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News Release

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For Immediate Release

## Two SCC Students Honored for Academic Excellence



Southeastern Community College has selected its 2009 Academic Excellence Award winners, John Browning of Clarendon and Kimberly Clark of Nakina. Both have earned perfect grade point averages of 4.0 in their respective degree programs.

Browning is seeking an associate's degree in history. He got married and started a family at a young age and just felt that he had neither the time nor the opportunity to go to college. After his wife went back to college in her early thirties and earned two degrees, he got motivated.

"If she can do it, then I can do it," he thought.

Browning works the night shift at the Columbus Correctional Institution, a medium-security prison for adult males, and attends college full-time, taking 16 credit hours this semester including on-campus and online classes. Most days, Browning will work all night and attend classes during the day. "I work a staggered daily schedule from 5:45 p.m. to 6 a.m. and attend classes Monday through Friday," he explained.

While this schedule would seem daunting to most people, Browning is determined to accomplish his goals. "After graduation from Southeastern, I am planning to earn a bachelor's degree in history from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and become a high school history teacher. I will eventually earn a master's degree and become a college professor, which is my ultimate goal."

Browning hopes that one day, he can return to SCC as an instructor. "I really love all of the instructors that I have had at Southeastern. They are so knowledgeable and helpful," he said. "When I was in high school, I really disliked math and was more than a little worried about taking math in college. Thankfully, I had Darian Ransom, who made algebra interesting and logical. After I took the first test and got an 'A,' I knew that I would be okay."

Clark is seeking an associate's degree in Early Childhood Education. She has been working at Open Doors Preschool in Whiteville for 12 years and has attended classes at the college on evenings and on the Internet with online classes to earn her degree. She is the teacher for the three- and four-year-old class and has 20 students.

"All I do is take classes, do homework, and go to work and church," explained Clark. "I started working straight out of high school. My advice would be to not put off your education; the longer you put it off, the harder it is."

Even though it has been difficult for Clark to fit in her dreams with her daily responsibilities, she believes that Southeastern has been a "wonderful experience." "Thanks to great instructors like Emily Cook and Darian Ransom, I have learned so much," she said. "The scholarships, such as the Barefoot Scholarship and the N.C. Educational Lottery, have taken care of my financial worries."

After graduating from SCC, Clark looks forward to pursuing her bachelor's degree. "Once you take the first step to continuing your education, the following steps seem to be a lot easier."

Every year, the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) encourages each community college to recognize two students for outstanding academic achievements. The minimum criteria set by the state is that the students be currently enrolled in and have completed 12 semester hours in an associate of arts, science, applied science, or general studies degree and have a grade point average (GPA) of no less than 3.25. Colleges may then employ additional scholarship criteria beyond these minimum requirements as they see fit.

Southeastern Community College will recognize these two students during spring commencement, and Dr. Scott Ralls, president of the NCCCS will present their awards to them. In addition, the NCCCS has posted an Academic Excellence Awards section on its Website ([www.ncccs.cc.nc.us](http://www.ncccs.cc.nc.us)) to acknowledge and highlight the students for their scholastic accomplishments.

To find out more about SCC, visit the college's Web site at [www.sccnc.edu](http://www.sccnc.edu).