



The Birmingham News

Kiwanis induct 5 area leaders

Inductees, descendants to get trophies

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The Birmingham Kiwanis Club will welcome five pre-eminent Birmingham leaders into its Business Hall of Fame today.

Inductees for 2007 are Afton Lee Sr., Charles "Scottie" McCallum, Sabert Oglesby, Herb Stockham and A.H. "Rick" Woodward.

The men, or descendants, will be honored at a noon luncheon at the Harbert Center downtown. Inductees receive a trophy depicting Birmingham's skyline and its undergirding of coal, limestone and iron ore. Each will be the subject of a short multimedia presentation.

Afton Lee Sr. for decades ran the Homewood grocery that bore the family name. His father was a slave who rose to become one of the wealthiest men in Birmingham by the time Lee was born in 1896. Lee inherited vast tracts of land from his father in Rosedale, Center Point and Riverchase.

Lee was active in the revitalization of the Fourth Avenue black business district, and was elected to the Homewood City Council in 1968. He died in 1989. Throughout his varied public and business life, he always maintained the little grocery founded by his father was the linchpin of the family's holdings.

Charles "Scottie" McCallum was born in Massachusetts in 1925, and later moved to Birmingham to attend dental school at The Medical College of Alabama. He then went to work for the college, which is now known as the University of Alabama at Birmingham, an institution McCallum served and shepherded as professor, dean, vice president and president until 1993.

UAB blossomed during McCallum's service. From a satellite of the Tuscaloosa campus, it grew to become the city's largest employer, a top-rated medical research site and a vibrant urban campus offering undergraduate degrees in a variety of disciplines. McCallum was elected mayor of Vestavia Hills in 2000, a post he continues to hold.

Sabert Oglesby was the president of Southern Research Institute from 1981 through 1987, a period of unbridled growth at the city's most prominent non-profit technical and research laboratory. A Birmingham native and Auburn University engineering graduate, Oglesby received further scientific training in the U.S. Army Signal Corps during World War II.

He joined Southern Research in 1946, a few months after it was founded by Alabama Power President Thomas Martin, who envisioned it as way to enhance the state's technical and scientific standing. Under Oglesby, Southern Research doubled its research dollar volume to \$36 million, and employment rose to 750 workers.

Oglesby personally developed revolutionary methods of using electrostatic energy to control air pollution, an innovation that added to the institute's worldwide scientific prestige.

Herb Stockham served for decades as the president of one of the city's largest and most successful industrial firms, Stockham Valve Co. He became president in 1923, after working in virtually every department of the company. Stockham was among the first Birmingham companies to offer health insurance, profit sharing and pension programs for hourly workers.

For decades, the company poured its own resources into a vast recreation program for employees and their families, programs that ranged from neighborhood playgrounds near the Northside plant site to fielding top-flight baseball clubs that regularly challenged for Southern semi-pro championships. Stockham died in 1958.

A.H. "Rick" Woodward inherited the Woodward Iron Co. lands, plants and fortune developed by his forebears in the late 1800s. He took over the empire as president in 1910. It was not a gift. Woodward had been working as a waterboy and shop hand since age 10. By 16, he was a fully licensed locomotive engineer. Later, he squeezed in a mining engineering degree from MIT.

The company had its downs (the Great Depression and a horrific, fatal explosion in the 1920s) and ups (World War II, which pushed iron production to records levels). The last plant closed in 1973.

Woodward was a baseball bug. He played in college and in summer leagues, and later owned the Birmingham Barons and Rickwood Field. In 1904, he married Annie Hill Jemison, eldest daughter of Robert Jemison, the prominent real estate impresario who built many of the city's first neighborhoods. Woodward died in 1950.

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