

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CONTACT: Barbara Larson 334-265-2297

LEADERSHIP ALABAMA HOSTS LEADERSHIP AWARDS LUNCHEON
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2007
HARBERT CENTER, BIRMINGHAM
12:00 NOON

Birmingham, Ala. – On Thursday, October 11, 2007, Leadership Alabama will recognize three outstanding citizens at the 2007 Leadership Alabama Awards Luncheon. Ms. Carolyn Akers will be presented the Leadership Alabama Distinguished Alumna Award, and Lifetime Achievement Awards will be presented to Dr. Wayne Flynt and to Senator Howell Heflin (posthumously) at a luncheon for Leadership Alabama members at the Harbert Center.

Carolyn Akers is the Executive Director of the Mobile Area Education Foundation (MAEF). In a very short period of time, MAEF has emerged as a leader among advocates for education in Mobile and across the state. Ms. Akers founded the foundation in 1992 as “Mobile 2000” to serve as a unique, central voice representing the entire community around education issues. From the small advocacy foundation Ms. Akers has established the groundwork that combines community standards and quality education, pioneering a new standard of value in education for all children. Currently, Ms. Akers is working with several communities across Alabama to replicate the public/private partnerships that have made education a community priority in Mobile.

Ms. Akers has received several rewards for her work in education: 2001 YWCA Woman of Achievement for Public Achievement, the National McKee Award for Partners in Education, and the 2001-2001 Southeastern Association of Elementary School Principals Award for Outstanding Contributions to Public Education.

Wayne Flynt grew up in Alabama and attended Samford University where he was a history/theology student. After graduation, he continued his studies at Florida State University, receiving his Ph.D. in 1965 with a specialty in Southern political history. In subsequent years, his research interest turned to poverty and religion. Of his eleven books, three deal with poverty and two with evangelical religion. Two of his books have been nominated for the Pulitzer Prize, and one won the Lillian Smith Award for non-fiction, which is given by the Southern Regional Council. Two of his books have won the Alabama Library Association prize for best works of non-fiction, twice he has been awarded the James Sulzby book award for best works on Alabama history by the Alabama Historical Association, and three times the University of Alabama Press has bestowed the McMillan Prize on his manuscripts as the best received in history.

Flynt is also a community activist, serving for a decade on the American Cancer Society’s Committee for the Socio-economically Disadvantaged, is on the board of directors for the Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform, and is a founder of the Alabama Poverty Project and Sowing Seeds of Hope, a 30-year initiative to overcome poverty in Perry County, Alabama.

These involvements resulted in numerous awards, including his selection by the Mobile Register as Alabamian of the Year in 1992, the Friend of Children Award by the Children’s Hospital of Alabama (1994) and the Child Advocacy Award by the Alabama Chapter, American Academy of

Pediatrics (2000). He was also asked by Governor James E. Folsom, Jr. and Judge Eugene Reese to act as the official facilitator of Alabama's school equity funding lawsuit, an attempt by three groups of plaintiffs to ensure adequate and equitable funding for Alabama's public schools. He was also the subject of two specials on Alabama Public Television. In the year 2000, Samford University awarded him an honorary degree, Doctor of Humane Letters.

Howell Heflin took the oath of office as Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court on January 19, 1971. While in office, Judge Heflin began the arduous task of bringing Alabama's antiquated court system into the 20th century. His judicial reform package, known as the Judicial Article, has been hailed as a model for the nation and has been studied by numerous state courts. He gained national recognition for his court reform package which opened Alabama state courts to newspaper and radio coverage television cameras. Along with television commentator Eric Severeid, Heflin was awarded the 1977 James Madison Award by the National Editorial Broadcasters Association.

Howell Heflin was elected to the United State Senate in 1978 and served three terms. During his tenure in Congress, Senator Heflin concentrated on bringing Alabama-style common sense thinking and values to Washington. He fought for the interests of Alabama and America: a sound economy, a fair deal for farmers, a strong national defense, expanded medical research, modernization of the justice system and continued space exploration.

As described by a friend, "Howell Heflin's progressive leadership almost single handedly transformed the legal and judicial system in Alabama. But he was not just the Chief Justice or a tremendously influential U.S. Senator. Howell Heflin was an outstanding leader in His church and his community before the world came to know of his leadership skills."

Leadership Alabama is a statewide nonprofit organization which each year brings together a class of 55-60 participants for six two-to-three day retreats in a nine month period. The program objective is to present to the participants a series of issues-oriented forums based on the belief that knowledge is a key element and prime motivator of leadership.

Since the organization was founded in 1989, over 800 citizen leaders in Alabama have graduated into the Leadership Alabama membership. These participants are selected based on their leadership abilities, career accomplishments, volunteer activities, contributions to the community and commitment to help shape a better Alabama.

The mission of Leadership Alabama is to give established leaders across Alabama exposure to the broader fabric of the state. The organization will develop a network of relationships and provide a structure for this network to seek mutual understanding of problems and priorities for Alabama's future. Leadership Alabama will encourage its members to act, individually and in concert, to move Alabama forward to help our state reach its full potential.