

Emory emeritus professor to receive 2017 Clemson Alumni Distinguished Service Award

CLEMSON, S.C.—The Clemson Alumni Association will present Perry Sprawls Jr, Ph.D., a distinguished emeritus professor at Emory University, with the 2017 Distinguished Service Award, the association's highest honor for a Clemson graduate. The award will be presented Friday at the Brooks Center for the Performing Arts at Clemson University.

"Perry Sprawls sets an extraordinary example of what a Clemson graduate can accomplish," remarked Clemson University President James P. Clements. "He is a pioneer and leader in his career, he is a dedicated public servant who gives back tirelessly to his community and communities around the world, and he is a loyal and devoted Clemson supporter. We are exceedingly proud to call him part of the Clemson family."

Born on a farm in Barnwell County, S.C., that had been in his family since 1812, Perry Sprawls Jr. grew up working in agriculture and learning the new technology of electricity. Sprawls earned a bachelor's degree from Clemson University in industrial physics in 1956 and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Army Signal Corps. After serving and working at Bell Labs, he returned to Clemson for the new nuclear science program, earning a master's degree in 1961 and then earning Clemson's first doctorate in bioengineering in 1968.

Sprawls found the opportunity to apply nuclear physics to medicine as a professor in the radiology department at Emory University. After 45 years, he retired in 2005 and became a distinguished professor emeritus. His career in medical physics includes serving as director of Medical Physics in Radiology at Emory; co-director of the College of Medical Physics at the International Centre for Theoretical Physics in Trieste, Italy; director for Medical Imaging Continuing Education for the American Association of Physics in Medicine; and co-editor of *Medical Physics International*.

His passion for expanding medical education on a global basis, particularly in developing countries, led to establishing the Sprawls Educational Foundation, which provides textbooks, online resources and collaborative teaching methods to improve global medical education. He led the establishment of the Emory University-Xi'an Cooperative Program in Radiology in China. In pursuit of expanding and improving medical education, Sprawls has taught in 14 countries and had post-graduate students working in more than 70 countries.

Sprawls' love for Clemson led him to help the class of 1956 select the Class of 1956 Academic Success Center as their 50-year anniversary project. The center opened in 2012 and contains a suite of rooms dedicated to his parents, Neva and Perry Sprawls Sr.

Sprawls has served as a deacon and leader in the Baptist church and on the board of directors for the Asheville Lyric Opera. With an ongoing interest in preserving rural South Carolina history and heritage, one of his current projects is hosting the Barnwell County Virtual Museum.

The prestigious Clemson Alumni Distinguished Service Award is based on three main criteria: personal and professional accomplishments; dedication and service to Clemson University; and devotion to community and public service. Members of the Clemson family nominate potential winners, who are then selected by the Clemson Alumni Association as outstanding alumni, public servants and examples to others.

"Clemson University can take pride in one of its graduates who has, and continues to, make major contributions to improve health care and education in virtually every country of the world," wrote Debra Monticciolo, M.D., FACR, professor of radiology at Texas A&M University and vice-chair for research in breast imaging at Baylor Scott and White Health, who worked with Sprawls to modernize mammographies in China.

Sprawls now lives with his wife, Charlotte, in Black Mountain, N.C. Their son, Charles Perry, is a professional singer based in New York.