

## February 12, 2015 for Thomas Crowder Visionary Award

The WakeUP Board of Directors is proud to present the first annual Thomas Crowder Visionary Award. An award established to honor Thomas Crowder, a true visionary leader of our times. Since this is the first time we are giving this award, I want to take a little time to share with you why we are honoring Thomas with this award.

First, let's talk about the term: visionary. Defined broadly, a **visionary**, is one who can envision the future; someone who has keen foresight and can use their mind creatively to solve problems.

Someone who sees the world not at it is BUT someone who sees the world as it could be...this was Thomas Crowder. This also describes the first recipient of the Thomas Crowder Visionary Award, Mr. James Fletcher Goodmon. I will introduce Jim in a few minutes.

First, a little history about Thomas Crowder and WakeUP Wake County. Back in 2006, he and I along with a small group of citizens met to share concerns about challenges of rapid growth. We talked about how decisions were being made influencing development with little or no input from local organizations and essentially no representations from average people. From that meeting, Thomas helped launch WakeUP as a non-partisan non-profit to represent taxpayers and to "wakeup" decision makers.

Thomas engaged the community in many ways to develop solutions and to speak up for effective growth policies that ensure sustainable, healthy communities. Thomas was an architect. His skills as an architect made him an excellent advocate for Raleigh – a place where he was born and raised – a place he loved. He wanted Raleigh to be a great, environmentally conscious city, but one that did not lose its small town charm.

Thomas's relentless dedication and belief in great design transcended individual projects to encompass comprehensive planning for the City of Raleigh. He served two terms on the City of Raleigh Planning Commission. Thomas was then elected to six consecutive terms on the City Council representing District D, the "Capital City's

Creative District," Southwest Raleigh. He authored the Council's first mission statement and championed a sustainable path for Raleigh's future. Thomas served as a dedicated member of the Triangle J Council of Governments Board of Delegates for more than 10 years. He was recently recognized by them for "standing for workforce housing, proactive environmental stewardship, inclusive government policies, smart growth, and regional solutions, all advanced with a mix of toughness, straight talk, insight and humor."

Thomas saw the interconnectedness of our communities and cared deeply about how every aspect of development impacted us all. He cared about the little things like front yard parking and big things like creating a sustainable comprehensive plan for how Raleigh and the Triangle region will grow. He cared about improving street scapes along Hillsborough St and beyond and was one of the first voices to support Dix Park, transit and inclusionary zoning.

He cared about the little details of how our communities worked to the big ideas of how we could develop and sustain in the decades to come. Possibly Thomas's greatest legacy is that he always listened to his constituents and he looked for ways to help regular people and neighborhood leaders advocate before city leaders. He initiated the District D Neighborhood Alliance, a monthly forum for neighborhood folks to share their own issues, making neighborhoods uniquely equipped to influence city government on their own behalf.

Thomas's commitment to service and his love for our community begun in childhood when he became a boy scout. He was involved in Boy scouting most of his life and considered attaining the rank of Eagle Scout as his most important and defining achievement.

Yes, everyday Thomas was working on something, talking to someone, creating a vision for how to make our city better and best of all, he never forgot to consider how it would impact us, and our quality of life.

**This brings us to the award recipient tonight, Mr. Jim Goodmon.**

When the board discussed who would receive the first Thomas Crowder Visionary Award, it was an immediate and unanimous decision. Jim Goodmon. We could think of NO one in Raleigh, Wake County or the triangle region for that matter, who had shown more commitment to our quality of life than Jim Goodmon.

Jim is the perfect example of how visionary leaders can guide us in bold, new directions. His passion and strong leadership for high quality public schools, transit, and fair treatment of the least among us, the arts, economic development, regionalism, and Dix Park has been significant.

Jim has the ability to instill confidence in others and he has inspired us through his own visions for how our community can work together – when Jim leads, others want to follow because they know he is sincere, he is courageous, he is straight forward and fair, he is bold and successful.

Why is this true? Because Jim not only shares his dreams and goals and vision for our future, he listens to our ideas and incorporates them into the larger goal.

Jim courageously speaks up for what is right and champions and enables the work of others. His leadership has helped our communities unite to overcome differences as we have taken on major transitions created by the Triangle's growth. He is willing to speak up for bold initiatives and then helps us all organize to make them happen.

Jim is a risk taker. He is willing to gamble on something he believes in, mostly us. Jim believes in people. He has a knack for seeing success and potential in others, and that is one of the reasons he and Thomas were such good friends.

Jim is a great strategic planner, part of what it takes to be a great visionary leader. Like a chess player, Jim is thoughtful, always plans ahead, keeping a vision in mind of what something can look like in the future and how they can impact our quality of life for the better.

He has worked to save what is great in our community like Dix Park, and he has worked to restore the American Tobacco Historic District in Durham – a fabulous example of entrepreneurial restoration. And just look what he has done for the Durham Bulls—Triple A champions!

Jim has also been a creative and bold leader in broadcasting where he led Capital Broadcasting and its stations into the digital age, gaining industry-wide recognition as a visionary whose stations pushed the boundaries of technology. In 1996, the FCC granted the nation's first experimental HDTV license to WRAL-TV – the first in a long line of CBC technological achievements in the field of high definition television.

Jim has spent his lifetime looking over the next horizon – a trailblazer who understands and sees the future.

Here is a quote from Jim that summarizes his commitment to us:

***“The base of our business is broadcasting, but beyond the business of broadcasting is our belief in the public trusteeship, the public service, and the community service responsibilities... We do not believe a company can meet its business responsibilities without meeting its community responsibilities as well.”***

Yes, Jim is a giver. He understands our community needs and he invests in solutions – like strong schools, housing, seniors, the arts, and regionalism. Jim and his wife Barbara and their children – all of them have all spent considerable time and resources advocating for our future. As a family, they have built and supported many organizations that have helped move our county, our region and state, and our people forward

Jim is known as a man of principle, vision and as someone who is excited about our future and willing to act for enhancing our quality of life.

This makes him the perfect person to be the FIRST person named as a Thomas Crowder Visionary Leader! Thomas and Jim were great friends and they share one other thing in common: our hearts and our appreciation.

Jim bring come forward and receive this award and Kay can you join us?

*--remarks by Dr. Yevonne Brannon, Director of The Center for Urban Affairs and Community Services (CUACS) at North Carolina State University*