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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Museum of Appalachia to Honor Pete DeBusk at “Heroes of Southern Appalachia” Award Ceremony**

NORRIS, Tenn.— This Friday, the Museum of Appalachia will celebrate Pete DeBusk at their “Heroes of Southern Appalachia” award ceremony, presented by Jenny and Randy Boyd. Retired Tennessee Supreme Court Chief Justice and Museum Board Chairman Gary Wade will present the award to the celebrated businessman and philanthropist.

“It’s impossible to measure the positive impact that Pete DeBusk has had on the economy of this region and the education of its people,” says Wade. “He has dedicated his life to bettering the place that raised him.”

Born in Rose Hill, Virginia, Autry O.V. “Pete” DeBusk attended Lincoln Memorial University, earning a Bachelor of Science in Biology. As a young pharmaceutical salesman, he created the first patented orthopedic cast boot. The success of this invention was the catalyst for a multi-decade career of innovation and product development in the healthcare industry.

In 1973, DeBusk founded DeRoyal Industries as a medical device manufacturer. What began as a one-room operation in Fountain City grew to an international organization with 20 facilities in 5 countries. Today, DeRoyal markets more than 25,000 products in 75 countries with a workforce of more than 1,900 employees. Despite such growth, DeBusk kept DeRoyal headquartered in East Tennessee.

In response to a lack of primary care physicians in rural Appalachia, DeBusk spearheaded efforts to build a medical school at his alma mater. Under his leadership as Chairman of the Board of Trustees, LMU founded the LMU-DeBusk College of Osteopathic Medicine in 2007. DeBusk also guided LMU's expansion, adding LMU Duncan School of Law, LMU School of Medical Sciences, LMU College of Veterinary Medicine, LMU College of Dental Medicine, LMU School of Engineering, as well as terminal degrees, including Doctor of Education, Doctor of

Nursing Practice, and Doctor of Business Administration. It was DeBusk's intent that all these schools focus on producing graduates who, in turn, would use their skills to serve the Appalachian people.

Past recipients of the "Heroes of Southern Appalachia" award include Alex Haley, Dr. Joe Johnson, Jim Hart, General Carl Stiner, and Senator Howard Baker. The Museum's criteria for choosing recipients include honoring a person(s) from the Southern Appalachian region who exemplifies the characteristics of perseverance, fortitude, self-reliance, and service.

Hosted by Dr. Jody Goins, the evening's festivities will kick off at 7:00 p.m. in Heritage Hall at the Museum of Appalachia. A limited number of tickets are available for purchase at [museumofappalachia.org](http://museumofappalachia.org).

Proceeds from the event benefit the Museum of Appalachia, a 501(c)3 organization, and are used in support of their mission to preserve Southern Appalachian history and culture.

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