

Wayne Brock, the top Boy Scout executive, receives ECC Citizen of the Year award



Wayne Brock, chief Scout executive of the Boy Scouts of America, center, takes a photo with attendees of the BSA luncheon Tuesday at the Woodmen Community Center. Brock, who grew up in Deep Run, was named the Distinguished Citizen of the Year by the Caswell District of the East Carolina Council of the BSA.

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One of Lenoir County's own has not only risen to the top of one of America's favorite national organizations, he was honored with a prestigious award Tuesday.

Wayne Brock, chief Scout executive of the Boy Scouts of America since September, was honored as the Distinguished Citizen of the Year by the Caswell District of the East Carolina Council of the BSA at the Woodmen Community Center.

To some, Brock, who grew up in Deep Run, is a member of the Lenoir County family.

Ford Coley, Caswell District chairman, considers him as a "local son" who has come back home to be recognized for his "journey in life."

"It's a recognition of an individual who has been unselfish in pretty much everything he or she has done," he said, "and in this particular case, of course, Wayne Brock has been totally committed to the Scouting organization."

Kinston Mayor B.J. Murphy said he is excited Brock chose to come back to Kinston to give back to the community in which he grew up.

"The city is glowing today," he said, "because we've got one of our own sons here that has made it to the big stage."

Brock, 64, has been involved in Scouting for 56 years, including more than 41 years employed by the Boy Scouts.

His father, a highway patrolman in Pamlico County, had seen enough of young people with the proverbial idle hands and who were frequently in trouble with the law to know he needed to keep his two sons busy and out of trouble.

"So one day when I turned 8," Brock said, "he literally just took me across the street to Mrs. Woodard's house — who was a den leader — to join the Cub Scouts. He didn't ask me. He just took

me across the street, which I'm very thankful that he did because that started me on this journey today."

That journey continued when his family moved to Lenoir County when he was in the sixth grade and he joined the Boy Scouts under Scoutmaster Jack Everette. He worked on Camp Charles, owned by the East Carolina Council, and later earned the Distinguished Eagle Scout Award and the Arrow Distinguished Award.

Ray Franks, Scout executive of the East Carolina Council, said Brock taught him how to swim, and the two of them were members of the Council back in 1975 when it moved from Wilson to Kinston.

"We're very proud of Wayne," Franks said, "and the leadership he's provided to the Boy Scouts of America, nationally."

A graduate of South Lenoir High School, he earned a degree in music from East Carolina University. He began his career in Scouting through the urging of his brother-in-law, a Boy Scout employee.

"I know what it did for me personally," he said about Scouting. "... I taught school for a year, but then I decided to go to work for the Boy Scouts because I just knew the benefit that it had for young people."

Those benefits start with a strong dose of leadership. Starting around age 12, boys are selected to head up patrols of six to eight younger boys. They are responsible for such tasks as planning menus, overseeing camp setup and making sure their patrol members carry out their duties, Brock said.

"You really learn leadership by doing it," he said. "And Scouting's a safe environment for you to fail. And that's important, too. Sometimes you learn as much from your failures as you do your successes."

It seems to have worked for Brock, who continues living the lessons he's learned and later taught.

"I just always just try to do the best job I can do," he said, "and, hopefully, if I did the best job I could do, people would recognize that and they would want your talents."

That recognition has taken him up the ranks through many packs, troops, posts and now to the top. However, according to the national Boy Scout bylaws, the chief executive must retire at the age of 65. Brock is 64 now.

"So our board made a one-time waiver to that rule so that I could serve until age 67," he said. "So that'll be in 2015."

Brock, now based in Irving, Texas, has made significant contributions through the years to the BSA. One was a program he developed in the classroom that increased the percentage of children joining the Scouts. He was also successful in fundraising efforts.

Those two areas, programming and finances, are vital considerations when selecting the Citizen of the Year candidate, John Leighton, Caswell District Friend of Scouting chairman, said.

"I think (Brock's) extremely qualified — 41 years in Scouting," Leighton said.

The Caswell District, which includes Lenoir and Greene counties, raised about \$36,000 during Tuesday's event, bringing the total funds raised to about \$67,000 towards its \$90,000 goal this year, he said.

Brock has been married to Kinston native Ernestine for 45 years. The two dated through high school and have a grown son who was a Boy Scout, like his father. Ernestine Brock said it's an honor and "icing on the cake" for her husband to receive the Citizen of the Year award.

"I attribute Boy Scouts and his parents to the man he is today," she said, "which is a wonderful father, wonderful husband and a fantastic leader."