

GEORGE W. MCBURNEY

George W. McBurney, a Tuscaloosan by birth, is a Florentine by choice. Son of a physician prominent there, he married Martha Roberts, daughter of Dr. S. S. Roberts of Florence in 1942. After army JAG service in World War II, he returned in 1946 to practice law here; became Vice President of First Federal Savings and Loan Association and then went into the real estate business. One of the first large scale apartment developers with Wildwood Park and Florence Apartments, he also developed 15 residential subdivisions including Norwood Park, Greenbriar and Hickory Hills. He located Howard Johnson Motor Lodge and Restaurant here, and developed Seven Points Shopping Center in the 1950s.

Successful in business, he was even more devoted to all civic and improvement causes. He originated Alabama Mountain Lakes Association, and was one of the organizers, later President, of Florence-Lauderdale Industrial Expansion Committee; and, has served as President of the Jaycees, Chamber of Commerce, Chairman of Lauderdale Red Cross, local chapter of American Cancer Society, and served as deacon at First Presbyterian Church. He was a founding member and first President of Turtle Point Yacht and Country Club in the 1960s.

Recreation and historic facilities, such as Joe Wheeler Park, Point Park, McFarland Park, Pope's Tavern, Indian Mound Museum, and W. C. Handy Home have been prime beneficiaries of his civic activities. He was not alone in these but first to see the need, to organize, and then to have a hand in their successful conclusion.

Always a few people are called upon to perform nearly every important task that comes along. Some do it for business reasons, some for political expedience, some for publicity purposes, and a few do it because they want to see progress made and a better community developed. The latter is the rarest of all and George McBurney has meant much to Florence in so doing. For all this, and much still unsaid in his quiet way, the Florence Exchange Club bestows its Book of Golden Deeds Award on George W. McBurney this May 12, 1981.