



GWINNETT COUNTY
PUBLIC LIBRARY

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MEDIA ALERT

GWINNETT PHILANTHROPISTS AWARDED AS PUBLIC LIBRARY CHAMPIONS

March 21, 2023 - Today at the Gwinnett County Public Library in Duluth, the Georgia Library Association awarded Gwinnett County philanthropists Clyde and Sandra Strickland as Public Library Champions of 2022.

The Stricklands' generosity has impacted hundreds of thousands of Individuals throughout Gwinnett County.

"The Stricklands are huge advocates for the library system," said Jason DiFranco, Director of Development and Community Partnerships at Gwinnett County Public Library. "Their focus is advancing education and literacy, so it has always been a perfect marriage for us. Whether it be providing funding for scholarships for individuals to earn their high school diplomas, seed money to start their own businesses through the New Start Entrepreneurship Incubator, or donating funds to assist with technology and collections to help support literacy for all ages."

Clyde and Sandra Strickland are well-known in Gwinnett County for their philanthropy, including building the Strickland Heart Center at Northside Hospital Gwinnett. In 2022 Sandra was named Philanthropist of the Year by the Greater Atlanta Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals. Clyde is the founder of Metro Waterproofing, one of the most successful companies serving the construction industry in the Southeast.

Their philanthropy has ensured the Gwinnett County Public Library offers resources and services to the underprivileged in their community.

Some examples include:

- Funding the Career Online High School program for individuals who

have not graduated and have aged out of public schools. They can continue their education online at no cost, at their own pace, and earn an accredited diploma. Graduates go on to college or use their degrees to advance their career positions.

- Funding the New Start Entrepreneurship Incubator program, from which over 38 individuals have completed the course and started their own businesses. This program is for individuals who were incarcerated at some point and find re-entering the workforce nearly impossible. As successful entrepreneurs, the Stricklands are also heavily involved in class structure and materials. All participants ultimately pitch their business plans to local entrepreneurs for possible seed funding.
- Funding library staff scholarships to help them complete their education and further their careers.

The Stricklands also donated \$1 million toward the library's comprehensive campaign for programming at the Hooper-Renwick themed library being built in Lawrenceville, Georgia.

Hooper-Renwick was the first and only African American public school in Gwinnett County from 1940-1968. The building was saved from demolition and will become the first African American themed library in the Southeast. The hope is that it will help tell the story and history of the black community in the county and Georgia. The Stricklands not only donated the first \$1 million, they continue to raise awareness and assist in raising funds for the campaign.

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