Roanoke Times

# Tech police honored for valor

By MADELYN ROSENBERG
NEW RIVER VALLEY BUREAU

Two Virginia Tech police officers were to receive awards for valor this morning from Gov. Douglas Wilder in the state Capitol.

Wendell Flinchum and Milton Franklin will receive two of the seven awards being given to state employees in the Old Senate Chamber.

The officers, both former Tech students, were to receive the silver awards for their bravery in responding to a fracas at a 1990 homecoming dance that resulted in gunshots being fired inside War Memorial Gym.

Flinchum and Franklin were working security at the dance in October when a man, who was not associated with the university, drew

PLEASE SEE **VALOR**/4

ALAN KIM/Staff

Virginia Tech policemen Milton Franklin and Wendell Flinchum will be honored today by the governor for their part in subduing an armed man at a campus dance last fall.

## Valor

FROM PAGE 1

a gun and fired it in the gym, said Michael Jones, Tech's police chief.

"Officers Flinchum and Franklin immediately entered the room and ordered everyone to the ground or out of the room," Jones said. "The guy drew his gun on the two officers."

Flinchum and Franklin drew their guns, too, but did not fire, Jones said.

"They could've justifiably shot the guy, but they chose not to. They approached him and secured the situation. It was an extraordinary show of bravery and sound judgment on their part."

The Virginia Chamber of Commerce instituted the Commonwealth Valor Awards several years ago to honor state employees who go beyond the call of duty in service to Virginia. It is the only valor award program that recognizes state employees.

Although Tech officers have won other state awards, this is the first time officers have received the valor awards, Jones said.

Franklin, 29, has been with the department for five months. He was a former Tech football player.

Flinchum, also 29, joined the department in 1985, after working with the police as a part of his work-study program. He needs one more semester of work before he completes his degree.

"They're excited about this award and we're excited for them," said Jones, who left for Richmond early this morning to join President James McComas and others in congratulating the officers. "This is a pretty prestigious award. We're proud of them. We're proud they work for us and are part of this team and this university."