institute, has been dedicated to – and actively working toward – the improvement of public education from early childhood to higher education.

“Gov. Hunt’s leadership and commitment to improving public education embodies the meaning and merits of the Education Visionary Award,” said Cheryl S. Williams, executive director of the Learning First Alliance. “His decades of service, both in North Carolina and across the nation, have positively impacted countless students and educators, and we commend him for his tireless work.”

Considered by many to be the nation’s first “education governor,” Hunt served an historic four terms as governor of North Carolina, from 1977-1985 and 1993-2001. Under his leadership, North Carolina public schools improved test scores more than any other state in the 1990s, according to the Rand Corporation. Hunt has also been at the forefront of national education reform and currently chairs the board of The Hunt Institute, which, as part of the University of North Carolina, works with current and emerging political, business, and education leaders on a national level to improve public education.
Hunt has been particularly focused on early childhood development and the improvement of the quality of teaching. Among his many successes in education, his Smart Start program received the prestigious Innovations in American Government Award from the Ford Foundation and the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. In 1985, he co-chaired the “Committee of 50,” which led to the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy and eventually to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, which he chaired for ten years. He has also provided education leadership as chairman of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, chair of the National Education Goals Panel, board vice chair of Achieve, Inc., and chairman of the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education.

Honorees of the Learning First Alliance Education Visionary Award are individuals who exhibit:

- Exceptional leadership in bringing groups who have a variety of points of view together to work collaboratively
- Tenacity in focusing on the needs of children from all environmental and economic backgrounds
- Respect for professional educators and a belief that they too have the best interests of children as the focus of their work
- A demonstrated belief that public education is the cornerstone of our democratic way of life and should be nurtured for the benefit of every American

Previous recipients of the Education Visionary Award include former U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley (2011), founder of the Center on Education Policy Jack Jennings (2012), and Charles E. Ducommun Professor of Education at Stanford University Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond (2013).

To learn more about the Learning First Alliance and its Education Visionary Award, visit [www.learningfirst.org](http://www.learningfirst.org).

**About The Learning First Alliance**

The Learning First Alliance is a partnership of leading education associations with more than 10 million members dedicated to improving student learning in America’s public schools. Alliance members include: the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, AASA: The School Superintendents Association, American Federation of Teachers, American School Counselor Association, International

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