



Communities of COASTAL GEORGIA FOUNDATION

A GIVING SPIRIT *that* LIVES ON

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

You may see her name gracing a building or a structure, but for those of us who aren't long-time residents, we missed the chance to know a really fine person. And, that's a shame. Julia Terrill Thomas, known as Terry to her many friends, was a great force of life and she remains one of the most influential philanthropists in the Golden Isles.

Terry Thomas was born into a successful Northeastern industrial family and she worked in significant roles with the

family firm and a leading brand design firm in New York. In 1958, she joined her family on a vacation to The Cloister at Sea Island - and she never left. An avid athlete and sportswoman, Terry found Sea Island to be an ideal blend of natural beauty, collegial engagement and warm informality.

Though her means would have allowed her a life of tennis and golf, her work ethic would not. So, Terry found a way to blend her avocations with a demanding career, as the Activities Director for Sea Island Company. Over her (*continues*)



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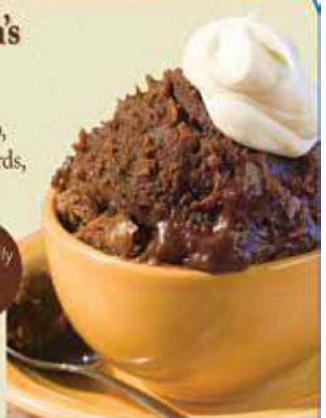
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many years at Sea Island, she organized every type of event and worked with residents and guests of all ages and interests. In 1974, the company recognized her with the Sea Island Spirit Award.

Terry found her true passion in the mid-1970s, when she began her work with community organizations and personally experienced that “giving truly was better than receiving.” She had always planned to leave a legacy of giving through her estate, but she decided to begin

her charitable work while she was still alive and could really enjoy it. The then-Boys Club of Glynn (now, Boys and Girls Club of Southeast Georgia) launched her journey of civic engagement. The Terrill Thomas Unit located in the heart of Brunswick remains the largest club operated by the agency.

Terry became involved with the Foundation of the then-Coastal Georgia Community College (now, College of Coastal Georgia). Several named scholarship programs and the Terrill



Terry Thomas once said her utopia would be “a world wherein everyone is honest, free, secure and happy – wherein every creature is cherished – wherein everyone lives by the Golden Rule.”

Thomas Auditorium in the Southeast Georgia Conference Center salute her many contributions and lasting impact.

Terry became an active member of the Board and the Foundation of the then-YWCA (now, YMCA) and provided the critical resources to make their current facility a reality. She also helped organize and seed the first foundation for the Southeast Georgia Health System. And, the list goes on...the American Heart Association, Salvation Army, MAP International,

Hospice of the Golden Isles, Coastal Georgia Historical Society, and many others. Her love for dogs ensured that Terry was a great supporter of – and regular adoptive parent for – the Humane Society of South Coastal Georgia!

Though Terry passed away in October 2011, through The Julia Terrill Thomas Foundation her philanthropic spirit lives and continues to touch programs of merit and significance across the Golden Isles. The Foundation has provided grant funding to the St. Simons Land Trust to help establish

field research and educational programming at Cannon’s Point. And, most recently, Frederica Academy celebrated the grant opening of the fabulous new Terry Thomas Playground.

Terry Thomas once said her utopia would be “a world wherein everyone is honest, free, secure and happy – wherein every creature is cherished – wherein everyone lives by the Golden Rule.” In life, and now through The Julia Terrill Thomas Foundation, she continues to seed and grow her utopia across these Golden Isles.



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