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# HORIZONS

SOUTH CAROLINA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION DEPARTMENT

Volume 30, Number 3

July 1991

## Taylor captures Governor's Trophy award

The South Carolina Governor's Committee on Employment of People With Disabilities honored Stephen Wayne Taylor of Travelers Rest as its 1991 Governor's Trophy winner at its annual awards luncheon held recently at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Columbia.

The Governor's Trophy award or Disabled South Carolinian of the Year award recognizes the citizen who most increased public awareness of the contributions that persons with disabilities can make to employment.

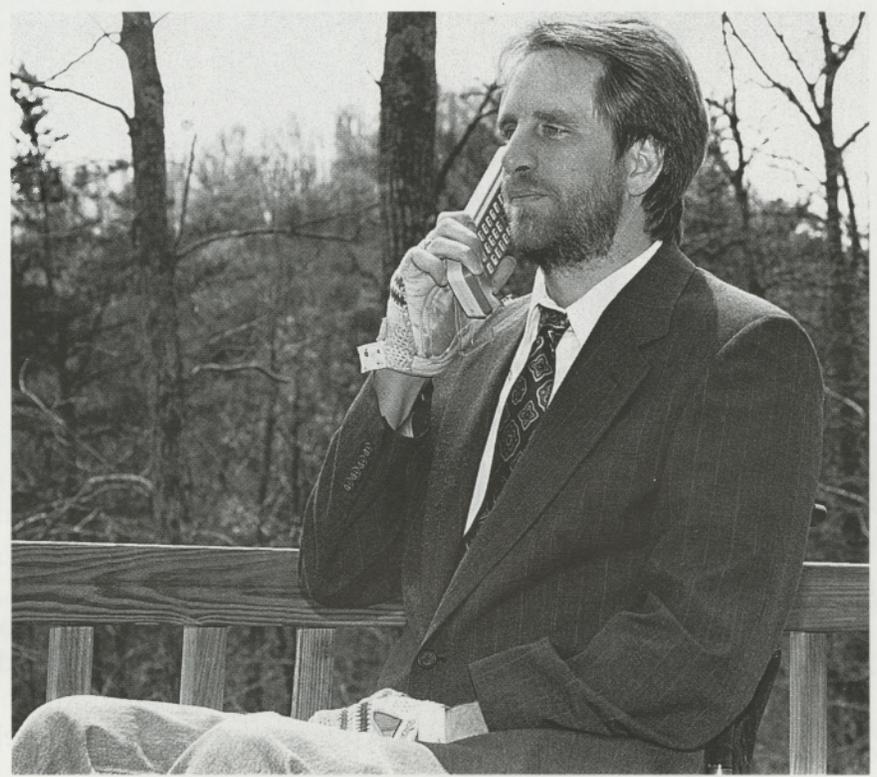
W. Lee Catoe represented Governor Carroll A. Campbell Jr. at the luncheon.

Catoe serves as the governor's executive assistant for Health and Human Services. He advises the governor in those areas and also works to improve community and race relations statewide.

The committee honored the following other 1991 winners: Large Employer of the Year, Colonial Life and Accident Insurance Company, Columbia; Medium Employer of the Year,

American Federal Bank, FSB, Greenville; Small Employer of the Year, Carpenter Cleaners Inc., Simpsonville; The Governor's Student of the Year Award,

Caroline Modlin Kobek, Mount Pleasant; and first through fifth place Journalism Contest winners, Matthew James Lengel of



*Stephen Wayne Taylor, the winner of the 1991 Governor's Trophy, manages a successful cleaning business out of his home in Travelers Rest.*

*Taylor and his wife designed and subcontracted the construction of their board and batten mountain home.*

*NEW HORIZONS* is published by the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department (SCVRD), 1410 Boston Avenue, Post Office Box 15, West Columbia, South Carolina 29171-0015.

The Public Information Office provides all news and information.

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# Taylor's GC award

Brookland-Cayce High School; Sean Patrick Robertson of Spring Valley High School; Pam Ingham of Irmo High School; Shealy Smith Painter of Spartanburg High School; and Marcus Keene LaFountain of Irmo High School.

The Governor's Trophy award winner, the Large Employer of the Year, the Medium Employer of the Year, the Small Employer of the Year and the first place winner in the Journalism Contest will represent South Carolina in national competition sponsored by the President's Committee on Employment of People With Disabilities.



**Stephen Wayne Taylor**

Stephen Wayne Taylor's story is one of great determination.

He became a quadriplegic as the result of a 1982 automobile accident.

That was very difficult for him to accept. He did not want to admit that his injuries were permanent — that he would never walk again.

But, once he did, he began to focus on the things he needed to do to become independent.

After receiving extensive reha-

bilitation, he attended Greenville Technical College and graduated from TEC with degrees in marketing and accounting.

He now handles full-time marketing, bookkeeping and payroll duties for his own business, C&T Cleaning Services in Travelers Rest, out of his home.

But Taylor is not confined to his home — not in the least. He is completely independent.

He drives a van, calls on customers, and plans meetings in advance so that he can anticipate barriers.

As a result, he devotes a great deal of his time working to remove barriers to people with disabilities in the greater Greenville area.

In addition, he helps conduct seminars on barrier-free design for codes officials, architects and contractors. He helps teach them how to make facilities accessible to everyone. He also displays his van in malls — just to educate the general public.

Taylor helps students with disabilities at Greenville TEC.

At Roger C. Peace Hospital he helps patients adjust to their new disabilities.

Taylor, a former military policeman with the U.S. Army, also works with the Veterans Administration.

Still, he makes time to compete in athletic events sponsored by the Paralyzed Veterans of America and has won numerous medals in track and field, archery and other sports.



# The 1991 Employers of the Year

## The Large Employer of the Year

The Large Employer of the Year award recognizes the one employer with more than 1,000 employees who most contributed toward improving employment opportunities for South Carolinians with disabilities last year.

This year's winner is a company with national prominence.

Colonial Life and Accident Insurance Company, headquartered in Columbia, believes in hiring the best person for the job — and if that person has a disability, the company does whatever is necessary to help that person do his or her best.

Colonial Life and Accident hires persons with disabilities for a wide variety of jobs including salespersons, security guards, programmers, secretaries and management personnel.

The vice president for claims is blind.

The general legal counsel for the company, a paraplegic, helped develop Colonial's policies on hiring persons with disabilities.

Colonial purchases equipment such as telecommunications devices for the deaf, or TDDs, to help some of their employees with disabilities do their jobs effectively.

The company purchased an electric wheelchair for an employee.

Colonial provides sign language training so that its employ-

ees can communicate with co-workers with hearing impairments and trains its supervisors to work with employees with disabilities.

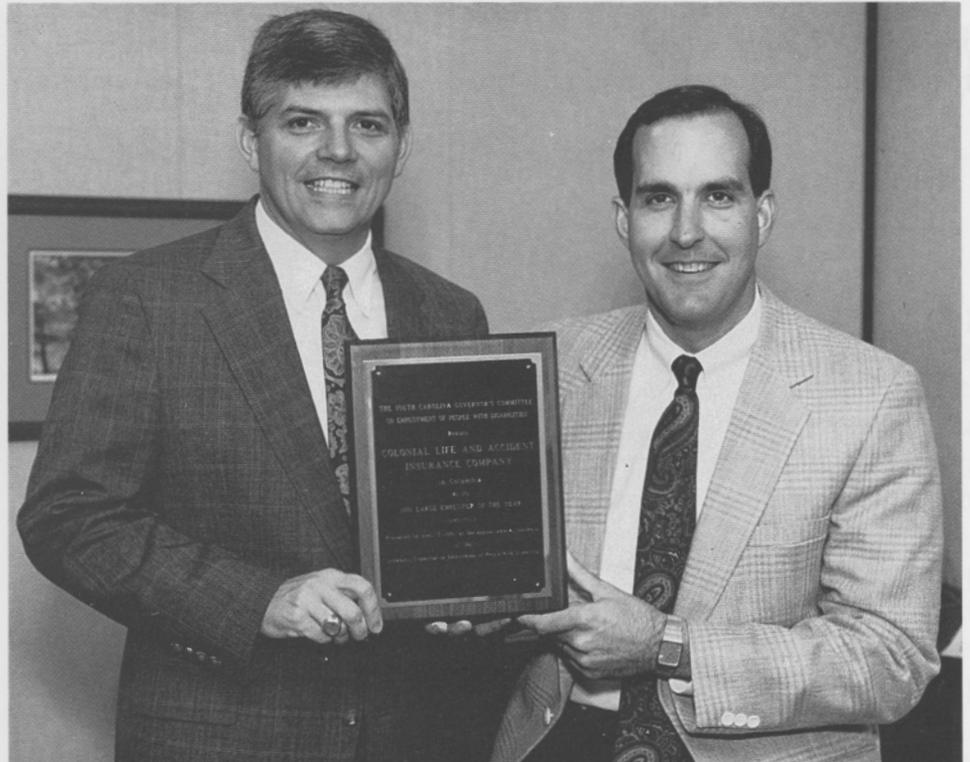
It actively seeks training for its supervisors — training about working with employees with disabilities.

Colonial Life and Accident is also involved in the disability com-

munity in many other ways.

Senior vice president Roy McCrorey serves as chairman of the Business Advisory Council for the Vocational Rehabilitation Department's award-winning Computer Training Program.

The company also has an active program for transitional employment to give the mentally restored opportunities for employment.



Don Montgomery (left), assistant vice president for employee relations, and Robbie Douglas, manager of staffing services, at Colonial Life and Accident Insurance Company enjoy a moment displaying the company's 1991 Large Employer of the Year award.

photograph by Mike Moore of Colonial Life

# The Medium Employer of the Year

**T**he Medium Employer of the Year award recognizes the one employer with more than 200 and less than 1,000 employees who most contributed toward improving employment opportunities for South Carolinians with disabilities last year.

The management of American Federal Bank in Greenville has a philosophy that what a person cannot do is unimportant. What matters is what a person can do.

Their hiring practices clearly illustrate that attitude.

American Federal employs persons with disabilities in its data processing, programming, facili-

ties services and customer service areas.

After hiring a programmer who used a wheelchair, the bank modified a rest room and other parts of the building.

The bank also serves its customers' needs better by making branch offices more accessible to persons with disabilities and by installing a telecommunications device for the deaf in its customer service department.

The bank has a policy of getting referrals for job openings for individuals with disabilities.

In fact, a vice president of the bank serves on the local board of

the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department in Greenville and actively encourages other employers to hire persons with disabilities.

American Federal offered sign language classes to its employees and received an overwhelming response.

The bank has also received national acclaim for its advertising campaign, which prominently features employees with disabilities.

American Federal is a national leader in the March of Dimes Team Walk event, placing among the top 100 companies for five consecutive years.



*Mike Trimble, chief operating officer of American Federal Bank, shows the 1991 Medium Employer of the Year award to Ramona Launius (left), deposit clerk. Interpreting for Launius, who has a hearing impairment, is Catherine Bowen, a secretary at the bank.*



*Neva Stewart, one of several employees with disabilities working at Carpenter Cleaners in Simpsonville, presses a pair of pants. Carpenter Cleaners won the Governor's Committee 1991 Small Employer of the Year award.*

## The Small Employer of the Year

The Governor's Committee Small Employer of the Year award recognizes the one employer with less than 200 employees who most contributed toward improving employment opportunities for South Carolinians with disabilities last year.

This year's winning company demonstrates that small business can provide a leadership role in the employment of persons with disabilities.

Carpenter Cleaners Inc. in Simpsonville has nine employees.

Three of them have disabilities.

For the past ten years this family-owned dry cleaning business has reached out to the disabled community, actively seeking employees with disabilities.

Earland Sarah Carpenter, owners, have found that they make reliable, solid employees.

The Carpenters provide on-the-job training for new employees who often need a period of adjustment.

And the Carpenters take a strong personal interest in their

employees. They willingly adapt schedules so their employees can go to therapy or other medical appointments. If an employee has transportation problems, the owners themselves drive them to and from work.

When an employee has the opportunity for advancement with another business, the Carpenters provide encouragement and support.

And they actively encourage other businesses to hire persons with disabilities.



# 1991 Student of the Year

The Governor's Committee presents the Student of the Year award to a high school student with a disability.

The award recognizes the student's outstanding accomplishments, initiative, activities, persistence and other similar qualities.

This year's winner simply refuses to let her disability keep her from doing the things that she wants to do.

Caroline Modlin Kobek was born with a profound hearing loss. However, Kobek says that she just happens to hear better with her eyes than with her ears.

A sophomore at Wando High School in Mt. Pleasant, she maintains a 'B' average in a college preparatory program. Her reading, writing and spelling levels are well above the national average for high school graduates.

Kobek's teachers say that she has a gift for putting others at ease and helping them understand and appreciate her abilities.

Debbie A. Kollar, the teacher who nominated Kobek for the award, called her an inspirational student who "...views her life and her future as a wonderful and exciting challenge and she optimistically faces and rises above the obstacles she encounters."

Kollar recalls how Kobek once startled the school faculty by announcing her intention to run for class president. Faculty advisers called her in and tried to talk her out of making a speech because they feared the other students wouldn't understand her and might laugh.

Kobek smiled politely and as-



Caroline Modlin Kobek of Wando High School in Mount Pleasant shows off her 1991 Student of the Year Award plaque.

sured them that she was fully capable of making her speech.

And she worked diligently on her speech and her enunciation.

She did not win the election, but the audience was moved tremendously by her words, her manner and her poise.

In fact, Kobek is an award-winning member of the Wando speech and debate team. She became the first Wando student ever to reach the semifinal round of a national level tournament.

She uses these opportunities to speak out against the prejudices that students with hearing impairments face in school.

Lois J. Matthews, instructor of audiology at M.U.S.C., says that

Kobek's efforts and successes have caused many people to change their views of deaf people.

An 'A' French student, Kobek is a member of the school's French Club.

She runs for the track team.

She is also active in church work, is a volunteer at the Medical University of South Carolina Children's Hospital, attends workshops in theatre, and works with environmental groups to clean up beaches and to recycle.

Caroline hopes to become a child psychologist or an attorney-advocate for people with disabilities.



# 1991 Journalism Contest

The first through fifth place winners of the 1991 Journalism Contest all submitted articles written on the topic "Employment: Investing in America's Future."

The committee received entries from high school students throughout the state.

A panel of judges, all professional journalists, chose the winning articles.

AMVETS provided the following cash prizes for the winners: first — \$200, second — \$150, third — \$125, fourth — \$75, and fifth — \$50.

## First place winner



**Matthew James Lengel**, a junior at Brookland-Cayce High School, took first place honors.

Lengel received a four-year college scholarship for tuition and fees to the state-supported university of his choice.

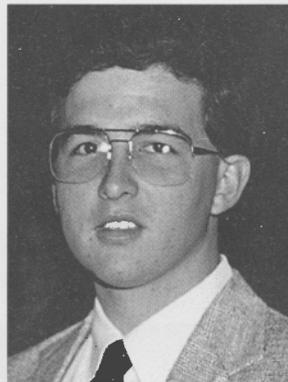
The Governor's Committee submitted Lengel's article for national competition sponsored by the President's Committee on Employment of People With Disabilities, in Washington, D.C. He finished in second place in that com-

petition and received an additional \$2,500 prize.

Lengel is a member of the National Honor Society, treasurer of the junior class and a writer for the school newspaper.

He is an Eagle Scout and was selected to attend Boys' State this year.

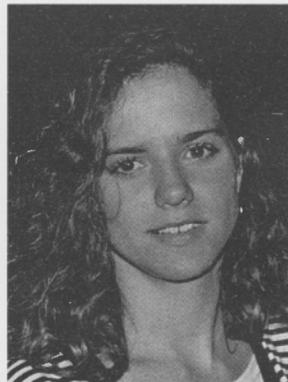
## Second place winner



**Sean Patrick Robertson** of Spring Valley High School in Columbia is an Eagle Scout.

He works as a high school sports reporter for *The State*.

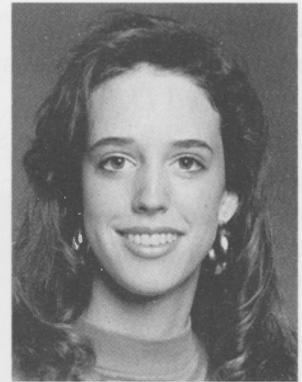
## Third place winner



**Pam Ingham** of Irmo High School in Columbia serves as an officer or board member of numerous school, church, and community organizations and works

as an instructor at Dance Unlimited in Irmo.

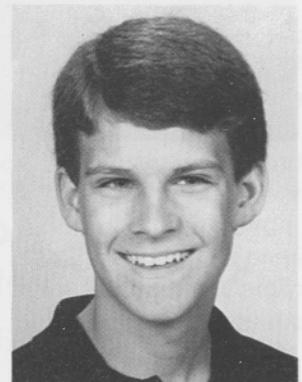
## Fourth place winner



**Shealy Smith Painter** of Spartanburg High School is president of the school's literary club and serves on the yearbook staff.

As a senior board member of the Anchor Club, she volunteers time to several school and community service projects.

## Fifth place winner



**Marcus Keene LaFountain** of Irmo High School in Columbia is on the school debate team.

He has written for the school newspaper, *The Stinger*, and for the "Neighbors" section of *The State*.

# SCRA holds 1991 annual meeting

The South Carolina chapter of the National Rehabilitation Association held its annual meeting, themed "Rehabilitation: Investing in America's Future," May 5 through 7, 1991, at the Carolina Plaza Hotel in Columbia.

Patrick Cleburn "Clebe" McClary III, Vietnam veteran and motivational speaker, and U.S. Representative Floyd D. Spence, 2nd Congressional District, spoke at the opening session.



**Patrick Cleburn  
"Clebe" McClary III**  
Vietnam veteran and  
motivational speaker

Justin W. Dart Jr., chairman of the President's Committee on Employment of People With Disabilities, spoke at a noontime honors luncheon on Monday. He discussed the need for employers and the disability community to work harmoniously together to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and how employment can empower persons with disabilities.

After the luncheon, Dart also met with employers and leaders in the disability field to discuss state and

local initiatives to celebrate and implement the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Also at the Monday honors luncheon, the association presented statewide Local Area Case of the Year Awards to counselors and clients of the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department.

The association honored the overall winners of this competition at Tuesday's awards luncheon.

A list of the award winners follows:

*SCVRD Case of the Year Award*

Jennifer D. Allen, client

Judith L. Hughes, counselor, Greenville Area

*SCVRD Runner-up Case of the Year Award*

Roy Edward Busbee, client

Rachael S. Harte, counselor, Aiken Area

*SCVRD Area Case of the Year Award winners*

Anderson: Cheryl B. Rich

Beaufort: Joel T. Patrick

Camden: Barbara F. Watkins



**U.S. Representative  
Floyd D. Spence**  
2nd Congressional District



*Gary Van Voorst (right), plant controller for Tupperware Incorporated in Hemingway, accepts a Business and Industry Partnership Award from Justin W. Dart Jr., chairman of the President's Committee on Employment of People With Disabilities.*

*SCRA honored Tupperware for providing contract work for clients at the Conway Vocational Rehabilitation Training Center. Nearly every workday, 20 or more persons with disabilities do production work for Tupperware at the center.*



*Personnel director at the Holiday Inn–Airport in Charleston, Debbie Grooms, accepts a Business and Industry Partnership Award from Dr. Marvin Efron, second vice president of the South Carolina Rehabilitation Association.*

*SCRA honored Holiday Inn–Airport for employing persons with disabilities. Last year, the hotel hired 100 people. Of these, 20 had disabilities.*

## Award winners, continued

*Brenda Davis, interviewer with the Graniteville Company, prepares to accept a Business and Industry Partnership Award. During this fiscal year, the company has already hired at least 19 persons with disabilities.*



*Wanda Sawyer, personnel manager for So-Pak-Co Inc., accepts a Business and Industry Partnership Award from Joe S. Dusenbury, commissioner of the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department. SCRA honored So-Pak-Co for its commitment to hiring persons with disabilities in its food packaging operation. During the past year, the company hired 20 persons with disabilities.*

Charleston: Frank B. Elliott  
 Columbia: Melissa S. Williams  
 Conway: Aaron C. Butler  
 Florence: Penny B. Campbell  
 Greenwood: Mitchell D. Kneece  
 Lancaster: Gordon K. Threatt  
 Laurens: Curtis E. Wallace  
 Marlboro: James E. Mincey  
 Orangeburg: Randy S. Pluta  
 Rock Hill: Margaret H. Allen  
 Spartanburg: Teresa D. Lancaster  
 Statewide Facilities: Hilda M.E. Cannon  
 Sumter: Henry D. Tindall III  
 Walterboro: Kathy E. Way

*SCVRD Business and Industry Partnership Awards*  
 Graniteville Company, Graniteville  
 Holiday Inn-Airport, Charleston  
 So-Pak-Co Inc., Mullins  
 Tupperware Inc., Hemingway

*SCVRD Citations for Individual Contributions*  
 Phillip J. Canders, member,  
 S.C. State Agency of Vocational Rehabilitation  
 W. Lee Catoe, executive assistant,  
 Governor's Office

*SCVRD Legislative Award*  
 Sen. Nikki G. Setzler, District No. 26

*PSA Professional of the Year Award*  
 Judith L. Hughes

*SCARS Secretary of the Year Award*  
 Linda C. "Sue" Hinson

*S.C. Job Placement Division Award*  
 Nancy L. Mitchum

*SCRAA Administrator of the Year Award*  
 Walter J. "Jim" House

*SCRCA Counselor of the Year Award*  
 Martha C. Bennett

*SCVEWAA Professional of the Year Award*  
 Krista A. Whitesel

*S.C. State College*  
*Rehabilitation Counselor Training Program Award*  
 Carthia Conyers

*USC Rehabilitation Counseling Program*  
*Student of the Year Award*  
 Rena L. Caudill



# SCRA honors Allen/Hughes with 1991 Case of the Year Awards

Editor's note: The South Carolina Rehabilitation Association's Case of the Year Award recognizes the client who made the most progress in overcoming his or her disability and the counselor who most contributed to that progress.

## Jennifer D. Allen

One simple event can completely change a person's life.

In April of 1987, Jennifer D. Allen, a 28-year old wife and mother, took a drive on the interstate. A tire blew out and the resulting accident rocked her world.

It left Allen with a severe closed head injury.

The injury stripped her of the ability to function well physically, mentally, vocationally, socially and economically.

It severely impaired her memory and judgement.

She had problems with double vision.

She spent more than four months in the hospital and then received outpatient services which included occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech therapy.

She could not manage well enough to stay alone at home. She relied on others for transportation.

## Judith L. Hughes

Five months after the accident, Judith L. Hughes, special services coordinator for the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department at Greenville's Roger C. Peace Rehabilitation Institute, began working with Jennifer.



*Joe S. Dusenbury, commissioner of the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department, presents the 1991 Case of the Year Award to Jennifer D. Allen.*

Hughes quickly discovered that Allen did not really understand the difficulties she faced.

For instance, she could not understand why it was so hard for her to do tasks that she had done so easily before.

She wanted to lead a productive work life, but was frustrated and angry.

Hughes spent many hours counseling Allen.

Hughes also arranged for Allen to receive evaluation and work adjustment services at the Greenville Vocational Rehabilitation Training Center and to go to the Center for Comprehensive Programs in West Columbia, where staff members provided her with a variety of innovative services. These services helped her increase her strength, mobility and endurance.

## 1991 Case of the Year Awards, continued

Still, her disability caused her many judgement and behavior problems, keeping her from becoming job-ready.

Hughes and Allen worked diligently together to help her overcome these problems.

When Allen expressed an interest in office occupations, Hughes arranged for a typing course at a local technical school.

Surgery corrected Allen's double vision. Her outlook brightened. Her physical skills improved. She showed steady improvement in judgement, self-esteem and relationships with others.

She began to enthusiastically pursue hobbies. A national finalist in a cooking contest, she flew to California to compete.

Finally, more than two years after the accident, Hughes and Allen felt that she was ready to begin looking for work.

First, a drug store hired her as a part-time cashier, but Allen was anxious to find full-time employment.

Hughes arranged for Allen to

take computer classes to improve her job opportunities. Soon Hughes learned of a data entry position and set up an interview for Allen, who got the job.

She now works successfully as a data entry operator with the American Leprosy Mission in Greenville.

Allen continued to become more independent. She got her driver's license back and moved into her own apartment.

But she has not stopped there. Allen, concerned for others with similar disabilities, takes part in local and state head injury groups and represents her employer on the Greenville Mayor's Committee on Employment of People With Disabilities.

Together Allen and Hughes experienced many frustrations.

They knew Allen had great potential. Yet, her disability sidetracked her so many times and in such unpredictable ways.

But her fierce determination and Hughes' counseling helped her focus on what she could do.



**Judith L. Hughes**

*Hughes, special services coordinator for the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department at the Roger C. Peace Rehabilitation Institute in Greenville, won two major awards this year at the South Carolina Rehabilitation Association's annual meeting: the 1991 Case of the Year Award and the 1991 Professional Staff Association's Professional of the Year Award.*



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