

Eulogy delivered by Angie Stober at the Celebration of Life for Wendell Hoomes, on April 22, 2018:

Wendell Hoomes

November, 1940 – February, 2018

Thank you Eleanor and family for inviting the Friends of McIntosh Reserve to share our appreciation for the life of Wendell Hoomes. Wendell along with other founding members of this group was dedicated to preserving the natural and cultural resources found in McIntosh Reserve. While these 500 acres of Carroll County give people a place to restore their connection with nature, Wendell was always dedicated to educating the visitors on the unique features of the Reserve. With its varied terrain from the uplands to the banks of the Chattahoochee River the plant diversity is great and this excited Wendell. He was especially delighted by the great display of spring blooming wildflowers, the ferns and holly. In the spring of 2002 Wendell and Eleanor initiated our annual Wildflower Walk and Talk and our winter Christmas Fern and Holly Walk and Talk. During early hikes Wendell would become so enthralled with locating and identifying plant that he would lose his way and Eleanor would have to set him on the right path again. They jointly lead these hikes until Eleanor decided she like to do more "Walk" than "Talk" and with that we had the fast hike with Eleanor and the slow hike with Wendell.

So many of our pictures documenting these hikes show Wendell leaning on his walking stick with that twinkle in his eyes and smile on his face as he spoke of to name a few; the vernal iris, the southern nodding trillium, wild ginger, crane fly orchid and of course the favorite of his grandchildren, Victoria and Ben, the pipsissewa. They were always in search of the pipsissewa as they loved rolling that name off their tongues. And of course the lovely Atamasco lilies found on the River side of Council Bluff, a spring display that Wendell wanted everyone to see, in fact the date of our Walk and Talks was arranged to coincide with their bloom in late March or early April.

Of all the majestic trees found in the Reserve Wendell chose an unsuspecting native Hawthorn as his favorite specimen, he noted that this tree has character, with it's lovely bloom and fruit, it is sought by birds, animals and nectar feeding insects plus this one especially showed characteristic of tenacity by living through wind and floods in the midst of much larger trees.

So you see McIntosh Reserve had its own "in resident Naturalist", our own William Bartram. Wendell truly shared DNA with native plants and his enthusiasm was contagious. He was so intent on finding and documenting all the unique plants found at the Reserve that he assisted in procuring a grant and the expertise of Dr. David Morgan, a botanist at the University of West Georgia. He and Dr. Morgan roamed the Reserve for days during every season for 2 years and even were interrupted by the flood of 2009. They located, identified and cataloged the many species. A document was compiled and is available on the Friends of McIntosh Reserve Website.

Wendell wore another hat for the Friends, he was chief negotiator, he was our liaison between county officials and park management...his knowledge of the park was a force to be reckoned with. Wendell was elected to the Friends of McIntosh Reserve Board of Directors at the first annual meeting in 2002 and was on the board at the time of our official incorporation in 2007. He served as president of the board in 2011.

In other words, Wendell embodied the naturalist skills of Wm. Bartram one of his heroes and some of Chief McIntosh's successful negotiating skills. Wendell was dedicated to education, awareness and action to protecting McIntosh Reserve, as well as the environment of the planet. Wendell has left an indelible and lasting impact on McIntosh Reserve and all who knew him. He did his share to preserve this special place and in the words of Jean Barr in 1994 ... Wendell worked "to preserve for future generations this historic legacy that they might be **not only** survivors, but inheritors as well... to draw the visitor into the spirit of this place".

Now, Wendell has left us the challenge to continue the work to preserve this very special place here in Carroll County. Thank you Wendell for your gentle persistence in sharing your knowledge and love of McIntosh Reserve Park with all of us.