



The community is the gathering place where people connect, build relationships, and support each other.

July 1, 2025

Drexel Friends,

Drexel has always been a community with a certain unique quality. Whether you are 25, or, like me, over 70, I'm sure you have many memories of the people and events that have made Drexel such a special place.

I want to invite you to join me in doing something truly meaningful to acknowledge those people in Drexel who have worked hard to create the special town we have here.

For me, I remember riding my bike down Settlemyre Road to Dunbar and Sadie Grindstaff's store for bread or milk. Some days I would continue downtown to Crosby's Drug Store, Grady McGalliard's grocery for a "baloney" sandwich, Price's Department Store, or Honeycutt's Dry Cleaners and Shoe Repair Shop. Occasionally, I would visit the little public library and Mrs. Hudson or get a haircut while listening to some fine bluegrass music. Often, the Drexel Community Center served as a second home where my friends and I could play basketball, attempt to master Rook, or just hang out in the game room with Ned Harris. The Fourth of July provided us with a Community Club fish fry and the chance to climb a greasy telephone pole. (Let's try to forget about that defenseless greased pig!)

Of course, summer always ended with the Drexel Fair, where we discussed our new teachers, rode The Scrambler, sloshed through the soaked sawdust, and picked up a rubber duck or two. The evenings always ended with amazing fireworks lighting up the night sky, thanks to Charlie Eller. Folks like Margaret Carswell, Pick Biggerstaff, and Bob Anthony kept us busy and out of trouble. During a few magical moments, Maxine McCall and Kathryn Siphers turned the Drexel gym into an enchanted version of Broadway by bringing *The King and I*, *The Sound of Music*, and *Camelot* to life. To this day, I feel deep pride every time I hear the words, "Drexel Furniture."

We were offered the chance of an excellent education where saints like Hilda McNeely, Julia Pittman, Clyde Shuping, Ann Denton, Reynolds Hollifield, Maude Stover, Ruth Sutton, Ralph Abernethy, Mary Parrish, and Garnie Brendel pushed us to reach our potential. To no one's surprise, the school on Main Street is named after Harry Hallyburton, our long time high school principal. For decades, he set the tone for an education that turned thousands of Drexel "knotheads" into productive adults. On Friday evenings in the fall, we gathered





at the football field to cheer our Wolverines on to victory under the guidance of Coach Shull. The basketball and baseball teams shared in the glory with athletes like Gereau and Terry McClured, Johnny Daye, Buck Crutchfield, Linda Williams, Terry Johnson, Tom Smith, and Susan Settlemyre. Drexel success was not limited to sports, of course. We all knew our band program was second to none. Absolutely none!



For me, the common thread that made Drexel a wonderful hometown comes down to the countless individuals who cared for us, who owned or worked in our businesses, and who had a vision for what our little community could be. Many names come quickly to mind: Greer Daye, Lenny Stadler, Bruce Hawkins, Millard Riggs, the Dellingers, the Witherses, the Fairs, Charles McNeely, Johnny Tate, Gail Fulmer, Gene and Larry, Claudia Amos, my parents Jethro and Maggie Hoyle. So many visionaries, whether from sixty years ago or last week, have guided Drexel to maintain its spirit for well over a hundred years.

Let's show our pride, and here is where I would like to ask you for your help. I want to invite you to join me in a project to commemorate the people and events that made Drexel, North Carolina, a memorable place in which to live, work, play, or attend school.

I am a stained glass artist. Over the past year or so, I have created seven stained glass panels as a tribute to the working people of Drexel. I am including photos of those seven panels. I am calling this public artwork, "A Community of Hands." When completed, the art will be installed along a trail that will wind through our Downtown Drexel Park. This art will be dedicated to the business owners, furniture factory employees, hosiery mill workers, teachers, faith leaders, community volunteers, and craftsmen who worked--and continue to work--within the greater Drexel community. In collaboration with the Town of Drexel, Metawood Design Company, and our nonprofit Grow With Drexel, we will install and preserve each stained glass panel within a live edge oak display with professional signage to describe the workers being represented. Hopefully, I will be able to expand the trail during the next few years with additional pieces to honor even more of our workers. For years to come, visitors can walk the trail and read about the types of individuals who exemplify the word, "community."

I am pleased to donate the stained glass panels, but, as we all understand, first-rate displays, installations, signage, landscaping, and ongoing costs have a price. Grow With Drexel, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, has set a goal to raise at least \$20,000 by the end of August, 2025, and have all seven pieces on display in the park by Christmas 2025. A private donor has offered to match all funds donated in order to make this project a reality.

Together we can do this! We will acknowledge every donation, large or small, on a sign or in a pamphlet, and for whom the donation is dedicated. Any monies raised above the needed amount will be used by Grow With Drexel for its ongoing projects. When everything is complete, the public art piece will be given to the Town of Drexel as a gift for future generations to enjoy and cherish. Every donation is important in reaching our goal. If you have questions or suggestions or want to discuss a donation, please give me a call at 828-432-4405. All checks should be made out to Grow With Drexel and sent to PO Box 177, Drexel, North Carolina 28619.

I hope you will be a part of this project to remember and honor the hardworking individuals who have helped make Drexel the wonderful town it's been for so many of us.

Dan Hoyle



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A Community of Hands Project

Hands of Faith, Hands of Guidance, Hands of Skill, Hands of Commerce, Hands of Industry, Hands of Kindness, Hands of Creativity

A Community of Hands Project is an installation of a series of stained glass art pieces by Dan Hoyle inspired by the people of Drexel who have built this community through their work, dedication, and heart. Seven stained glass art pieces have been completed and will be donated for the project. Funds are needed for quality displays, installation, signage, landscaping, etc. to install the artwork along a trail through the Drexel Downtown Park. The art will be dedicated to the business owners, furniture factory employees, hosiery mill workers, teachers, faith leaders, community volunteers, and craftsmen who worked and continue to work within the greater Drexel community.

You can be a part of this project that will continue to inspire the community of Drexel for years to come!



Partners: Town of Drexel, Grow With Drexel, Metawood Design Company, Burke River Trail.

***Fundraising Goal: \$20,000**

***Target date: August 31, 2025**

***Donations matched by private donor**

***Installation target: Christmas 2025**

JOIN HANDS TO MAKE THIS VISION A REALITY!

Together, we can do this! Every donation is important in reaching our goal!

DONATION:

___ \$25

___ \$50

___ \$100

___ \$200

___ \$500

___ \$Other _____

Name/Company: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

☐ List donation in memory of/ in honor of (circle one):

Make checks payable to **Grow With Drexel**

Mail to: Grow With Drexel. P. O. Box 177, Drexel, NC 28619

For questions, contact Dan Hoyle 828-432-4405

