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Doctor receives humanitarian award

January 2, 2006

Mercer University recently honored Sallie A. Carter M.D., of Anderson with the Walter L. Moore Humanitarian Award in recognition of her lifelong commitment to Christian character, service and humanitarianism.

After graduating from Mercer in 1971 with a degree in psychology, she remained at the university for two years as coordinator of Project Upward Bound, a program designed to better prepare young people for college. She began visiting inmates at the Bibb County jail with a local priest, which eventually led to a position as educational director of the women's prison in Hardwick, Ga., where she established a school for the inmates.

Following her work at Hardwick, she entered Yale Divinity School, earning a master's degree in divinity and pastoral care in 1977. Ordained by her home church, Waldrop Memorial Baptist, in Columbus, Ga., she became the chaplain at Sweetbriar College in Virginia, the first woman to hold that position at the women's college.

In the 1980s, she returned to the classroom. The mother of three earned a doctor of medicine degree from the Medical College of Georgia in 1986. She started a private practice in Anderson and became a staff pediatrician at the AnMed Child Health Center.

Concerned about local barriers to children's health care, from transportation to the lack of Medicaid acceptance, she researched mobile clinics and bought a 40-foot recreational vehicle that she custom outfitted as a medical office. Wellness for Children LLC was on the road by August 2003, with Dr. Carter seeing more than 1,000 patients in the first four months.

Dr. Carter has never turned away a child from receiving medical care and has provided numerous free services to hundreds of families over the years. Her mobile unit allows children to stay in school, ensure they have the medicine they need, and identify any chronic illnesses earlier in the child's life.

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