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### **Howard College Honors Couple With Building Naming**

**BIG SPRING** – The Howard College Board of Trustees gave special recognition to Dr. Douglas and Beatrice Burke by naming buildings on the SouthWest Collegiate Institute for the Deaf (SWCID) campus in their honor during their regularly scheduled meeting Monday.

The administration building, now called the Douglas Burke Education and Administration Building, was chosen to honor Dr. Burke for his pioneering role in the life of SWCID.

As the first deaf individual to lead an institution of higher education in the nation, Burke paved the road for all deaf leaders and students.

“Dr. Burke was a true visionary as he worked with Howard College to establish SWCID and to lead its early development,” said Dr. Cheryl T. Sparks, Howard College President. “When Dr. Burke passed away in 1988, we lost a giant in the field of deaf education.”

Burke’s early work in the establishment of a community college for the deaf was a huge milestone in the world of higher education as it created new opportunities for the deaf not only in the State of Texas but on the national and world-wide scene as well.

Sparks added, “He is certainly deserving of this special recognition and we are proud to be able to remember him in this way.”

A second building naming took place as the residence hall – the Burke / Mehan Residence Hall – now serves as a special honor to Beatrice Burke.

Although one of the wings of the residence hall previously recognized Dr. Burke, it will now recognize his wife, Beatrice. Mrs. Burke played a significant role as a deaf leader in the early envisioning of SWCID and has provided ongoing leadership in the advocacy of deaf education.

Mrs. Burke also served as a SWCID faculty member and retired after 19 years of service. During her tenure as a SWCID faculty member, she received the highly-esteemed Minnie Piper Professor award.

“Beatrice Burke has been and continues to be an integral part of our SWCID family,” said Dr. Sparks. “She has shown a deep commitment to SWCID and its evolution.”

Even after her retirement from teaching, Beatrice has remained involved as a past chair and member of the SWCID Advisory Committee and is also a member of the Texas School for the Deaf Governing Board, appearing before legislative committees advocating best practices for deaf education.

Sparks added, “The Burke family is a huge part of the history and foundation of SWCID and Howard College. We are indebted to them for their leadership and vision that have been critical in getting us where we are today.”

A ceremony to unveil the new building names honoring the Burkes will be held this summer as part of the ongoing 30 year celebration at SWCID.

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