

MEMORIALS

Dr. John Mims 1920-2018

LEGACY

By Billy Rye, President, Forest Management Specialists, Inc., Florence, Alabama

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines legacy as ‘something transmitted by or received from an ancestor or predecessor or from the past.’ No word could more aptly describe what Dr. John P. Mims left for his family, his community, and the forest landowners in Alabama.

Dr. Mims was born November 10, 1920, in Chilton County, Alabama, and was raised on a farm near Billingsley. He and his siblings enjoyed playing in the forests near their home. It was this place, most likely, that piqued his interest in nature and the great outdoors. John told me that forests taught him a lot about science. Once, he learned the aspects of physics such as tension, loading, and trajectory when he used a hickory sapling to catapult one of his younger brothers through the air with the greatest of ease. Rather than complain about his obvious physical injuries upon landing, his brother excitedly shared with his flight crew that he could see the skyline of a nearby town while airborne.

Eventually, Dr. Mims grew up and left the homestead for Auburn University. He had only completed one year at Auburn when the U.S. entered World War II, and he enlisted in the Naval Air Corps as a pilot. John served primarily in the South and Mid Pacific, where he flew supply planes to remote locations and conducted submarine patrols as well as search and rescue. Dr. Mims shared with me that during flight training, someone in his company knocked over an outhouse with the wingtip of his airplane, forcing the occupant of the structure to scramble for safety before her attire had been successfully secured. This incident was no laughing matter when the airman faced the ire of his superior officers. I always suspected that Dr. Mims was the guilty party.

Following the war, John returned to Auburn where he graduated, and then entered The University of Alabama School of Medicine. After earning his M.D., he completed a residency in



Dr. John Mims enjoyed his TREASURE Forest license plate, joking that it keeps women from wanting to borrow his car.

General Surgery at Vanderbilt, with additional training in obstetrics and women’s surgery at the University of Pennsylvania.

Family members, Bitsy and Lawrence Beck, persuaded him to consider the Shoals area for private practice. Because he knew good hunting and fishing were nearby, he agreed and opened a clinic in downtown Tusculumbia in 1958 where he treated patients for the next 40 years. Perhaps no service was as enjoyable to him as his role on the Deshler High School sidelines as team doctor. For his 96th birthday, he was recognized for his service during halftime of the last home game and was made an honorary graduate of DHS.

Anyone who knew Dr. Mims was impressed with his vitality and longevity. After retiring from the medical field, he worked with students at a local trade school on woodworking, assisting with the construction of many pieces of furniture which were sold for fundraisers. At age 96, he was as interested in educating himself on current forestry and wildlife topics as most landowners are at age 36. Once, when he was 88, I watched him climb a 20-foot-high stack of lumber, and even rode around with him on ATVs when he was 91.

Dr. Mims was also a natural born leader, encouraging people to follow by setting an example. He was a deacon, a trustee for Samford University, and served on medical mission trips. He was recognized for his forest stewardship efforts with TREASURE Forest certification and the Helene Moseley Memorial TREASURE Forest Award, and was presented with the Lifelong Achievement Award from the Alabama Natural Resources Council, just to name a few. At the age of 86, he became a Certified Burn Prescriptionist and even conducted demonstration burns to educate landowners on the proper use of fire. He hosted multiple 'Classroom in the Forest/Forest in the Classroom' events to communicate the role of private lands and private landowners in benefiting all of the people of Alabama. It was his love for private land ownership that served as impetus to become a founding member of the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association.

Of course, his most important legacy is the love that he had for his family and his heritage. John loved to talk about his ancestors, and even had cuttings from several of the vines planted by his granddaddy's granddaddy during the 1820s on the original family homestead in Chilton County. His love for his family was evident

in our conversations as he never failed to mention his wife, Mary, one of his three children (Park, Rosemary, and Emelyn), or one of his beloved grandchildren.

I first met Dr. Mims in the fall of 1988 as a newly-employed Staff Forester for the Alabama Forestry Commission's District 9 office. While in this position, I coordinated the TREASURE Forest program for Northwest Alabama. John, who was already heavily involved in the various forest management programs and landowner groups in our area, could see how inexperienced I was and took it upon himself to mentor me. I would spend hours riding over his property listening to his vision for the land and the results of his forest management efforts (some good, some bad). He was always willing to share his experience with anyone who would listen.

Dr. Mims was more than just a client to me. He was a mentor, a hero, and a friend. It was his encouragement that gave me the courage to step out in 1996 and start Forest Management Specialists, Inc. His wisdom, charm, and love of the outdoors will be missed by all who were blessed enough to know him. However, his legacy will forever live on in the hearts and minds of those who were touched by his life. ☮

Chris Jaworowski

1973-2018

By Dana Johnson

The wildlife community lost a great person when Mr. Christopher Lamar Jaworowski passed away on May 18, 2018, at the age of 45. Christopher, better known as Chris, was born in Montgomery on January 17, 1973. His passion for the outdoors at a young age led Chris to pursue a career in it.

After graduating from Auburn University with a degree in Wildlife Science, Chris was hired as the Lowndes County Wildlife Management Area Biologist by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR). It is here where he fine-tuned his knowledge about feral swine. Sharing his expertise about these animals with thousands of people over the years, he became known as the state's 'pig biologist.' In fact, Chris was often asked to be a key-note speaker at feral swine and trapping seminars around the country.

Following a lengthy career with the ADCNR, Chris finally hung up his tractor keys and was then hired as a Regional Extension Agent by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. In this position, he worked with individuals addressing



By Billy Pope/ADCNR

Chris Jaworowski, Wildlife Biologist

many wildlife issues, and started a feral swine trapping program for landowners.

Chris leaves behind his wife, Monica; two daughters, Jasmine and Sasha; mother, Sue Jaworowski; and sister, Dawn Jaworowski; along with many other family members. The family requests that any donations in his memory be sent to Buckmasters Youth Life Hunt Program at BADF Disabled Services, 10540 Daystar Drive, Tuscaloosa, AL 35405 or contact dsullivan@buckmasters.com. ☮