DEL MAR COLLEGE

COLLEGE RELATIONS OFFICE

colrel@delmar.edu • www.delmar.edu

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CONTACT: Dr. Leonard Rivera, Vice President of Dual Enrollment & Continuing Education, at lrivera@delmar.edu, 361-698-2404 (o) or 361-215-6952 (m) or DMC Associate Director of Media Relations Melinda Eddleman at meddlem@delmar.edu, 361-698-1597 (o) or 36-815-4111 (m)

ONLINE NEWSROOM: vikingnews.delmar.edu

Del Mar College Board of Regents honors Dotson G. Lewis, Jr.'s service to country, college, community and fellow veterans

98-year-old U.S. Army Veteran retires from teaching as College establishes Dotson Lewis Scholarship through the DMC Foundation

(Corpus Christi, Texas)—You may have heard his voice on the radio, seen him on television, read his articles or taken a Del Mar College (DMC) credit or noncredit class he taught.

On Nov. 10, 98-year-old retired U.S. Army Sergeant Dotson G. Lewis, Jr. was honored for teaching technology courses to Coastal Bend senior citizens through the College's Continuing Education (CE) Department. Lewis was recognized by the DMC Board of Regents as he announced his retirement from teaching and received a certificate honoring his service.

Additionally, administrators announced the Dotson Lewis Scholarship that the Del Mar College Foundation will administer to assist DMC students pursuing higher education or career training at Del Mar College.

"This scholarship provides a lasting tribute to Dotson's service, dedication and sacrifice while helping deserving students pursue their educational dreams," said Dr. Leonard Rivera, vice president of dual enrollment and continuing education, who presented the recognition.

He added that continued donations to the scholarship fund will honor Lewis' legacy and open doors of opportunity for future generations and make a meaningful difference.

During public comments, former Senior Education student Jack Miller, who took computer skills and software courses taught by Lewis, addressed the educator's dedication to ensuring senior residents had the technological skills to maintain their independence.

"Seniors are usually afraid of computers, and Dotson taught the basics to build our confidence," Miller said, noting that Lewis spent 20 to 24 hours overall each week planning, traveling from the island and teaching Apple and Microsoft software skills, computer and smartphone use and their applications for everyday life.

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"The main thing Dotson taught us is that in today's world, seniors without technology can lose their independence and control of their own lives," Miller said. "He taught us how to conduct research online and make informed decisions."

Human Resources records show that Lewis started as an adjunct instructor with Del Mar College's Kinesiology Department in 2009 and moved over to Continuing Education in 2015 to teach a variety of technology courses while offering extra computer lab time for student support. Other Continuing Education staff noted that he also volunteered teaching CE classes before becoming a DMC employee.

Additionally, he created a "Writing Your Story" course, helping veterans share stories about their military service and preserve their legacies for their families. He taught students how to explore their personal histories, share memorable experiences and turn life events, family traditions and special moments into written stories.

"Not only did Mr. Lewis' students receive instruction, but they also received a sense of community and connection with many taking his classes again and again," said Dr. Rivera. "The stories and laughter could be heard down the hall, and Mr. Lewis will always be well respected and liked by veterans, seniors and students alike."

Lewis has also hosted the Corpus Christi Veterans Roundtable meetings at the College's Center for Economic Development.

Of the recognition and his students, Lewis said, "I spent a lot of time working with these people, and it wasn't work. It was fun. After spending many years working here, all I can say is 'Keep senior education going.'"

About Dotson G. Lewis, Jr.

Born in Gunter, Texas, Lewis joined the U.S. Army 80 years ago when he turned 18 in 1946, and in 1948, General Douglas MacArthur presented the soldier with a gold watch.

As a member of the 1st Cavalry Division, he arrived for combat service a few days after the Korean War started, serving in that country for 13 months. He received several combat medals, including the Korean Service Award with five battle stars.

After the Korean War, Lewis was assigned to the Army Air Defense at Ft. Bliss near El Paso, Texas. He worked in research and development, primarily developing and testing surface-to-air missile systems.

In 1964 following the Olympic Games in Tokyo, Lewis and his family were deployed to the 3rd Infantry Division in Germany, where soon after his arrival he was assigned as the division's Special Services NCOIC (Noncommissioned Officer in Charge). In 1967, he was chosen as the European "Sportsman of the Year" and then received the U.S. Army's Legion of Merit Award the following year.

He left active duty in 1968 and retired from the reserves as a Master Sergeant, continuing to add to his accomplishments after a 21-year career with the U.S. Army, including becoming a writer, educator and sports official, along with fulfilling other roles. Lewis continues to serve the Coastal Bend community and local Veterans by hosting The Veterans Radio Round Table and writing for The Island Moon newspaper.

From 1968 to 1977, Lewis worked toward and earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Health, Physical Education and Recreation, along with his master's degree in Education from the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP). During that period, he also worked as an instructor with the Physical Education Department and was director of UTEP's Intramurals Program.

Lewis served as Supervisor of the Southwest Officials Association from 1977 to 1995, and between 1987 and 1995, he assisted with writing the annual CCA Football Mechanics Manual and the illustrated NCAA Football Rules manuals. Additionally, between 1995 and 1999 Lewis was honored in several Halls of Fame, including the Football Officiating and the Japanese-American Football Halls of Fame.

In July 2002, Lewis and his wife Peggy relocated to Corpus Christi, where he received the city's Greatest Generation Award in 2008. His other accomplishments include hosting the radio talk show, "The Veterans Round Table" on 1440 KEYS, writing "Sports Talk" and "Senior Moments" for the Island Moon newspaper on Padre Island, serving as chair of the Corpus Christi Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee and working as an Instant Replay consultant.

In December 2019, Lewis gave the commencement address to the fall class, sharing his words of wisdom with nearly 400 graduates who participated in the ceremony.

As a man with many accomplishments, yesterday provided a special opportunity to thank Veterans like Lewis for their military service and commitment to the communities where they live as the country observed Veterans Day.

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