

Laurie K. Abbott Fund

Laurie Kimball Abbott was born on August 26, 1928, in Hamlet, North Carolina. He moved with his family to Savannah in 1936. Laurie graduated from Savannah High School in 1946, from Armstrong Junior College in 1948, and from the University of Georgia Law School in 1951.

Laurie married Jane Maud Harty in 1952 and they had five children: Laurie Jr., Anthony Harty, Jenny, John Royce, and Ann Elizabeth.

He began his legal career as a sole practitioner before joining the firm of Stephens and Gignilliat in 1954. It later became Stephens, Gignilliat, and Abbott; then Abbott, Talley, and Abbott; and finally Abbott and Abbott.

In addition to his law practice, Mr. Abbott served in a variety of civic and statewide leadership positions, including the Savannah-Chatham County Zoning Board of Appeals and the Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission. He co-founded the Georgia Southern Area Planning and Development Commission.

His service as chairman of the Ocean Science Center of the Atlantic Commission was instrumental in the creation of the Skidaway Institute of Oceanography and the Georgia Marine Extension Program (both units of the University System of Georgia), and the creation of a center of continuing education in Savannah jointly operated by Armstrong State University and Savannah State University. Mr. Abbott co-chaired the Bridge for Progress Committee that sponsored and passed the Chatham County referendum to build a bridge to Skidaway Island. He founded the Skidaway Marine Science Foundation, and, with Dr. J.W. Fanning, co-founded the Georgia Marine Science Extension Programs in Savannah and Brunswick.

Mr. Abbott also served 29 years, from 1977 until his death, as a board member of the State Property Commission of Georgia, serving under five governors. He was also on the Board of Visitors at the University of Georgia and the UGA Research Foundation.

Mr. Abbott was a longtime supporter of the Georgia Historical Society, serving on the GHS Board of Curators and as president from 2002 to 2004.

Because of his lifelong dedication to the people of Georgia, Mr. Abbott was honored by the Georgia General Assembly for outstanding service in organizing the Marine Science Complex on Skidaway Island. He received the Oglethorpe Trophy for outstanding citizens in Savannah, and was also honored by the US Corps of Engineers for public service.

Mr. Abbott died November 17, 2006, age 78, and is buried in Savannah's Catholic Cemetery.

In 2010, Mrs. Jane Abbott established the Laurie K. Abbott Endowment Fund at the Georgia Historical Society, ensuring that their shared dedication to Georgia history education will continue in perpetuity.