



ACHIEVERS INTERNATIONAL - GEORGIA

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COMMUNITY

Achievers International volunteers honored by State Board of Education

Three local businessmen who are volunteers with the Coweta County-based Achievers International Scottish partnership have been honored by the Georgia Department of Education and state Board of Education.

Those honored:

— Sam Edwards, vice president of Bank of Coweta.
— Douglas Cantrell, manager of the Belk Department Store in Newnan.
— Bill Loftin, a clothing manufacturer and owner of companies including the Bleyle Inc. operation in Newnan.

Achievers International has made links between students in Coweta County and later other parts of the state and students in Scotland. Communication, including live video-conference link-ups, has grown into a mini-international business exchange. Classes develop their own import-export "companies," learning about international trade as well as a cultural exchange.

"We learned a long time ago that when business partners are involved, our children respond. Without question, when they lend their resources, expertise, and other talents, Georgia's children learn the skills to compete in our ever-changing workplace," State Board of Education Chairman Johnny Isakson, a businessman himself, said.

State Superintendent of Schools Linda C. Schrenko added, "Time and time again, these companies and organizations have shown a willingness

to help Georgia's children. This recognition is our way of publicly saying thank you for their participation. Each one is proof positive of what can happen when business leaders decide to help improve education."

Edwards began working with Achievers International-Georgia when he was asked to participate in the first teacher training program in 1995, explained program director Bette Hickman.

His banking experience was valuable to the teachers whose first task is to assist their students in forming a business and raising start-up capital. He helped the teachers understand the steps necessary to start a small business. Since then he has helped many Achievers International-Georgia school companies get off the ground. Edwards worked directly with students to write business plans if they chose to obtain a bank loan, and he assists the students in converting and transferring monies for international business transactions.

Edwards serves on the Achievers board of directors and for the last two years has chaired the "Spirit of Scotland" golf tournament, raising thousands of dollars to assist



Edwards



Cantrell



Loftin

Manufacturing in Bremen, GCO in Bowden and Fashion Star Outlets in Carrollton. His expertise over the last 40 years epitomizes the definition of entrepreneurs.

Loftin finds time to be at O. P. Evans Middle School and Jefferson Parkway Elementary School in Newnan to assist their Achievers International student companies.

Since the Achievers program began, Loftin has been a mentor to the school companies. The students designed blazers and vests under his guidance, learning every step of the process along the way. The results saw hundreds of men and women throughout Georgia wearing apparel designed by students. Some of the clothing is even being worn internationally.

Loftin is now working with Achievers statewide to market suits through catalog sales. He also serves on the program's advisory council.

teacher and student study tours to Scotland and England.

Cantrell became involved with Achievers in 1995. He designed the first marketing and sales program for teacher training during the pilot phase and has participated each year since. Cantrell has helped organize opportunities for students to have their products introduced to the community in Belk stores in Newnan and Fayetteville.

"He is always available to assist the AI-G Board of Directors or individual school companies with questions about marketing and sales," Hickman noted. He encourages his employees to share their expertise and has been the liaison for Achievers to the corporate headquarters of the Belk chain. He also serves on the Achievers advisory council.

Loftin has a long history of giving back to the communities where his businesses are located. In addition to Bleyle Inc. in Newnan, he owns Sewell