

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA



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For Immediate Release

University of South Alabama to Hold Public Tribute Friday for Mayer Mitchell

The University of South Alabama will hold a public tribute to honor the life of Mayer Mitchell at 2 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 28, 2007 in the Mitchell Center on campus.

The long-time trustee, philanthropist and visionary died Wednesday at the age of 74.

USA President Gordon Moulton said, "The life of Mayer Mitchell can be summed up best in one word: service. He gave freely and generously of his time and resources to serve and support the community that he so dearly loved. The University of South Alabama was incredibly fortunate to become the beneficiary of Mayer's generosity with his time, expertise and philanthropy. He will be forever remembered as a legendary figure in the growth of the University and, in turn, the improvement of educational and health care opportunities for everyone in the Mobile region.

"Mayer exchanged ideas and influence with presidents, political leaders and renowned philanthropists, but he was always focused on what he could do to make the world a better place. His life had many dimensions, but his philosophy was simple and direct: 'Do the right thing, and make bold strokes,'" Moulton said. "The University of South Alabama family will always remember him as Mr. U.S.A."

Mayer Mitchell was born in New Orleans in 1933 and grew up in Mobile. He earned his bachelor of science degree in economics with Beta Gamma Sigma honors at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Finance in 1953. He then served as an Army first lieutenant in Korea, earning a commendation ribbon with medal pendant for meritorious service.

Returning home to Mobile with young wife Arlene, Mitchell recruited his brother Abraham to join him in founding a residential and commercial real estate development firm, The Mitchell Company, in 1958. Their business acumen surfaced and the firm grew rapidly, becoming one of the largest in the Southeast.

After serving as chairman and CEO of the company for nearly three decades, Mitchell sold his interest in 1986. Since selling his first entrepreneurial creation at age 53, Mitchell spent the second half of his business life managing his investments through his company, MBI L.L.C., and putting much of the return to work in support of his family, faith, and community.

Mitchell was a tireless proponent of education and health care, serving more than 32 years on the University of South Alabama Board of Trustees, including a term as chairman. He was particularly supportive of USA's medical, business and sports programs, but his giving has touched the entire University. He also used his considerable political and philanthropic influence in support of USA's cancer research efforts.

To date, the Mitchell family -- Mayer, Arlene and Abe -- has given more than \$36.6 million to the University of South Alabama. This includes a gift of \$22 million to support USA's cancer research institute, which is providing state-of-the-art care to people of the Gulf Coast region. USA's trustees named the "Mitchell Cancer Institute" in the family's honor. USA's Mitchell College of Business and Mitchell Center sports arena also bear the family name as testaments to their previous generosity. Also as a result of Mitchell generosity, USA's business learning resource center is named in honor of the Mitchells' parents, Joseph and Rebecca Mitchell.

In fact, the Mitchell family holds the distinction as having given more to a single public university than any other family in the history of the state of Alabama.

Mitchell's philanthropic and leadership service included Alabama Power Company, Wright School, Bishop State Community College, Leukemia Society of America, USA Foundation, AmSouth Bank, Altus Bank, Mobile Area United Way, Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, Congregation Ahavas Chesed, Mobile Jewish Welfare Fund, Mobile Federation of Jewish Charities, Mobile County Real Estate Association, Archives of American Art, Anti-Defamation League, and The Banc Corporation. He also was deeply involved in the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the Jewish Theological Seminary and Camp Ramah Darom, a retreat for Jewish youth in Georgia.

Mitchell was given the USA National Alumni Association's Distinguished Service Award in 2005. Honors also included Outstanding Young Men of America; Jewish Welfare Fund Man of the Year; Prichard Honorary Citizen of the Year; Mobile County Realtor of the Year; and high honors from the Boy's Club of Mobile, Bishop State Community College, University of Rochester, New Orleans Chapter of Hadassah, Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind, Mobile Kiwanis Club, and the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association.

The family requests that in lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the USA Mitchell Cancer Institute (460-7032), to the Congregation Ahavas Chesed Synagogue (343-6010), or to the charity of your choice.

Condolences may be shared with the Mitchell family:

*Family of Mr. Mayer Mitchell
c/o P. O. Box 16006
Mobile, AL 36616*