

\$1 million Clemson gift reflects donor's love of state's wild places

By Anna Simon
Clemson bureau
asimon@greenvillenews.com

CLEMSON — A former Greenville business leader and nature lover who helped create the Foothills Trail Conference that maintains a 77-mile trail winding along the mountainous South Carolina/North Carolina line has given \$1 million to Clemson University to create a professorship in environmental sustainability.

With their gift to his alma mater, R. Glenn Hilliard and his wife, Heather, have created the Glenn '65 and Heather Hilliard Endowed Professorship in Environmental Sustainability, university officials said Tuesday.

"We want our state to be a wonderful place to live, play and work for generations to come," said Hilliard, a former chief executive officer and chairman of

Continued from Page 1A

University and worked in Washington, D.C., for the late South Carolina congressman William Jennings Bryan Dorn.

He joined the legal department of Liberty Life in 1968 as a young lawyer and was with the company for two decades, through 1989.

He was the first chairman of the Foothills Trail Conference, which he led for more than 15 years, and "had the vision" to bring people together — private, federal and state agencies — so people could hike this wilderness area, said Heyward Douglass, a board member and former chairman of the organization.

Betty McClellan, Clemson's longest-serving development officer, has known the Hilliards since the 1980s and said he "cares more about our state and our school, his family and the environment than he does about himself."



Glenn Hilliard, with his granddaughter Caroline Stuart, gave Clemson University \$1 million. /CLEMSON UNIVERSITY PHOTO

Liberty Life Insurance Co. "One of our goals in life is to leave this world, and our state, a better and more beautiful place."

His name may be familiar to hikers who have visited Hilliard Falls, named in 2008 to honor his role with the trail conference. The 50-foot waterfall is just off the Foothills Trail about 5.5 miles from the Bad Creek

trailhead above Lake Jocassee.

Both Anderson natives, the Hilliards love South Carolina, its people and its beautiful outdoors places, he said.

They hope their gift will help to identify and preserve the state's natural environments and encourage sustainable development and economic growth in

places other than these irreplaceable assets.

The Clemson professorship "will help to do that long after we are gone," he said.

Their gift will fund a professorship in Clemson's Center of Economic Excellence in Sustainable Development, created in 2010 to develop new technologies to foster sustainability, protect the state's natural resources and encourage smart growth, university officials said.

The gift qualifies Clemson for a dollar-for-dollar match from the state, creating a \$2 million professorship.

It's "a very forward-thinking investment in all our futures" and "a lasting legacy," said Clemson President James Barker.

Hilliard, a 1965 Clemson graduate, earned a law degree at George Washington

See GIFT, Page 3A

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2011

and education to advance the state economy.

In addition to his role with Liberty Life, he was chief executive officer and chairman of ING Americas and chairman of CNO Financial Inc.

He now is chief executive officer of Hilliard Group LLC, an Atlanta investment and advisory firm, and is a director of Columbia Funds Trust.

Hilliard said he and his

wife plan to move back to Greenville in the next couple of years. He said he hopes this gift will inspire others "to step up and help Clemson and to do some things for the out-of-doors in South Carolina."

The Glenn '65 and Heather Hilliard Endowed Professorship in Environmental Sustainability is part of Clemson's \$600 million Will to Lead capital campaign.

Hilliard also was active with the Greenville Art Museum and was founding chairman of the state Governor's School for the Arts.

He is a past chairman of the Clemson University Foundation board of directors, received Clemson's Alumni Distinguished Service Award in 2008, is a major donor to the Clemson Fund and IPTAY and was the inaugural donor to Clemson's Palmetto Challenge supporting research