



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **Mr. Les Wicks named Erskine Pillar Award Recipient**

**HARDEEVILLE, SC** – Mr. Les Wicks, co-founder of Royal Live Oaks Academy of the Arts and Sciences Charter School (RLOACS), was awarded a statewide Erskine Pillar award on Thursday, May 18 at the Charter Institute at Erskine Awards Banquet.

In celebration of its 5-Year Anniversary, the Institute added a Five-Year Celebration at the Banquet. This celebration included a new category of accolades, titled “The Erskine Pillar Awards,” which highlighted and celebrated the importance of significant contributors to the Institute’s success and growth.

“When the Institute was founded, there was a small group of visionaries who believed in us and believed that we could accomplish the impossible,” said Superintendent Cameron Runyan. “These individuals became our pillars and supported the Institute, enabling it to grow into the highly impactful organization that it is today.”

Les was one of just four Erskine Pillar recipients. He received this honor in recognition of his unwavering dedication to the children of Hardeeville through the formation of Royal Live Oaks Academy of the Arts and Sciences. Over ten years ago, Les and his wife, Dr. Karen Wicks, moved to South Carolina from New Jersey after seeing the Corridor of Shame documentary, which outlined the educational need in Jasper County. Throughout the process of opening the school, Les remained an unwavering supporter of the Institute and its mission. He accepted the award on stage with Dr. Karen Wicks, who is also a RLOACS co-founder and the Executive Director.

“Words cannot describe how proud I am of Les,” said Karen Wicks. “He’s always been my partner in both work and life, and I am thrilled to see that he is being celebrated for his dedication and passion. This was a very special evening that Les and I will both remember for a long time.”

Royal Live Oaks Academy of the Arts & Sciences is a K-12 public charter school located in Jasper County that uses project-based learning to highlight the importance of critical thinking and problem solving. RLOACS is authorized through the Charter Institute at Erskine.

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*The Charter Institute at Erskine is the fastest-growing school district in South Carolina. Serving 24 schools and 24,000 students across the state, the Charter Institute at Erskine is committed to innovative, creative, high-quality methods of education. For more information about the Institute, please visit [www.erskinecharters.org](http://www.erskinecharters.org).*



*Les Wicks accepts his award from Superintendent Cameron Runyan and Director Vamshi Rudrapati.*



*Les and Karen Wicks at the Awards Banquet and Five-Year Celebration.*