

MORRIS L. “MAC” MCGOUGH

Morris “Mac” McGough passed away peacefully on January 15, 2011. Mac McGough was the father of community development and the catalyst behind so many of the great pieces of infrastructure we all continue to enjoy to this day including; the WNC Farmers Market, WNC Ag Center, NC Arboretum and the Mountain Research Stations.

The following is the story of how Mac McGough came to call western North Carolina home.

In 1948, George Cecil and Lloyd Langdon traveled to Tupelo, Mississippi to gain an understanding of the agricultural successes in their State’s rural communities.

By November of 1948, Mac McGough with Doane Agricultural Services arrived in Asheville to conduct a Rural Area Study. The purpose of the study was to take a careful and thorough approach in creating an appraisal of the agricultural resources in our area. This study created a plan to bring farmers and businessmen together in pushing forward with the agricultural development of our region.

In February of 1949, over 700 leaders representing, farms, businesses and the State, attended a Chamber of Commerce meeting to hear an explanation of the study and the proposed Rural Development Program at the Asheville City Auditorium. Approval was enthusiastically given and a new movement was underway for further progress in the mountains of North Carolina.

The Asheville Agricultural Development Council was formed and adopted the slogan, “Business, Agriculture and Labor Working Together to Build a Prosperous and Stable Community.” Mac McGough was hired as the manager to implement the plan within the mountains of North Carolina.

The attitude of “you’ll never do anything in rural development unless it comes from the bottom up” was the one adopted when Mac McGough spoke to George Cecil about the Asheville Agricultural Development Council sponsoring the first rural development contest. So, on November 15, 1949 the Council sponsored the Western North Carolina Rural Community Development Contest with \$1,000 in prizes to be given to three top communities. Over 60 years later this program, now called the WNC Honors Awards, is still going strong with over 60 communities participating and over \$22,000 distributed in cash awards.



In the words of Richard Wynne, “Mac McGough should be at or near the top of Western North Carolina’s ‘unforgettable’ list, a visionary who could get things done. Once he decided on a course, he pursued it relentlessly. If the cause got opposition, he met it head-on or circumvented it, depending on the situation.”

WNC Communities’ Board of Directors is pleased to announce the Morris L. “Mac” McGough Endowment has been created to continue Mac’s legacy of work in community development. Gifts to this endowment fund can be mailed to WNC Communities, 594 Brevard Road, Asheville, NC 28806.