



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DECEMBER 14, 2018

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ETEC Presents 2018 Awards at Annual Celebration



OAK RIDGE, Tenn. – Three women captured the Muddy Boot Award and Postma Young Professional Medals presented by the East Tennessee Economic Council (ETEC) at its annual awards luncheon today.

The **Muddy Boot Award** was created in the 1970s to honor individuals who have gone above the call of duty—like those who served the nation during the Manhattan Project—to make the community, the state of Tennessee, and the nation a better place to live and work. Over 90 people have received the award. A full list of recipients and more information about the honor can be found on the ETEC website, www.eteconline.org.

Lawrence Young, founding president and CEO of the Community Reuse Organization of East Tennessee (CROET) presented the Muddy Boot Award.

Sherry Browder, currently the reindustrialization manager for URS | CH2M Oak Ridge LLC (UCOR) at the East Tennessee Technology Park and a career environmental management specialist, was awarded the Muddy Boot Award for, among other activities, her work to transform the former gaseous diffusion site to an industrial asset in Oak Ridge and Roane County.



“I’ve had the pleasure of working with Sherry in any number of capacities over the years,” said ETEC President Jim Campbell. “She’s chaired the board of just about every organization of note in Oak Ridge and the surrounding area... United Way of Anderson County and the Oak Ridge Economic Partnership, just to name a couple. She makes the people around her better and is just an outstanding servant leader.”

Browder started her career in Oak Ridge with the nascent Department of Energy Environmental Management program in 1989. As part of that effort, she wrote portions of the Federal Facility Agreement that governs the cleanup of the Oak Ridge Reservation.

She joined SAIC/Leidos in 1995 and worked there for nearly 20 years holding leadership positions there before joining UCOR in 2015.

Along the way Browder made community development her goal. She has graduated from both Leadership Oak Ridge and Leadership Knoxville. She has also been a chair of the CROET and the ETEC boards. She still sits on both of these as well as the Oak Ridge Chamber of Commerce and the Farragut High School Education Foundation boards.

The **Postma Young Professional Medal** was created by ETEC to honor the accomplishments of young professionals who have made an impact and fostered a community culture in the region. Former Oak Ridge National Laboratory director Herman Postma epitomized this spirit during his life; and his wife, Pat continues the tradition of service today through her involvement in the Oak Ridge community.

The Postma Medal, however, is about more than outstanding work. It’s about being passionate about your community.

United Way of Anderson County director Naomi Asher and UCOR chief of staff Ashley Hartman Saunders were named the latest recipients of the Postma Young Professional Medal

Pat Postma and Jim Campbell made the award presentations.

Naomi Asher is a long-time resident of Oak Ridge graduating from Oak Ridge High School in 2001 before heading to Johnson University where she graduated with a double major in music and theology. After graduation, she worked in several different industries including catering, event management, teaching and personal training.



It was as the Office Manager for CASA of the Tennessee Heartland where she found her passion for non-profit work. In 2010 she was hired as the Executive Director of CASA where she spent the most fulfilling 5 years of her life. She graduated with her MBA in Marketing from King University in 2012.

In May of 2015 Asher was hired as the Executive Director of the United Way of Anderson County. She sits on the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board, Convention and Visitors Bureau/Explore Oak Ridge Board, is a Past President of the Altrusa Club of Oak Ridge, Board member for the Rotary Club of Oak Ridge, a founding member of the Leadership Oak Ridge Alumni Board and member of the Anderson County Chamber of Commerce Young Professionals Board. She also teaches courses on Non Profit Management at the University of Tennessee.

Spencer Hall, President of Retirement Planning Services, who nominated Asher for the award said, "Naomi has been a tireless advocate for our community for years and has a passion for young people. Among other things she has trained our high school leaders for the Oak Ridge Youth Leadership Program and on a personal level, she and her husband have been serving as foster parents for years."

Like Naomi, UCOR's Ashley Hartman Saunders is a quick study. She knows how to get results in a complex that is often daunting to a newcomer, and for that she has been given opportunities to rapidly move into positions of ever increasing responsibility. She has been selected as an emerging leader for her current company.



"Her ability to build strong and lasting relationships and foster Oak Ridge programs is demonstrated through her work with area Chambers of Commerce, ETEBA, The Tennessee Valley Corridor, the United Way of Anderson County, Junior Achievement of East Tennessee, and the American Cancer Society – planning events, chairing committees, serving on boards," said UCOR president Ken Rueter. He also talked about how Saunders tells the Oak Ridge story all across the country in a way that brings a great deal of positive attention back to our community.

She came to Oak Ridge with a communications degree fresh out of the University of Tennessee and got an internship at Y-12. At Y-12's recommendation, she was hired by the East Tennessee Economic Council in 2013. UCOR took her on as head of communications in 2015, and she was named chief of staff earlier this year.

In that role Saunders has gone to work on improving the workforce, pulling together a task force of DOE, education, union, and corporate leaders that has built a program that led to 48 new jobs for individuals in the community. She also spearheaded an event for young professionals in the nuclear industry with the University of Tennessee and ETEC as partners.

"Ashley has had huge challenges in her life, but they've made her a stronger person," said ETEC president Jim Campbell.

Battelle's executive vice president of Global Laboratory Operations, Dr. Ron Townsend, himself a former Muddy Boot winner, keynoted the annual meeting at the Doubletree Hotel in Oak Ridge.

About ETEC:

The East Tennessee Economic Council is a non-profit membership organization that focuses on bringing people together to create new opportunities for federal research, national security and environmental programs, and to support technology transfer and economic development.

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