



Belle Meade Founder's Bridge and Time Capsule

Last month, we featured the story of the Children's Bridge and racoon statues on Belle Meade Boulevard. Did you know that there is another bridge of interest on the Boulevard? Just one street over, the Founder's Bridge stands in remembrance and honor of the founders of Belle Meade: Douglas S. Henry, Belle Meade's first mayor; Alec D. Stevenson, the City's first Vice Mayor; and Robert C. Cooney, our First City Commissioner.

On May 2, 1993, the Founder's Bridge was dedicated and a Time Box containing memorabilia of Belle Meade's government was placed in the commemorative terrace, to be opened in one hundred years.

The dedication was quite an event! Mayor T. Scott Fillebrown was Master of Ceremony, and the festivities were kicked off by a rousing performance from Nashville Pipes & Drums who marched from Tyne to the new bridge, under the direction of Pipe Major Steve Snoddy.

Dr. Edwin Coleman, Minister of St. George's, blessed the ceremony and Senator Douglas Henry gave a passionate speech on the then-68 years of Belle Meade's history, inception, incorporation and legacy.

After Senator Henry's speech, Vice Mayor Crabtree introduced Mr. George Bartlett of the Public Works Department, who unveiled the Time Box containing memorabilia, photographs, books and historical records given by residents of the City. Chippy Pirtle sent letters to residents requesting items of importance or sentimentality to the City and City Government to be donated at City Hall. The final selection of the contents was made by Vice Mayor Crabtree, Mrs. Walter Robinson, Jr., and Mrs. Crom Tidwell, Jr.

Among the many selections, the Time Box contains: a buckeye from Belle Meade Country Club; a plaque entitled "Colors of Belle Meade"; a brick from Parmer School; a copy of the Warner Watch newsletter; a 1993 Belle Meade Country Club rule book; a program from the previous year's Swan Ball, an aerial photograph of Belle Meade; photographs of City Hall, the Bells of St. George's and the dedication of Belle Meade Boulevard. Also included are the City's first Beautification Receipt Book; a copy of the very first Ordinance that Belle Meade passed; a 1992-3 Belle Meade & Green Hills telephone directory; as well as several books: *Cheekwood* by Richard Cheek; *A History of Immanuel Baptist Church* by Gaye McGlothlen; *The History of Belle Meade: Plantation, Mansion and Stud* by Ridley Wills II; and *Belle Meade Park* by Dr. Cromwell Tidwell.

After the Time box was embedded into the terrace, Vice Mayor Crabtree invited all guests to a reception at the Belle Meade Country Club. The entire City of Belle Meade was invited, and a crowd of approximately 200 were present.

The Belle Meade Bridge Dedication Committee who spent many months planning this grand event was comprised of: Mrs. Scott Fillebrown, Consultant; Mrs. Bruce I. Crabtree, Consultant; Mrs. Alex (Chippy) Pirtle, Coordinator; Mrs. James O. Bass, Jr.; Mrs. Lindsay P. Bohannon; Mrs. J. C. Bradford, Jr.; Mrs. Andrew W. Byrd; Mrs. O'Neal Clayton; Mrs. McAlister W. Fletcher; Mrs. H. Lynn Greer; Mrs. E. Palmer Jones; Mrs. Roland Lamb; Mrs. John Lea; Mrs. Joseph B. Ledbetter; Mrs. Jack Massey; Mrs. Hunter McDonald, Jr.; Mrs. Raymond Pirtle, Jr.; Mrs. Walter M. Robinson, Jr.; Mrs. James T. Reynolds; Mrs. Herbert Shayne; Mrs. H. R. Slaymaker; and Mrs. Cromwell Tidwell, III.

If you're wondering why there was such a fuss over a seemingly understated bridge and terrace, I will quote then-Vice Mayor Bruce Crabtree, who said,

[Belle Meade] is not a city of big public structures, so a simple bridge over Richland Creek will be the monument to those who envisioned the City. My feeling is that not only is the bridge a monument to them, but also the entire City, with its beauty and uniqueness.

A fitting monument indeed!

--Laura Katherine Wood, Society of Ceres Chair, with special thanks to City Manager and historian Beth Reardon for her invaluable research!



