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Galbreath, Fulcher Winners of Sparks Lifetime Achievement Awards

Dodd Galbreath, conservationist and founding director of Lipscomb University's Institute for Sustainable Practice, and Bobby Fulcher, a park manager with over 40 years of service to Tennessee State Parks, have each been named winner of the 2020 Robert Sparks Walker Lifetime Achievement Award.

The award is part of the annual Governor's Environmental Stewardship Awards.

"Dodd Galbreath and Bobby Fulcher exemplify the highest ideals of a love for nature and a commitment to preserving resources unique to Tennessee," David Salyers, commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC), said. "Each in his own way has had a vision for the work and found ways to transfer that passion to future generations. We are proud to name each of them winner of the Robert Sparks Walker Lifetime Achievement Award."

Galbreath, now associate professor of sustainability, became founding director of the institute at Lipscomb in 2007. It was the Southeast's first academic program offering a Master of Business Administration, Master of Science, graduate certificate, and undergraduate major and minor in sustainability. It fostered entrepreneurs, scientists, engineers, policymakers, and other sustainability leaders. He also became active in community engagement, participating in several community programs and boards.

Galbreath spent his early years on farms in Georgia and Tennessee. As a teen he showed horses. Galbreath studied agriculture at Tennessee Technological University and received a master's degree from the University of Tennessee. He worked with landowners as a federal employee with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, providing technical and planning assistance in preservation, restoration, conservation and use of natural resources.

He worked for TDEC as a senior policy executive. At TDEC, he led strategic initiatives resulting in the establishment of the West Tennessee River Basin Authority. He led policy and planning for wetlands conservation, environmental justice, design standards for sustainable storm water systems, climate change adaptation and sustainable communities. He also served two mayors of Nashville in board or agency appointments related to open space preservation, storm water management, sustainability and climate change adaptation.

Fulcher has dedicated his entire professional life to Tennessee State Parks, spanning 40-plus years from his first job as a seasonal employee at Pickett State Park in 1976 to his current role as park manager at Justin P. Wilson Cumberland Trail State Scenic Trail State Park. As leader of the park since 2000, he has guided the vision for the Cumberland Trail. Fulcher has received numerous accolades for his time, effort and dedication to the natural and cultural heritage of the Cumberland Plateau and Appalachian region.

Fulcher grew up in a military family before attending the University of Tennessee, where he received a B.S. in Forestry in 1976. Between the summer of 1976 and the summer of 1977, he worked at Union College Environmental Center in Cumberland Gap. After his second summer at Pickett State Park, he became a regional naturalist in 1978, serving 15 state parks.

As a regional naturalist, he applied for and received funds through the National Endowment for the Arts' Folk Arts Program, and the funding was used to start the Tennessee State Parks Folklife Project, with three folklorists, one for each grand division in the state. He took up the challenge of preserving old songs by collecting and recording materials during visits in homes of Tennesseans. He began successful folk music programs and festivals in the parks. The Folklife Project has produced more than 500 hours of audiotapes, 9,600 slides and 2,200 black-and-white negatives that are stored in the vaults of the Tennessee State Library and Archives in Nashville.

In 1999, Fulcher joined the staff at Cumberland Trail State Park before becoming manager the next year. It is the state's only linear park as a scenic hiking trail cutting through 11 Tennessee counties and follows a line of pristine high ridges and deep gorges along the Cumberland Plateau. The state continues to partner with the Cumberland Trails Conference and other volunteers to solicit public and private support for the acquisition of land along the trail. In 2002, the park was renamed for Justin P. Wilson in honor of Wilson's work to help make the vision of the Cumberland Trail a reality.

For more information, including a summary of each award winner's initiative, visit <https://www.tn.gov/environment/program-areas/opsp-policy-and-sustainable-practices/governor-s-environmental-stewardship-awards.html>.