**Marcia Skeeba Balester Recognized at Seventh Annual Hero’s Brunch at Wilkes University**

Marcia Skeeba Balester, coordinator of the First-Year Foundations program at Wilkes University, was recognized for outstanding commitment and service to veterans and community at the Seventh Annual Hero’s Brunch at Wilkes. The award was presented by Jerry Guinari, past commander of Greater Pittston AMVETS Post 189, and Bernie McDonald, current commander.

Balester, a resident of McAdoo, Pa., teaches a first-year foundations course, “Be the Change” where students interview veterans about their war-time experiences as part of an oral history project. The veterans interviewed in fall 2018 represented military personnel who have served in conflicts from World War II to the Gulf War.

Her project reflects Wilkes' commitment to community and civic engagement. Since the oral history project began in 2012, over 500 oral histories have been recorded by Wilkes students. Balester’s class is one of many first-year foundations courses offered. They are required classes taken by all first-year students at Wilkes to support their transition to the University.

This year, the 30-minute audio or video recordings were shared with the Library of Congress to be included in the library’s Veteran’s History Project. The project collects, preserves, and makes accessible the personal accounts of American war veterans so that future generations may hear directly from veterans and better understand the realities of war.

The brunch was hosted by 62 Wilkes University freshmen in Balester’s first-year foundations course. The event was attended by over 200 veterans and their spouses and guests.

**PHOTO CAPTION: Marcia Skeeba Balester, middle, coordinator of the First-Year Foundations program at Wilkes University, is presented an award at the Seventh Annual Hero’s Brunch at Wilkes. Jerry Guinari, right, past commander of Greater Pittston AMVETS Post 189, and Bernie McDonald, left, current commander, presented the award.**

**About Wilkes University**:

Wilkes University is a private, independent, non-sectarian institution of higher education dedicated to academic and intellectual excellence through mentoring in the liberal arts, sciences and professional programs. Founded in 1933, the university is on a mission to create one of the nation’s finest small universities, offering all of the programs, activities and opportunities of a large university in the intimate, caring and mentoring environment of a small college, open to all who show promise. *The Economist* named Wilkes 25th in the nation for the value of its education for graduates. In addition to 47 majors, Wilkes offers 25 master’s degree programs and five doctoral/terminal degree programs, including the doctor of philosophy in nursing, doctor of nursing practice, doctor of education, doctor of pharmacy, and master of fine arts in creative writing. Learn more at [www.wilkes.edu](http://www.wilkes.edu).

#####