

To His Excellency
Governor Roy Cooper
Raleigh, NC

Dear Governor Cooper,

On behalf of the North Carolina Historical Commission, I would like to request that Emeritus Commissioner status be bestowed upon recently retired member of the Commission, Ms. Millie Barbee. Emeritus Status is awarded for extraordinary service to a state commission and confers with it all privileges of membership except for voting. Ms. Barbee's service to the North Carolina Historical Commission was, indeed, extraordinary. She served as an active member of the Commission beginning in 1991 until January of this year. For many years she acted as the Vice Chair of the Commission when the chair was unable to attend a meeting, and for five years she served as the Commission's chair. Always considering herself the voice of the mountains on the Commission, Ms. Barbee has often noted that her proudest moment during all of her years with the Commission was presiding over the meeting where the monument to commemorate the contributions of African Americans to the life of the state was unanimously approved for the State Capitol Grounds. She still regularly asks Department of Natural and Cultural Resources staff, "Where are we with our project?"

Ms. Barbee, who is proud to call herself "an old Quaker," graduated from Guilford College and taught in the Guilford County schools before becoming involved in historic preservation and cultural tourism early in life—and from mountains to the sea. She served as the executive director of the Burke County Historical Association, Beaufort Historical Association, North Carolina High Country Host, and the Hickory Metro Convention and Visitors Center before retiring to West Jefferson where she took on downtown revitalization. Local police there laughed at this retiree "community service worker" regularly watering the plants in the downtown flower boxes. Flowers—and visitors—now abound in downtown West Jefferson. But, just to make sure, Millie always keeps Ashe County cheese close at hand, ready to promote her "place on the mountain."

In Burke County, alone, Millie spearheaded the restoration of the old county courthouse, created the local historic properties commission, published the Burke County architectural survey, and fundraised for two major archaeological digs, one that changed the understanding of Spanish exploration in the western part of the state. She also led efforts to restore Quaker Meadows, the McDowell County home

of Revolutionary War hero Joseph McDowell, using it to put up young archaeologists, historic preservationists, and others working on her various projects, many of whom became leaders in North Carolina's public history world.

Millie has served on too many boards to list, but among them have been the North Carolina Maritime History Council, the North Carolina Travel Industry Association, the Blue Ride Parkway Association, the West Jefferson Community Partnership, the Blue Ridge Land Trust and Preservation North Carolina.

For her service to the state, she has been recognized with the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, Appalachian State University's Outstanding Tourism Development Award, the Bill Sharpe Award for Outstanding Service to North Carolina Tourism Association, and the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association's Christopher Crittenden Award for lifetime achievement in North Carolina History.

For her many years of service, the Commission asks that you bestow the honor of Member Emeritus on Millie Barbee.

Sincerely,

David Ruffin
Chair