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Communities of
COASTAL GEORGIA FOUNDATION

HANDS-ON
AND HEARTS OPEN

by Valerie Hepburn, President & CEO Communities of Coastal Georgia Foundation

Ada Lee and Pete Correll met at the University of Georgia, and married in the early 1960s. Each had experienced loss; their fathers died when they were just pre-teens. Born in Brunswick, an only child, Pete was raised by his mother, Elizabeth. The Corrells owned a small men’s store in downtown Brunswick and Pete worked there every day after school. Ada Lee was raised in Swainsboro, and her mother, Sudie Fulford, was a highly respected school teacher and community volunteer. Their mothers’ tenacity, hard work and unflagging spirits became the fiber and foundation for the Corrells’ lifelong commitment to service and stewardship.

During their careers, the Corrells had been charitable in their communities, particularly in Atlanta, but they would not have considered themselves philanthropists. They gave to the causes of others, but nothing that was really theirs. Finding themselves with significant proceeds from the sale of Pete’s business, Georgia Pacific, they formed The Correll Family Foundation and seized the opportunity to become transformative philanthropists.

The Corrells are particularly engaged in supporting impactful projects in their home communities because they know “the need is great,

the resources are limited and the investments go so much farther.” Shaped by their life experiences, much of their philanthropy has focused on youth and education. The Elizabeth F. Correll Teen Center of the Boys and Girls Club of Southeast Georgia was another early project, which has attracted support and commendation from around the community and country. The Center, named in honor of Pete’s mother, serves hundreds of teens every week with a host of academic, arts and athletic programs all designed to foster knowledge, resilience and long-term success.

Honoring Ada Lee’s mother, the Sudie A. Fulford Community Learning Center and Planetarium, built at East Georgia State College, has become a treasured educational and cultural hub for the college and the community in and around Swainsboro. The Corrells recently have initiated a scholarship program at East Georgia State College, with the goal of recruiting and retaining exceptional college students within that community.

In 2012, their commitment to teacher education and public service connected them to the transforming campus at the College of Coastal Georgia. The best-in-class Correll Center for Teacher Education and Learning now supports future teachers as well as students across

the campus engaged in service learning and various academic support programs. Another top-flight education project, Correll Hall at the Terry College of Business at The University of Georgia, will open for classes in fall 2015.

Following brushes with their own mortality, the Corrells have become passionate health care advocates and supporters. Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta now stands as one of the nation's shining examples of inner city, public hospital transformation. Pete has chaired the hospital's corporate board since its restructuring in the mid-2000s, and Ada Lee is vice-chair of the Grady Health Foundation. Emory University's School of Medicine has benefitted from significant faculty and facility support from the Corrells and, in 2013, the Correll Cardiac Center opened its doors.

The list of the Corrells philanthropic endeavors – game-changing and forward-focused – is nearly boundless and always impactful, from saving Cannon's Point to supporting arts education through Young Audiences. Last month, the Correll Scholars Program was formed with The Communities of Coastal Georgia Foundation to support Glynn County youth at the Elizabeth F. Cor-

rell Teen Center in college and career post-secondary education.

For their tireless commitment to achievement and excellence, the Corrells have been honored with every possible business and humanitarian award – from the national Paschal Murray Award for Outstanding Philanthropists to Georgia Trend's Most Respected

Business Leader. Their approach to philanthropy provides them with total engagement and considerable enjoyment, because they have their hands in the process and they know they are making a difference. In Southeast Georgia where their lives began, they are steadfast in their efforts to improve communities and the lives of young people, with the same determination and optimism ingrained in them by their beloved mothers, Elizabeth and Sudie.

In April, A. D. "Pete" Correll will be the featured speaker at the Coastal Georgia Philanthropy Summit, the Communities of Coastal Georgia Foundation's 10th Anniversary Celebration. At the event, the Foundation will announce the formation of Coastal Georgia Partners in Philanthropy, which

Pete will chair, with the goal of bringing colleagues together to consider ways to strengthen area communities through engaged and impactful philanthropy.



TOP: College of Coastal Georgia Student Austin Gleaton sits in the Correll Center for Teacher Educating and Learning preparing his notes as a supplemental instructor (Photo: John Cornell); **MIDDLE/ABOVE:** Elizabeth Correll Teen Center exterior and interior (Photos: Dayton Austin).

