

A. Wade Martin was the first executive director of the technical and industrial training program in South Carolina that became the model for most of the United States and other countries around the world. His vision pointed the way. During his lifetime, Wade Martin was recognized as one of the best industrial developers and occupational educators in the country. He had a vision for the New South - there would be good jobs for everyone and there would be a South that stood shoulder to shoulder with the rest of the country.

Wade Martin believed that people would make this happen. People with skills they could market. A trained labor force would attract industry and would create jobs. Jobs would provide economic growth that would be beneficial to all. To pay tribute to his vision and innovation, the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education established the A. Wade Martin "Innovator of the Year" Award in 1980. This award reflects the foresight and ambitious standards of excellence exemplified by him.

In July, 1990 the A. Wade Martin Foundation merged with the Educational Resources Foundation (ERF). At that time, the ERF Board of Directors elected to continue the practice of presenting this outstanding award and enhance it with a financial contribution.

The A. Wade Martin Award recognizes individuals in the Technical College System who employ innovative approaches to meet the ever changing needs in the technical education arena and whose achievements impact most positively in our statewide efforts in economic development and the education of our students. Each year during the SCTEA conference, the A. Wade Martin Award is presented to an outstanding Tech employee for his/her contribution to the South Carolina Technical College System.

Presidents of the individual colleges and their direct reports along with members of the executive staff in the state office are ineligible for the award. A nominee must be a full-time vested employee (an employee for a minimum of five years) in the Tech System and have made a significant contribution to his/her college or to the Tech System. In addition, nominees should employ innovative approaches to meet the fast changing needs in the Technical Education System. Each college president is requested to nominate an individual representing their institution. In addition, the Executive Director of the Tech System is requested to nominate an individual from the state office for the award.

The South Carolina Technical College System Foundation informs the college presidents and the Executive Director of the State Tech System of this award annually and solicits nominations. Nominations are made in writing to the South Carolina Technical College System Foundation by completing a nomination form (supplied by the Foundation) along with the letters of support for each nominee.

Once nominations are received, the Executive Committee of South Carolina Technical College System Foundation selects the recipient. The award will be a check for five hundred dollars made out to the recipient and will be presented to the recipient by a member of the South Carolina Technical College System Foundation Board at the annual SCTEA conference.