



**COLUMBIA NATIVE GWENDOLYNNE SMITH JACKSON FETTED AS INITIAL  
FIRST FARMERS & MERCHANTS BANK ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNER**

**COLUMBIA, Tenn. (August 14, 2009)** – A Columbia native came home today and was named the inaugural First Farmers and Merchants Bank Achievement Award recipient in special lunchtime ceremonies at the bank.

Dr. Gwendolynne Smith Jackson, a Knoxville veterinarian who grew up in and graduated from Columbia schools and Columbia State Community College, thanked Chairman and CEO T. Randy Stevens and the bank for the honor and promised to continue being someone whose actions well represented the award, her faith, her family and First Farmers & Merchants Bank.

Intended to annually recognize individuals with Middle Tennessee roots who have been quiet but effective achievers, the inaugural award seeks to honor people whose integrity and successes are representative of both the American spirit and the values of First Farmers and Merchants Bank, especially at this time of economic hardship.

“Gwen will represent the ideals of this award very well,” Stevens said. “She’s an achiever, an influencer and just an all around great person who has touched the lives of a lot of people. In addition to her being an entrepreneur, I’ve been especially impressed at what she quietly has done with youths who need a listening ear. That’s exactly what we try and do every day at First Farmers – listen to customers and try to find a way to help them better their lives or achieve their dreams.”

Jackson is a 1969 graduate of Columbia Central High School and also graduated both Columbia State Community College (1971) with an associate’s degree in Science and George Peabody College (1973) in Nashville with a degree in Biology. After becoming a board certified medical lab technician, she attended Tuskegee School of Veterinary Medicine, graduating as a doctor of veterinary medicine in 1979.

She was awarded the title of Miss Columbia State Community College in 1971 and Miss Tuskegee School of Veterinary Medicine in 1975.

She practiced veterinary medicine in Savannah, Georgia for a year and then moved to Knoxville, Tennessee to serve as a backup veterinarian. Later, she took a position as veterinarian at the Knoxville Pet Emergency Clinic. In 1990 she opened All Paws Veterinary Clinic in Knoxville with her husband Olvin.

A practicing veterinarian for more than 30 years, Jackson has developed and provides awareness programs about animal healthcare in Knoxville schools and has been one of a number of veterinarians who have helped Knox County run its annual, low-cost Rabies Clinic. She is also a competitive horse woman, specializing in endurance riding and teaches horsemanship to collegiate-level students in the Knoxville area.

Several years ago, Dr. Jackson began working with principals at nearby schools to provide a mentoring program to support children with challenging family situations who might need extra attention or skill development to reach their potential. Her efforts involve time spent at her farm riding horses, taking care of animals and generally experiencing nature. The time together also allows Jackson and the youth a non-threatening setting for talking about issues and offering encouragement.

Jackson's husband, Olvin, is a planner with the Department of Energy's Y12 Site in Oak Ridge, Tennessee and she has two children, a daughter, Kyoo, 27, a physician in the Bronx, New York, and a son Aaron, who is a criminal justice student at Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia. All three, along with other members of her family, the Columbia community and First Farmers Bank, attended the award ceremony.

Recipients of the First Farmers & Merchants Achievement Award do not need to be high profile individuals, have a direct relationship with First Farmers or even live in the Middle Tennessee area. The award will be bestowed annually.

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***About First Farmers & Merchants Bank***

*Founded in 1909, First Farmers & Merchants Bank (Member FDIC) is one of the most successful independent banks in Tennessee, with total assets of approximately \$917 million and deposits in excess of \$758 million. An additional \$2.7 billion in assets is held by its Trust & Financial Management Department. Headquartered in Columbia, Tenn., the bank operates 17 offices in a seven county area in Middle Tennessee that includes Maury, Lawrence, Marshall, Hickman, Giles, Dickson and Williamson counties. It is distinguished by its commitment to traditional, personal banking relationships that incorporate state-of-the-art technology to provide the highest possible level of service. For additional information, visit [www.fandmbank.com](http://www.fandmbank.com) or call the main office at 931.388.3145.*