

Civil rights icon, Atlanta developer will share stage at Feb. 11 GHS gala

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By [Chuck Mobley](#)

As his 80th birthday nears, former U.N. ambassador, U.S. congressman and Atlanta mayor Andrew Young still maintains a full schedule, but he'll slow down for one weekend next month to visit Savannah and become a member of an exclusive group that dates back to the state's earliest days.

Young and Atlanta real estate and sports franchise mogul Tom Cousins will be inducted as Georgia Trustees on Feb. 11, the crowning event of the annual Georgia History Festival.

These two visionaries "were central to the creation of modern Georgia," said W. Todd Groce, president and CEO of the Georgia Historical Society, which organizes and oversees the festival.

"Of all their accomplishments over their long careers, nothing compares to the courageous stand they took during the 1960s and early '70s to ensure that Georgia would move beyond the deep racial prejudice that had divided our state for generations," Groce said. "They represent the best our state has produced and serve as an example and inspiration for all of us."

The GHS, along with the office of the governor, "is proud" to name Cousins and Young as Georgia Trustees, Groce said. The original trustees were appointed by King George II in 1732 to govern the colony. The title was revived in 2009 as an honorary appellation, and represents an annual opportunity to celebrate the contributions of contemporary Georgians.

Cousins, who once owned the Atlanta Hawks and Atlanta Flames, and whose development portfolio includes the CNN Center, the Omni and the World Congress Center, declined to be interviewed. Young, who frequently travels to the Caribbean and Africa as the chairman of GoodWorks International, spoke in depth about his ties to Georgia during a lengthy, far-ranging phone interview.

Born March 12, 1932, in New Orleans, Young said he moved to Georgia in the mid-1950s to become the pastor of Bethany Congregational Church in Thomasville.

Back then, he often brought young people to a church camp in Liberty County and to Savannah, remembered Young. "It was a great place to teach them Georgia history," said Young.

By the early 1960s, Young himself was helping make history as a leader in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and associate to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Young laughingly recalled one 1963 incident in Savannah. Visiting the city to help out Hosea Williams, another SCLC leader, Young said he noticed a policemen taking a group of young African-Americans into custody.

Young said he told the officer that "if these kids go to jail without an adult there will be trouble." The officer then said, "OK, you can go to jail with them," and loaded everybody into a paddy wagon. Fortunately, they were all eventually released without charges, and it turned out to be a "great experience," Young said.

Years later, as the United States' ambassador to the United Nations, Young helped negotiate the Panama Canal treaty in the late 1970s and saw an opportunity for Savannah.

"It was clear to me," even back then, that the canal would have to be widened and that Savannah would be one of the East Coast ports vying for the larger ships, Young said.

Now, after spending three-quarters of his life in the Peach State, Young said he considers himself a Georgian.

"I've gotten to visit the world, 137 countries in all," he said, "and I haven't found any place I'd rather be than Georgia."

For more info on the Georgia History Festival, call 912-651-2125 or go to www.georgiahistory.com.

IF YOU GO

What: Georgia History Festival Trustees Gala

When: 7 p.m. Feb. 11

Where: Ballroom of the Hyatt Regency Savannah

Details: With a theme of "Savannah Sol," this black-tie event will present an elegant evening of Latin-inspired dinner and dance, and will include the induction of the 2012 Georgia Trustees, Tom Cousins and Andrew Young.

Cost: For Georgia Historical Society members, \$250 a person; for non-members, \$285 a person; reserved tables for 10 start at \$2,750. Reservations are required.

Info: 912-651-2125 or www.georgiahistory.com.

ABOUT GEORGIA TRUSTEES

The original trustees governed the colony of Georgia from 1732 until 1752. In 2009, the Georgia Historical Society reconstituted the title to recognize Georgians whose accomplishments and community service reflect the ideals of the colony's founding principle, Non Sibi, Sed Aliis – "Not for Self, but for Others."

2009 trustees: Bernie Marcus, the late Marguerite Williams

2010 trustees: Hank Aaron, Ted Turner

2011 trustees: Vince Dooley, Sam Nunn

2012 trustees: Tom Cousins, Andrew Young

2012 GEORGIA HISTORY FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

KICKOFF PROGRAM

Ginger Wadsworth speaks about *First Girl Scout: The Life of Juliette Gordon Low*, her youth biography of the founder of the Girl Scouts, and this year's Georgia History Festival nominee.

When: 6 p.m. Feb. 2

Where: Congregation Mickve Israel, on Monterey Square

Admission: Free

COLONIAL FAIRE AND MUSTER

Witness the colonial experience in Georgia through re-enactments, cannon firings, demonstrations of cooking and craft techniques, and music and dance.

When: 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Feb. 4-5

Where: Wormsloe State Historic Site, 7601 Skidaway Road

Admission: Free

SUPER MUSEUM SUNDAY

Visit museums, cultural institutions and other points of interest in Savannah and coastal Georgia for free.

When: Noon-4 p.m. Feb. 5

Where: Go to www.georgiahistory.com for the list of participating institutions, or contact individual sites.

SHUMAN CUP CRICKET TOURNAMENT

A tribute to the favorite sport of the colonial era, this event is open to all Savannah-Chatham County public schools.

When: 9:30 a.m. Feb. 9

Where: Shuman Elementary School, 415 Goebel Ave.

Admission: Free

GEORGIA DAY PARADE

A charming and unique Savannah institution, this colorful procession features hundreds of school children dressed in colonial costumes marching from the north end of Forsyth Park to City Hall.

When: 10:30 a.m. Feb. 10

Admission: Free

276TH ANNIVERSARY OF FORT FREDERICA LIVING HISTORY ENCAMPMENT

A schedule of events and hands-on activities will explain the history and importance of this colonial stronghold.

When: 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Feb. 18

Where: Fort Frederica National Monument on St. Simons Island

Admission: Free

More info: Call 912-638-3639 or go to www.nps.gov/fofr

SCOTTISH HIGHLAND DINNER

An annual event that's held in the barracks at Fort King Georgia Historic Site in Darien.

When: 7 p.m. Feb. 18

Cost: There will be a fee; reservations required.

Information: 912-437-4770

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