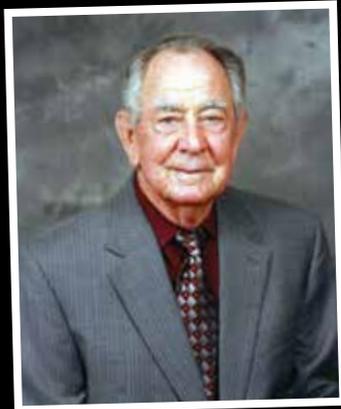


MEMORIAL

Bob Erskin Blanks 1929-2015



Lauderdale County TREASURE Forest landowner Bob Blanks passed away on April 11, 2015, at the age of 85. Originally from Marion County, he and his wife, Tincy (also deceased), had moved to Rogersville, Alabama, living along the banks of the Tennessee River for over half a century. Here he quietly went about living and leading by example, serving and helping others all along the way.

Following his service in the U.S. armed forces during the Korean conflict, Mr. Blanks had been employed many years with Sears in Florence. Upon retiring, he volunteered his time and carpentry/woodcraft skills in numerous special construction projects throughout the community. An active member of Rogersville United

Methodist Church, he was also a member of the Rogersville Civitan Club and the Rogersville Area Chamber of Commerce, as well as a 50-year member of the Masonic Lodge 147 of Rogersville. In addition to leading his neighborhood watch for several years, Mr. Blanks was instrumental in the development and construction of the Rogersville Volunteer Fire Department's second fire station. For this lifetime of community service, he was recognized by induction into the Rogersville Hall of Honor.

Mr. Blanks also leaves a legacy of stewardship in the Tennessee Valley. Owning forestland in both Lauderdale and Marion counties, he practiced conservation and encouraged preservation of natural resources. He was a charter member of the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association (ATFA), remaining very active in the statewide landowners' organization and in all forestry issues in general. 🌲



Forest landowner Bob Blanks (center) proudly displaying his TREASURE Forest, Stewardship Forest, and Tree Farm certification signs at his Lauderdale County property with grandson John Patterson (left) and AFC Lauderdale County Forester Steve McEachron (right).

Kreher Preserve

(Continued from page 27)

provide hands-on learning experiences, live animal encounters, and educational activities. "Nature centers are important components of every community. They provide not only a way to teach children to learn and appreciate nature in a fun and engaging environment, but also a place for the residents to hike and enjoy the great outdoors," said Lolley.

Along with the native species of plants and wildlife found within the preserve, there is a live animal collection known as the "Critter Caravan" that is a key component of the environmental education programs. Staff naturalists are also available to take their "Critter Caravan" to homes, businesses, schools, and other public facilities to provide educational programs.

The Frank Allen Turner Amphitheatre is utilized to host the "Music in the Forest" outdoor concert series, which was created recently to attract a part of the community that might not have previously visited the KPNC. Many of the other programs are held under a covered pavilion which was financed with a grant from the Alabama Forests Forever Foundation. The amphitheater and nature center pavilion also offer a unique and desirable location for private events such as weddings and corporate outings.

The rental of these facilities helps to supplement income needed for operating the preserve.

In addition to its educational programs and features, the nature center offers convenient access to restroom facilities, shaded benches, and drinking fountains. The KPNC protects the natural flora and fauna of the preserve with a "Leave No Trace" policy that prohibits littering, smoking, pets, and biking throughout the acreage.

According to Lolley, "There is really so much here for the community, no matter their interests or fitness level. Whether they are looking for a peaceful place to have lunch, do some birdwatching, run a 5k race, or attend one of the many programs we offer, the KPNC is here for the public's use and enjoyment. Our goal is that everyone knows that this is available to them."

Located at 2222 North College Street in Auburn, the Kreher Preserve and Nature Center is truly a place "Where Leisure Meets Learning." For more information on upcoming programs and events, visit the KPNC's website at <http://auburn.edu/preserve>. 🌲