



PRESS RELEASE

March 17, 2009

Contact: Dusty Deming

864-242-1111, ext. 25

864-303-0103

George Whilden Mackey Memorial dedication set for Thursday, April 2

Greenville, S.C -- Since last May, the Mackey Memorial Committee has been quietly raising funds from among those whose childhood or teen years were made better by the late George W. Mackey. The campaign is complete and the place of tribute will be dedicated on Thursday, April 2 at 2:00 p.m. at the Caine Halter Family Branch, 721 Cleveland Street. A “plaza” near the entrance to the Y will display a large flagpole and a plaque, both dedicated to Mackey in honor of his important contributions to thousands of young lives. Raymond Campbell, Clint Hunter, Ralph Aiken, Buddy Smith, Bobby Chambers and Harold Crout led the effort to build the memorial.

“His unique ability to bond with young people simply can’t be put into words,” said Raymond Campbell, the committee chair. “Although Mr. Mackey died 40 years ago, it is significant that 75 people came forward from across the country, to create a memorial to him. He loved us like a father--he made us feel loved, as though we were part of his family. This tribute is long-overdue.”

After returning home from World War I in 1919, Mackey became the Physical Director of the Greenville YMCA, a position he held until 1935. After that, between 1936-1958, he was the School District Director of Playground Activities. In both these positions he coached games and organized teams, but what most inspired these Memorial donors was his role as Founder and Director of the Rotary Boy

-MORE-

Mackey, page 2

Choristers. Begun in 1931, the Mackey Boys Choir and later named the Rotary Boy Choristers, not only taught hundreds of young voices to sing for many churches in the area, but Mackey also hosted a two week summer camp for the choir and conducted summer tours of the U.S. and Canada for boys whether they were part of the choir or not. Eventually, he began a girls-only (with chaperones) touring group as well.

Following the dedication ceremony, which is open to the community, there will be a reception in the second floor lobby of the Caine Halter Branch.

###