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Ross & Vicki Babbitt Honored with Distinguished Service Award

Neosho, MO - Crowder College Foundation recently honored Ross & Vicki Babbitt of Pineville with the prestigious Distinguished Service Award. Owners of McDonald Telephone Company, the Babbitts have always held education near and dear to their hearts. "My grandfather was an educator all his life. He inspired my passion for education, and that motivated me to become a teacher. When we educate our young people, we give them the tools to make this world a better place," commented Vicki.

Ross and Vicki have faithfully supported Crowder College Foundation for many years. Theirs is a legacy that began more than 50 years ago when Vicki's mother partnered with former Crowder College Trustee James Tatum to garner community support for the establishment of a junior college in Southwest Missouri. The two canvassed neighborhoods door-to-door and played a vital role in the founding of Crowder College. Years later, when Vicki was approached about serving on the Crowder College Foundation Board, she eagerly accepted. She served in that capacity for 17 years. She's also a current member of the Crowder College Facilities Corporation.

"Since my involvement on the Foundation board, I have learned so much about the college and how it benefits students and the communities it serves. Ross and I have supported a variety of needs—from the McDonald County building campaign to scholarships and many others—because we see firsthand how giving impacts the students. Each year, at the annual scholarship banquet, we get to sit with students who have received scholarship assistance from the Foundation. They are always so grateful and that touches our hearts," said Vicki. "When we are asked to support, we give if we can.

Ross and Vicki's generosity reaches beyond Crowder College. They actively support the McDonald County Schools Foundation, Missouri Southern State University Lantern Society, Faithful Friends Animal Advocates, McDonald County Historical Society Courthouse Renovation, I'll Fly Away Foundation, The Chuck Wagon Gang—a gospel singing group, Breast Cancer Foundation of the Ozarks, and their local fire department. Additionally, they sponsor Show Me the Ozarks Stop the Texting and Four State Heroes campaigns. Ross serves on the board of directors for both The Cornerstone Bank and Missouri Telecommunications Industry Association. The couple were the inaugural recipients of the Heart of Education Award given by the McDonald County Schools Foundation to recognize donors who have made a difference for students.

Accomplishments that took place during Vicki's years of service to Crowder College and the Foundation include the installation of air-conditioning in Sneller Gymnasium, the opening of James B. Tatum Hall in

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McDonald County, Dawson-Spencer Hall on the Neosho campus, and launching of Maddox Hill Behavior Support Center.

“The Babbitts have made a profound difference for Crowder College through faithful giving of their time, gifts, and resources. It is with deep gratitude that we honor them with the 2017 Distinguished Service Award,” said Cindy Branscum, Crowder College Director of Institutional Advancement.

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Ross and Vicki Babbitt at the Crowder College Foundation Annual Meeting.

Please contact my office if you have additional questions.