

# **Memories of Mr. Moody – Complete Version**

*As noted in the Fall 2019 issue of Alabama's TREASURED Forests, it was necessary to condense some of the Bill Moody tributes beginning on page 20 for the sake of publication space. These "Memories" are printed below in their entirety. At the end, also see "In His Own Words" a collection of a few writings by C.W. Moody during his tenure as State Forester of Alabama. (The accompanying article "C.W. 'Bill' Moody: The Man Who Made Alabama 'A Better Place for People Through Forestry'" written by Coleen Vansant can be found in the magazine.)*

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## **Dan Jackson, Retired AFC Employee –**

One of the best memories I have of Mr. Moody occurred during his last year of service as State Forester. He was making, what I refer to as, his 'farewell tour' to most district and county offices. At that time, I was the county forester in Walker County, and I was notified that Mr. Moody would be stopping by to visit the county office and staff on a particular day. Naturally we got everything in order for that day – equipment was cleaned, shop and office were spruced up, pickups were washed, and the county staff were in our best work uniforms.

The morning he arrived, we greeted him and after he looked around briefly, he came in to the office area and we all sat down. He proceeded to talk about his forestry philosophy for the Alabama Forestry Commission; where we had come from and the future for the agency, and we all listened intently. After a while of Mr. Moody talking, I began to notice some faint black marks on his face and hands. These marks puzzled me, so I looked a little closer and noticed some writing. Mr. Moody, prior to arriving that morning, had written our names with a pen on the palms of his hands as his way of remembering who we were. And in the course of his speaking, he inadvertently touched his forehead, lightly smearing the writing on his forehead and palms.

Once I figured what had happened, I was slightly amused. However, I thought about what he had done and realized the thought he put in to being able to refer to us by name and the personable demeanor he always seemed to have. That was impressive to me, for back in those days the AFC had about 500 personnel across the state, and that was Mr. Moody's simple way of being able to know who a few of us were.

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## **Gerald Steeley, Retired AFC Employee –**

Mr. Moody could be a hard person to work for, especially in the early years. I experienced this first hand shortly after being promoted to the District Forester position for District 9 in 1977. One of the first things I did was to check the district budget to see how we stood. To my dismay, I discovered that there wasn't enough money left in the budget to finish out the three or four months left in fiscal year. So off to Montgomery I go to explain to Mr. Moody my budget dilemma. I was feeling pretty good about having caught this problem early on and didn't expect the butt chewing that I received when I went before him. He let me know in no uncertain terms that I was never to come before him again asking for more money to be added to my budget. As I recall, additional money was put in the budget to get us through the remainder of the fiscal year, but I paid a price in getting it. It reminds me of the old cartoon of this guy walking by with part of his rearend missing and telling someone he just had a conversation with the boss.

I remember Mr. Moody telling us one time in a District Foresters meeting that he didn't want us to feel comfortable in our jobs. I think the message there was that we should never become complacent but should be constantly striving to better the Alabama Forestry Commission.

I admired and respected Mr. Moody for all he did for the Alabama Forestry Commission. The AFC may never see a State Forester and Assistant State Forester team as good as Mr. Moody and Mr. Pigg. It was an honor to be part of their team.

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***Kim Nix, Former AFC Employee –***

One of the things I remember is he would walk the halls at the state office late on Friday afternoons and stop briefly to say hello if you were in your office. Yes, he was checking up on who was working until 5 p.m. on Friday afternoons, but he was also letting us know that he was working as well. He was leading by example, and that's always stuck with me. I tried to have the same philosophy when I got to be a supervisor.

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***Steve Nix, Retired AFC Employee –***

I was standing in line at the Faulkner University/Atlanta Highway Taco Bell talking to a total stranger about his TREASURE Forest near Mathews. I turned around to see a little, stooped man wearing a baseball cap behind us in line. Who else but BILL MOODY! We had a great laugh when I introduced Mr. Moody as the creator of ‘his’ TREASURE Forest program. He corrected me to explain it was ‘ours.’

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***Tony Avery, Retired AFC Employee –***

I think Mr. Moody liked to visit counties. So, he came to Marion County one day. We had a previous county supervisor that had retired and lived not far from our office. Mr. Moody dropped by his house along with a couple of AFC employees for a visit. I think he thought that was the best thing he had done that day. Mr. Moody loved to affect people in a positive way. He was great visionary, motivational leader, and a great person.

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***Tim Albritton, Former AFC Employee –***

Mr. Moody had a presence about him that conveyed confidence. You just knew you were in the presence of a leader. Some people might say that’s because I was young, in my late 20s and early 30s when I was working for him at the AFC. There may be some truth to that, but years later when I was in my 50s, I ran into him at Publix grocery store one day. I still had that same feeling as we talked for a while in the aisle.

Mr. Moody left a positive impact on me. It’s hard to explain, but I want to reach higher in life because of his inspiration. There are not many people these days that do that to you.

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***Johnnie Everitt, Current AFC Employee –***

When I graduated from Auburn there was a reception held at the forestry school. Mr. Moody was in attendance. My mother saw him and introduced us. I’ll never forget her asking him to give me a job. I was a little embarrassed. However, he was very nice and talked with us for a couple of minutes.

A couple of years later I went to work for the Alabama Forestry Commission. Soon after coming on board District 9 Forester, Gerald Steele, introduced me to Mr. Moody at the state office. When Mr. Moody saw me, he brought up the conversation we had at graduation and welcomed me to the Commission. I was impressed by how he remembered such a small conversation. He was a people person.

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***Gary Faulkner, Current AFC Employee –***

Mr. Moody genuinely provided a professional pathway for me and my family as a career within and outside the forestry community. The opportunities he provided for advancement were likened as service missionaries – to go out and preach the gospel of forestry wherever life situated our careers over time. He was fond of pushing new ideas and advancements for achieving higher levels of accomplishments. Mr. Moody loaned me to another state agency where I eventually settled in another rewarding career.

The character and values he instilled while at the Alabama Forestry Commission carried forward to others. His vision, legacy, and influences were second to none for the state and nation. He had a tough ‘row to hoe’ operating such a large agency under his tenure. Mr. Moody’s leadership demanded professional attitudes and positive results – and he received them. I liken him to bringing a rock to a sword fight. I believe there is a story in the scriptures about this – and we all know who won that fight! Above all, he was a good and decent man who was a unique and valued asset to our state. The good Lord made only one Mr. Moody. His name will be etched and synonymous with Alabama’s forest legacy like none other.

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***Jerry Dwyer, Retired AFC Employee –***

Mr. Moody was truly an inspiration to me. He supported my efforts as well as several others in achieving a degree in forestry. His establishment of the Forestry Commission’s Cooperative Education Program developed future leaders within the forestry community. The majority of participants eventually served in both upper level positions internally as well as outside the Forestry Commission. I personally benefitted from this program and achieved success beyond my beliefs.

Upon graduating I had the good fortune of driving Mr. Moody to a local meeting in Lee County, Alabama. I took that opportunity to thank him for his support. He politely told me I didn’t need to thank him but rather go forth and do great things for the Citizens of Alabama. It was obvious to me, which he conveyed with his eyes and tone, he supported the Cooperative Education Program for the purpose of providing employees an opportunity to grow but mostly for the benefit of Alabama citizens.

Prior to this, I served in Mobile County as the assistant county supervisor. Mr. Moody spoke at the introduction of the Go-Track in Bay Minette where local Forestry Commission employees, forest landowners, local politicians, and the media were present. Afterwards about 15 or so employees went to lunch at a local restaurant. I sat next to Mr. Moody. He asked what I thought about the new Ford F-8000 transports. Being asked, I felt comfortable and expected he wanted honest feedback. I politely stated they were fine, but checking the oil and fluid levels was difficult since you basically had to climb up and into the engine compartment to check them. This was even more problematic when it was wet, as it was easy to slip.

He cocked his head and asked, “How long have you been with the Commission?” I replied a little over five years. He kind of pursed his lips and said sternly, like a father talking to his son, “You haven’t been here long enough to complain.” Keep in mind this was the first personal conversation I ever had with him. I thought, “Damn, I’m screwed.” Obviously, it did not impact me negatively, as he signed the paperwork for me to go through the Cooperative Education Program about a year or so later.

He always expected much of us as Forestry Commission employees and we always tried our darnedest to make sure he wasn’t disappointed. He led us with firmness while instilling the self-confidence to know we could accomplish anything. His visionary leadership, dedication to the Forestry Commission, its employees, forest landowners, and the citizens of Alabama was/is truly inspirational.

The Forestry Commission family has missed him since the day he retired. I’m quite sure God is smiling knowing he has someone of Mr. Moody’s stature in his Kingdom. We know the Kingdom is perfect, but God now has someone who will help him tweak it a little and make it more perfect.

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***Sam Gravel, Retired AFC Employee –***

On a district visit by Bill Moody, as we rode along, he asked me if I was reading any interesting books. I started describing the book entitled *The Mind of a Manager and the Soul of a Leader*. Bill listened and then quickly asked, “Which one should be boss?”

Everyone recognized that Bill was the soul of the Alabama Forestry Commission and that he was very good at being the leader of the organization.

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***Rick Oates, Current State Forester –***

One of the first forestry leaders I met when I started working for the Alabama Forestry Association (AFA) was Bill Moody. Though young and inexperienced, I knew right away Mr. Moody was a man to be respected, a leader to follow. Our careers at the AFA and AFC didn't overlap by much, but I worked with him at Stewards of Family Farms Ranches and Forests a great deal. While he was there, I got to know Mr. Moody and understand his philosophy about life and leadership. He taught me a great deal in those few years. I hope, as state forester, I can do half the job he did.

Even more important to me than the respect his employees had for him was the obvious love and respect I saw from his son, Mike. That told me that in addition to being a good leader at the Alabama Forestry Commission, he was a good father and family leader. Something I've tried to imitate as well.

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***Jim Hyland, Retired AFC Employee –***

The AFC had sent in a Southern Pine Beetle project to the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) for \$2 million to try new things such as landowner assistance and \$10 per cord incentive for cutting spots. One of the headhunters from the USFS (that was not well liked by the state pest managers) came to Montgomery to tell Mr. Moody whether they were going to approve the project or not. He would not reveal to me what the outcome was, but asked if he could meet with Mr. Moody. I told him he was a busy man; just say his howdy-dos and get straight to the point.

We went in and when the Fed started to talk about the project, Mr. Moody leaned forward and said, "If you are going tell me we are not going to get all our money, you can get the hell out of here now!" The look on the Fed's face was priceless. Mr. Moody reared back in his chair and roared laughing, and then told him, "Give the details to Jim and he can handle whatever you want."

Another reason I respected Mr. Moody was that he let his men do their jobs and backed them up.

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***Linda Parten Tillery, Former AFC Employee –***

During the 16 years I worked for the Alabama Forestry Commission, I was involved heavily with the Forest Festivals at the Coliseum in Montgomery. Randy Allen and I were tasked to place posters in stores advertising the FREE EVENT. Well, cars were short that day, so I drove Mr. Moody's car. When Randy and I finished up on the Southern Boulevard, I backed up and landed on a 36" pipe sticking out of the pavement, and pinstriped Mr. Moody's car as I drove off. Randy and I made a pact not to mention this to ANYONE. And of course, the next day I ran into Mr. Moody in the hall and he commented to me that although cars were still in strong demand, I wouldn't be using his. He just grinned that grin of his and kept walking. I turned RED and flew up the stairs to my office.

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***Harold Cleveland, Retired AFC Employee –***

I don't know where this quote came from, but it fits Mr. Moody to a tee: "He had a seemingly innate ability to deal with people in a firm, yet considerate manner, which instilled in them a sense of pride in the quality of their work and inspired them to their maximum effectiveness."

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***Barton Williams, Retired AFC Employee –***

Needless to say, the field employees of the new Alabama Forestry Commission were very excited by all the changes. Rumors were flying about the new State Forester Bill Moody, such as, he is a real hot shot forester from Florida. He went on a round-robin tour of the state, meeting with two districts at a time.

I worked in District 6 and we met with District 7 in the southeast part of the state. He told us he was holding these meetings so we could learn things about each other. He said, "I have already learned a lot about the Forestry Commission employees and still learning more. I have observed that the employees consistently do one thing very well. They seem to be excellent 'bitchers.'" Everyone hee-hawed and grinned. He continued, "In fact, I have never heard so much 'bitching' in my entire life!" More laughter. Then he said, "I absolutely hate bitching and bitchers!!!" You could hear a pin drop. Doug Smith and I looked at each other with an "Oh Hell" look. At that point we realized that nothing was the same and we were in for a ride. And what a ride it was until Bill Moody retired as State Forester. A ride that Six Flags would never be able to duplicate!

I was attending a very large conference of influential people from the forestry profession, agriculture, and the political arena. State Forester Bill Moody gave a speech from the heart, on his frustrations with the ever-increasing sniping towards the practice of forestry and agriculture. Investigative reporters, environmental groups, and Washington D.C.'s liberal interpretations of environmental laws were taking a toll on property owner rights, handcuffing landowners and industry in the practice of forestry and agriculture. He told the group that he kept hearing things such as, "It is for the good of our country." Other comments he kept running into included, "Forestry and agriculture need to be 'more open minded.'" He went on to say, "I am not against being open minded. I have always considered myself to be an open-minded person. However, I feel you can become so open minded that eventually your brains will fall out!" That quote resonated with the audience and has been one that I have always remembered. It applied to the situation back then and still applies for me to our current national compromises and conflicts.

Bill Moody's Assistant Glenda Hughes called me one day to set an appointment for me to meet with him in his office. I asked what the meeting was about, as I always tried to be prepared and bring in any materials needed. She said, "I do not know."

The morning of the meeting I drove down from Birmingham. Upon arrival I walked past his office door to check in with Glenda. It was open, but he was in a heated discussion with someone on the telephone. Glenda whispered it has been like this all morning and he has two other appointments before he can see you. I went upstairs to take care of some other business. When I came back downstairs his office door was closed and I could hear agitated voices all the way into the foyer. I checked in with Glenda and went to other offices to do more business. This went on for a long time and I finally just camped out in the little waiting room outside his office. It was near the noon hour when the voices quietened. Glenda advised me that he could see me now, but he just had to return a phone call. He told her for me to just come on in. I was thinking as I walked in that it would be my luck that he had been thoroughly roughed up with a wire brush by the previous appointees and phone calls. He was on the phone with his back to me. The call turned sour quickly and I wondered if I should step out. I rode it out and eventually he slammed the phone down on the credenza. He spun his chair around and glared at me. He pulled his chair up to his desk and said "Barton Williams, finally a friendly face!"

He got up from his chair and walked around his desk to the conference table where I was sitting. He sat down in front of me unloading about what a rough morning it had been. He shared some of the things that had gone on. He asked for my honest opinion on how to handle the issues going on. He also asked for me and my staff to check on some issues in our area just to make sure we had support there. He finally wound down and asked me why I had come down. I said, "I don't know. You called me in." He said, "Well, what did I want?" I said, "I don't know." He grinned and said, "Maybe I just needed to see a friendly face," and just cackled laughing. I left that meeting relieved, but with a profound understanding of just how difficult his job had become as State Forester in an age of investigative reporting with Washington's liberal interpretations of water quality regulations and disdain for landowner rights.

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***Tommy Patterson, Retired AFC Employee –***

My first connection with Mr. Moody happened in the early ‘70s. I was a young, green, naive forester that had just graduated from the University of Georgia. I had not had much luck finding a forestry job and was working at the YMCA in Anniston, Alabama. A friend’s father was a county agent who one day brought me the name and phone number of Bill Moody. He said I might want to contact him about a job with the state. I had no idea about state protocol concerning employment registers or the application process. I just picked up the phone and called this Bill Moody fellow! I guess it was a slow day as I got right through to him. I told him I needed a forestry job and had been given his name. This was THE STATE FORESTER I was talking to! He was kind to me. He asked about my background and said that the AFC was indeed looking to hire some foresters. After we chatted a while, he connected me with Mrs. Brown, the AFC Personnel Director and she sent me the paperwork to get the process started. I was hired about a month later as a staff forester for Lambert Smith in the Tuscaloosa District Office. I guess it pays to go directly to the top sometimes, at least when you don’t know any better!

Mr. Moody was a great boss, leader, and mentor to me during his career with the AFC. I moved from being a county forester to coordinating some forest management programs in the AFC State Office in the early ‘80s. It gave me a chance to see him, up close and personal, almost every day. I got interested in the abilities of computers, working with the TVA Forestry Department on WRAP plans (forest management plans for landowners). Mr. Moody was a visionary and I convinced him that these machines could improve our organization in many ways. He finally took a chance and bought 11 desktop computers. One for me and one for each district.

Things grew quickly from there as we started developing TREASURE Forest Plans, using word processing, spreadsheets, and creating fire reporting programs. I finally went into Mr. Moody's office one day and discussed the need for someone to do forestry computer development full time. I must have caught him at a weak moment as he agreed and thought I would be a good person to do that. I think I got more than I bargained for! As time went on, Mr. Moody would stop by my office to check on the progress of various tasks. Remember, this was way before the days of Windows operating systems, so computer operations required you to know some MS-DOS commands from the now archaic C:/ prompt on the monochrome screen. His standard line to me was, “Alright Patterson, I want to be able to press one key on that computer and know about all the fires we had yesterday.” It took us a while, but we finally got there. Mr. Moody allowed us to stay on the cutting edge of technology for many years.

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***Phearthur Moore, Retired AFC Employee –***

While working at the Alabama Forestry Commission’s State Office as a district forester trainee for State Forester C. W. Moody, I was fortunate enough to travel around the state with him on various assignments.

One of the things Mr. Moody did was to go to as many funerals affecting Forestry Commission employees as possible. While en route to these services, Mr. Moody would often ask me about the forestry associate’s family members. He wanted to know how many children they had, and any other information he could get about the family. He would make notes for himself and in a pinch would jot the information down in the palm of his left hand to serve as a reminder. When he saw the employee, he would use their name when greeting them and ask about their children or mention some other topic he knew was of importance to that employee. He said he wanted “our people,” as he put it, to know that he cared about them and their family. He taught me that the ministry of presence was very important and that you should show up when people were dealing with the passing of a loved one.

Mr. Moody encouraged me to attend Auburn University to earn my forestry degree. After he retired from the Forestry Commission, I sent him a card thanking him for all he had done to help me and

my family. I offered praise for the great job he had done in promoting forestry in the State of Alabama. He then sent me a card, and in it he said “*We*” did a good job of promoting forestry in the state. He was not concerned about who got the credit, he just wanted to get the job done.

Mr. Moody was an amazing man, and my life was positively affected by my association with him. He sometimes spoke of his faith in God, so I believe he is now resting with the LORD.

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***Anita Benton, Retired AFC Employee –***

Working under the leadership of Mr. Moody was an awesome experience, and I had as much respect for him as I ever had for anyone in my life. He always exhibited respect for the people who worked at the Alabama Forestry Commission; he expected associates to perform to their full potential, but he was always quick to show his appreciation for a job well done. But, having said these things, he also did not hesitate to let you know that he was disappointed with some job you did that did not meet his expectations, or some trait or action he witnessed that was not a compliment to the AFC.

Often, he believed in me when I did not believe in myself or my ability to get a job done. During my years of working at the AFC, I had an opportunity to be part of the team that produced video presentations regarding forest management practices, highlighting landowners participating in the TREASURE Forest Program, and other forestry topics. On more than one occasion when our team was working late to complete a presentation, we would hear Mr. Moody coming down the hall to check on us (one night as late as 10 pm), to offer his help if needed, and thank us for working so hard.

It was my pleasure and good fortune to work for an agency with a strong leader like Mr. Moody, and his belief in me certainly helped make me the person I am today. I will be forever grateful for that opportunity.

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***Spencer Ryan, Director, Alabama PALS (People Against A Littered State) –***

Mr. Moody was one of the most innovative and forward-thinking individuals that I have ever had the pleasure to meet. He cared about people and he cared about the cause. He was sincere in his dedication to the Alabama Forestry Commission and Alabama PALS, and so many organizations flourished under Bill Moody's leadership. I not only appreciate his interest in people personally, but will be forever in debt to Bill Moody.

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***Derrick Heckman, Retired AFC Employee –***

I met Bill Moody and Charles Pigg in 1989 while working for the U.S. Forest Service as an FIA forester out of Starkville, Mississippi. Fast forward to 1991, I was bored with the Forest Service, so I called Montgomery and asked to speak with Bill Moody. He immediately recognized my voice, knew my name, knew where I grew up and my alma mater, Stephen F. Austin. I was impressed at this point since I had only given him my name when we first met. I never did find out how he got the rest of my information; maybe that Texas drawl and cowboy hat was a clue. Anyway, he told me about this great forester position in Jefferson County and asked me to call Bart Williams. I did, and that started my adventure with the Alabama Forestry Commission.

Over the next few years I saw Mr. Moody often and he always took time to speak, ask questions, and as a new employee he made me feel like my opinion was just as important as the ‘old-timers.’ I never forgot that! For many years I worked hard to make new employees feel included, listen to their opinions, and make them feel as though they were part of a family, the same way Mr. Moody made me feel. To this day, I have never forgotten the impact Mr. Moody had, and still has, on my life. May his legacy live on forever in those of us that knew him.

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**Doug Smith, Retired AFC Employee –**

When I first started working at the State Office, I don't know if I have ever been so scared. I had deep respect for Mr. Moody...almost fear. One day I was sitting in a chair in front of his desk with something in my lap that was heavy and had sharp edges. In my nervousness, I dropped the item I was holding, and it hit the edge of his desk. "That better not have scratched my desk," he said. I got up and quickly exited his office. Later when he had left the building, I went back into his office, only to see a long scratch in the wood of his desk. I rounded up some furniture polish and shoe polish and spent hours buffing that place out, trying to cover the scratch so he wouldn't see it. I lived in fear for about two weeks.

Many times, when someone had a birthday or there was a special holiday such as Christmas, we would have a party or celebration at the State Office. Mr. Moody would make an appearance, usually for a short time, then he would leave. After a while, he would return with a hand full of leave slips for those who were still at the party. It was his way of saying you had partied long enough and needed to get back to work or fill out a leave slip.

For a time, I was the Chief of the Information and Education section at the State Office in Montgomery. At one point Mr. Moody personally took a person from somewhere else and assigned them to my section. It wasn't long before we all realized that this person was not going to fit in, work out, or be a success in our section. I finally got up the nerve to go downstairs and speak to Mr. Moody about my problem. I explained the situation to him, how everyone in the building was complaining and that I had done everything I could do, but it just wasn't working out. He informed me that it was my responsibility to make this person a 'success' and that I wasn't doing my job. I explained to him over and over that I didn't know what else to do, but it just wasn't going to happen. He raised up on the edge of his chair and said, "If I can get to you before you get to the door, I will throw you out of this office." I didn't know he could move that fast because the next thing I knew he was coming around the desk towards me and I got out of the door just in time.

There are several things that I was most impressed about with Bill Moody. One was his interaction with his employees. When he came to the Alabama Forestry Commission, we had just been severed from the Department of Conservation. We had limited equipment, limited personnel, and limited resources of any kind. Some of our county personnel had little formal education and a few had trouble reading. There had been no training and there was no organization and consistency throughout the agency. He immediately began making field trips to the counties. He would walk around the buildings and look at the equipment, even raise the hood and check the oil. But the most important thing he did was talk to and listen to the people in the field. In this, he found out that despite the limited education of some and no real training, they had managed to take worn equipment and tools, make modifications to them, and better do their jobs. He saw how much they had accomplished with nothing, and he recognized an untapped potential that he could develop.

Out of his visits came great things. One, he made the field feel important. He made them want to live up to his standards. He had a real soft spot for them, and he endeared himself to the counties. As we began to get money for equipment, training, and uniforms, they began developing more pride in their work. At one point he decided to have an agency-wide meeting at a large park so that every district could showcase their equipment and personnel. Everyone dressed in their uniforms and we had a drive-by with the trucks and equipment. An announcer on a PA system would recognize the county and tell about their equipment, how they had made this modification to the trailer or change in the plow, etc. It made everyone so proud. He knew how to take people, and by recognizing their good work, make them want to go back and do more. That was one of his greatest strengths.

Another thing that amazed me was his ability to form alliances: Alabama PALS, the organization of the volunteer fire departments, the TREASURE Forest Association, the Urban Forestry Association,

and the Forestry Planning Committees, just to name a few. Any time he saw a chance to include someone else to do part of the work or solve a problem he did it. He was just about a genius at doing that, and to see it happen and watch it grow was an amazing journey.

And lastly, he had a heart of gold. He would do anything personally for you.

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**Coleen Vansant, Current AFC Employee –**

In April 1986 Mr. Moody changed my life. He hired me to work for the Alabama Forestry Commission, and at the same time, handed me the job of my dreams. I consider myself blessed.

Working for Mr. Moody was tough at times. He expected 110 percent from every person in the agency and he worked us hard. He was involved in so many things; many of them occurring at the same time! Each time he came up with a new idea or a new program that meant more work for us. But he worked hard alongside us, and he was so proud of us. He told us every time he saw us how great we were, and we believed him!

But what I remember the most about working for him was how much fun it was! We had fun in everything we did! It was truly a pleasure to get up and come to work every day. As I've heard my former District Forester Bart Williams say so many times, "We were high on the mountain with Bill Moody."

Mr. Moody was the greatest leader and motivator that I have ever known, and I am a better person because I had the opportunity to know him and work for him. We all drank the Bill Moody Kool-Aid and stuck our cup out for more. He was loved so much by so many people, and he will be missed. However, he will continue to be as large as life, as long as there is a single one of us left that worked for him, because he instilled in the hearts and minds of all of us who were fortunate enough to have known him. Just like you taught us, Mr. Moody; "*We ARE the Alabama Forestry Commission.*"

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# In His Own Words . . .

## by C.W. Moody, State Forester

Below are excerpts from, or entire writings authored by Mr. C. W. Moody during his time as State Forester of Alabama. These were collected from the Alabama Forestry Commission's in-house (employee) newsletter *TREETOPics*, Alabama's *TREASURED Forests* magazine, and other publications.

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*TREETOPics*, Vol. IV, No. 4, October 1986

### STATE FORESTERS MESSAGE By C.W. Moody

*During the past couple of months, we have had several excellent opportunities to "show off" our organization. I always look forward to the opportunity for people outside the Alabama Forestry Commission to see and experience firsthand the pride we have in our organization. That is, of course, a direct indication of how we feel about ourselves and the vital function we perform for the people of this state.*

*In early September, the Third Alabama Landowner and TREASURE Forest Conference was held in Montgomery. This provided us with an excellent forum in which landowners could interact with our people, as well as representatives of other agencies. Participation was excellent, and many positive comments were made about the AFC. Good media coverage also favorably depicted our people and organization to the public.*

*Then in the latter part of September, the Volunteer Firefighters' Appreciation Day was held in Prattville. This provided volunteer fire departments from across the state the opportunity of fellowship, competition, and recognition, as well as spotlighting the RCFP's vital contribution to the protection of life and property for the people of Alabama. Again, I heard many positive comments about my associates in the AFC.*

*October saw the biggest event of all, the National Society of American Foresters Convention in Birmingham. Since so many Alabama Forestry Commission associates were involved in key areas of the convention, this provided us the opportunity to show our dedication and pride to foresters from all over the nation. I felt that pride as did some fifteen hundred SAF visitors to our state. What an outstanding event that was made possible, in great part, by dedication and hard work by people of the AFC. We had much feedback on the conduct of AFC people during that event. I had trouble keeping my coat buttoned because my chest kept swelling up!*

*The months ahead will provide many other opportunities for us to show the world how we feel about ourselves, our mission, our customers, and our image. Keep letting that pride and dedication shine for all to see. You are the Alabama Forestry Commission!*

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**TREETOPics, Vol. V, No. 1, January 1987**

**STATE FORESTERS MESSAGE By C.W. Moody**

*Happy New Year!*

*Here we are again at the beginning of another new year. Let us take a moment to reflect upon some of our accomplishments of 1986 and look ahead at the upcoming new year.*

*Of course, the big story of 1986 was the extended fire season. The 12,787 fires of 1986 represented a 51% increase over the previous year. This was the highest number of fires ever recorded in a twelve month period, since Alabama was placed under organized fire protection. In spite of this tremendous increase, our people were able to limit the acres burned to 127,086, a 22% decrease over FY 1985. Furthermore, our associates held the average fire size to 9.9 acres, a whopping 49% decrease over the previous year!*

*By May of 1986 we had reached our goal of 650 certified RCFPs. Also, we continued to make steady progress towards our goals in fire control, safety, TREASURE Forest, and Tree City USA. As we look ahead, we see many challenges which await us in 1987. We are hampered by reduced funding, so we must work together even more effectively and efficiently to meet our goals. However, a new administration is taking office and we are optimistic about our prospects with Governor-elect Hunt. A legislative package has been prepared and we are eager to work with the legislature in passing these bills.*

*As you can see, much has been accomplished, yet much remains to be done. Let us look back with pride and ahead with determination and dedication to the job that remains to be done. Together we can make Alabama a better place for people through forestry.*

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**TREETOPics, Vol. V, No. 2, April 1987**

**STATE FORESTERS MESSAGE By C.W. Moody**

*Our society, hence our department, is a multi-cultured environment consisting of men and women working for a common good. From time to time this multi-cultural environment is disturbed through thoughtless acts of bigotry, sexual harassment, and ethnic degradation. This thoughtless action does nothing but belittle the individual and the organization he/she represents.*

*Our government has found it necessary to implement laws which spell out exacting punishment to violators of a person's right to go about his/her day-to-day activities, free from harassment or intimidation.*

*Overall, I am proud of the members of the Alabama Forestry Commission and the values placed on the contribution of our associates. Certainly, there have been flaws in our image and these were and are being corrected.*

*We must now redouble our efforts to stamp out remnants of discrimination within the Alabama Forestry Commission. Only through mutual respect can we hope to fulfill our mandated duties to the citizens of Alabama. Revised statements regarding equal employment*

*and affirmative action will be forthcoming. However, it is my desire to see a work force guided by decency rather than dictates.*

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**Excerpt from Mr. Moody's speech during his retirement banquet, August 24, 1983**

During his farewell address to the Commission, Moody thanked all the associates for the good work they have done for the citizens of Alabama during his term as state forester: "*You ought to know that you are an outstanding group of people,*" he said. "*You make a tremendous contribution to our state. You're due honor and respect, and you're going to do well.*"

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***The Alabama Forestry Commission Annual Report SFY 1985-86***

In his letter to The Honorable George C. Wallace, Governor of Alabama, Mr. Moody uses a special phrase to describe the Alabama Forestry Commission's mission: "*If we were to summarize the ongoing mission of the Alabama Forestry Commission in one phrase, it would be, "Making Alabama a better place for people through forestry."*"

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***Alabama's TREASURED Forests, Spring 1992, Page 2.***

*"TREASURE Forest owners are, by definition, good stewards of the land. As such, they are willingly achieving their objectives in a manner that promotes the common good."*

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***Alabama's TREASURED Forests, Summer 1991, page 2.***

*"Along with the right to own land comes the responsibility to be a good steward of the land . . . Owners have the right to pursue and achieve their own objectives, as good stewards, on their privately-owned forestland. They have the right to control access to their forestlands as consistent with the common good. They have the right to receive full and just compensation for values which are privately owned in their forests. This includes recreational leases and timber sales. Restrictions which take these rights and values from responsible forest owners erode the rights of all and should not be allowed to take place."*

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***Alabama's TREASURED Forests, Spring 1985, page 2.***

*"President John Kennedy made the following statement which most of us recall. "Ask not what your country can do for you, but rather ask what you can do for your country." This profound statement is relevant to all generations of Americans, but especially to TREASURE Forest landowners of today. This country has been good to us. Our forests not only reflect upon our own stewardship, but also in most cases reflect upon the stewardship of Alabamians and Americans who were here before us.*

*TREASURE Forest means good stewardship, and participating landowners are not only providing for their own needs, but also are concerned about those generations which will follow."*