

MEMORIALS

Dr. Robert Parker 1940-2016

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Doctor Robert Parker passed away in March of 2016. It is difficult to know where to begin in describing Dr. Parker; he was much more than one of Auburn University's gifted veterinarians. He wore many hats and had many titles and affiliations. He was a husband, father, grandfather, retired veterinarian, a veteran, a member of many



Photo by Sarah Albritton

“Dr. Parker proudly displays his 25 years designation as a certified TREE Farm landowner with the author, Tim Albritton.”

boards and committees, a TREASURE Forest landowner, a wooden bowl artist, and what he considered most important – a devoted follower of Jesus Christ. But since these thoughts are being shared with readers of Alabama's TREASURED Forests magazine, I will focus on what I knew best about him – his love for God's creation and especially his TREASURE Forest.

Dr. Parker did love his property in south Elmore County. The fact that his farm was a certified TREASURE Forest and a Tree Farm attest to his work ethic. His diligent care for God's creation was publicly recognized when his property was named as a Helene Mosley Memorial TREASURE Forest Award winner in 2005 and as the state Tree Farm of the Year in 2013.

The good doctor worked the land, wanting every acre to produce something worthwhile. He hated to see some invasive plant such as privet take up valuable space. He once wrote a paper for me to pass out at a forestry tour entitled 'Dr. Parker's Privet Control Notes.' In it he said, "Don't be overwhelmed with the task – start small and just be consistent." He practiced what he preached; he was consistent and a good steward of the land.

In many ways Dr. Parker was a modern-day Renaissance Man. He bought a portable sawmill to cut his own lumber. He tried his hand at making knives. He planted wildflowers. He built his own cabin and installed his own solar power electric system. He even made his own rustic furniture. Along the way, Dr. Parker decided to make bowls out of different kinds of wood. He did it the old fashioned way – chopping them by hand with a woodworking tool called an adze.

My home in Elmore County is between Dr. Parker's farm and his home in Coosada. I remember the time he called me on his

way home from the farm, "Hey Tim, I have a log I want you to look at and see if you can tell me what it is." He was eager to start a new bowl and he wanted to show me the latest log he was working on. He would say, "There's a bowl in there and I need to get it out." And soon that log would turn into a beautiful bowl.

Dr. Parker loved the Lord. Out of a desire to leave a legacy of faith, he recorded a message and asked that it be played at his funeral. I was deeply moved listening to his voice at his own funeral. One statement he made I will never forget . . . "People are more important than things." He loved people and he showed it by his giving and kind spirit. I was the recipient of his kindness as were many other people. My wife and I cherish one of the bowls he gave us – even more now that he is gone.

I expect to see my friend in heaven someday, but I will sure miss him until then. In the meantime, I intend to love people and help others in need as he did, in the hope that I may leave a legacy half as good as that of a truly good man – Doctor Robert Parker.☮



Photo by Sam Duvall, Alabama Forestry Association

Dr. Robert H. Parker was a member of the Class of 1958 at Sidney Lanier in Montgomery. He later served his country in the United States Air Force and the United States Marine Corps Reserve. Graduating from Auburn University with a Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine in 1969, he founded the Ark Animal Clinic in Millbrook in 1980. In retirement, Dr. Parker spent his time growing and managing trees at his tree farm.

In addition to his TREASURE Forest being featured in the Spring 2007 issue of Alabama's TREASURED Forests magazine, a couple more articles were written about Dr. Parker in the publication. 'Elmore County Landowner Uses Computer Technology to Manage Forestland' appeared in the Summer 2000 issue, and a story that included his bowl making talents, 'From the Stump to the Woodworking Shop,' appeared in the Fall 2013 issue.

Don C. East 1939-2016

Clay County TREASURE Forest landowner, Capt. Don C. East, U.S. Navy (Retired) of Lineville passed away on March 9, 2016, at the age of 77.

Funeral services were held on March 15 at Lineville Baptist Church, and burial with full military honors followed in the Rock Springs Baptist Church Cemetery.

Born in Clay County and a 1957 graduate of Bibb Graves High School, East enlisted in the U.S. Navy reaching the grade of Chief Petty Officer. During his enlisted service, he served as a specialist in electronic warfare and as a cryptologic technician, as well as attaining proficiency in Russian and other European languages. During the Vietnam War, he received a commission as an Ensign and was assigned to flight training, eventually receiving his wings as a Naval Flight Officer amassing nearly 10,000 flight hours. During the remainder of his naval career, Captain East served tours of duty involved in electronic and photographic reconnaissance and in naval intelligence as a specialist in Russia and Communist Bloc countries. His tours of duty included numerous overseas assignments as well as the National Security Agency, the Naval Technical Intelligence Center, and the U.S. Navy and U.S. Air Force War Colleges where he was assigned as a Professor of Naval Science. In addition, Captain East earned masters' degrees in National Security Studies from the Naval Postgraduate School and in International Relations from Salve Regina College in Newport, Rhode Island.

Following his retirement from active duty in 1992, the 36-year Navy veteran returned to his native Alabama where he was owner and manager of 'The Creeks Tree Farms.' As a very active land-



owner, East was a member of both the Clay County and Randolph County Forestry Planning Committees, as well as the Clay County Chapter of the Alabama TREASURE Forest Association.

Capt. East leaves a legacy of forest stewardship as evidenced by his property not only being certified as a TREASURE Forest (#1187 in 1996) and Tree Farm, but also receiving the Helene Mosley Memorial TREASURE Forest Award for the Northeast Region in 1999. The Creeks Tree Farms was a past winner of several other environmental, forestry, and wildlife management awards including the Alabama Tree Farmer of the Year, runner-up for the American Tree Farm System Southern Region (16 states) Tree Farmer of the Year, and the National Forest Landowner of the Year from the Forest Landowner Association.

East will also be remembered for his writing. In addition to his TREASURE Forest being featured in the Winter 2000 issue of *Alabama's TREASURED Forests* magazine, he often contributed articles for the publication including a story about "Wilderness Survival Training on a TREASURE Forest" (Fall 2000), "The Browns' TREASURE Forest: A Piece of Alabama History" (Fall 2002), "Alabama's Champion Catalpa Tree" (Fall 2008), and "Veterans Take a 'Walk in the Forest' at a Clay County TREASURE Forest" (Fall/Winter 2011). In 2008, he published *A Historical Analysis of the Creek Indian Hillabee Towns*, a book taking an extensive historical look at the rise and fall of the Hillabee faction of the Creek Indian tribe and its existence in Clay County, Alabama.

John William Sudduth 1943-2016

Winston County TREASURE Forest landowner John William Sudduth passed away on March 19, 2016, at the age of 72 at his home in Double Springs, surrounded by his loving family. Funeral services were held at Double Springs First Baptist Church on March 22, with burial following in Double Springs Memorial Cemetery.

As a 1961 graduate of Addison High School, Sudduth later received his bachelor's degree from Auburn University and a master's degree from Alabama A&M in 1972. During his career as an Ag teacher, he taught five years at Spring Garden High School and 29 years at Winston County High School. A member of Double Springs First Baptist Church for 44 years, John served as deacon and Sunday School teacher.

Sudduth was a member of the following organizations: Northwest Alabama Livestock Auction Board of Directors, Traders and Farmers Bank Advisory Board, Winston County Farmers Federation Board, Winston County Natural Resources



Council, Winston County Republican Party Vice-Chairman, State Alabama TREASURE Forest Committee, Grass Roots Advisory Council through the Winston County Cooperative Extension Office, Winston County Equalization Board, Winston County Soil and Water Conservation District Board, and Winston County High School FFA Advisory Committee.

In addition to raising cattle, Sudduth enjoyed managing timber on his farm, for which he earned TREASURE Forest certification (#1262). During his lifetime, he received numerous honors and awards including the W. Kelly Mosley Environmental Award, Winston County High School Honorary Chapter FFA Degree, Alabama FFA Honorary State Farmer, Double Springs Panorama Study Club Outstanding Service Award, and the Ronald Reagan Award from the Winston County Republicans.

A story about silvopasture practices on John and Mary Sudduth's TREASURE Forest appeared as a 'Hidden TREASURES' feature in the Summer 2004 issue of *Alabama's TREASURED Forests* magazine.