

Hatley, Donald



Founder of the Louisiana Folklife Center and Co-Founder of the Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival, Founded the Master of Arts in English: Folklife/Southern Culture Track, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts

When Donald W. Hatley came to Northwestern State University as an English Professor some forty years ago, he probably had no inkling that he, along with H.F. "Pete" Gregory would be the founders of one of the most successful and longstanding Louisiana festivals, the Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival. Hatley holds a Ph.D. from East Texas State University and has long been interested in American and Southern Literature and Folklore. Hatley conceived the idea of what today is known as the Master of Arts in English: Folklife/Southern Culture Concentration.

He founded the Louisiana Folklife Center and worked diligently to insure its status as a permanent agency of Northwestern State University. For twenty years, he dedicated himself to the Festival and the Louisiana Folklife Center gradually accruing over 5,000 hours of audiotape and a substantial array of resources which continue to be used by researchers. Hatley served as Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, and he was active in fundraising. Although he is now retired, he continues to assist with the Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival.

In 2004, Hatley was inducted into the Louisiana Folklife Center's Hall of Master Folk Artists.

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