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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Bill Jones III of Sea Island elected Chairman along with other officers and board members at the GHS 169<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting**

**Savannah, GA - May, 9, 2008:** The 169<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the membership was a flurry of activity for the Georgia Historical Society as Bill Jones III of Sea Island was elected Chairman of the Board of Curators along with three other new officers and three new board members. "Bill Jones is one of Georgia's most distinguished businessmen and philanthropists," said GHS President and CEO, Dr. W. Todd Groce. "I am excited about the leadership he will bring as board chairman."

Over 110 people attended the business meeting and subsequent Garden Party. Three new members were elected to the Society's Board of Curators and four elected to office. Bill Jones III of Sea Island was elected Chairman; Robert Brown, Jr. of Decatur Vice Chairman; John Helmken II of Savannah Treasurer; and Shell Knox of Augusta Secretary. In addition, Chris Humes of Savannah, Commissioner of Labor Michael Thurmond of Atlanta, and Mark Smith of Savannah were each elected to the board and will each begin serving their first 3 year term while Jimmy Blanchard of Columbus and Atlantans Phil Jacobs and John Wallace were re-elected to serve an additional 3 year term.

"With more than half of the Board of Curators hailing from outside of Savannah, we have truly achieved a state-wide presence. The high profile and diversity of the board members undoubtedly makes this one of the strongest boards in the state of Georgia. The Georgia Historical Society has always had the board makeup necessary to meet the organization's needs at the time. I am confident that this board will be able to meet the current challenges and opportunities facing GHS to ensure the continued growth of Georgia's historical society."

Mr. Jones is chairman and chief executive officer of the Sea Island Co. and served as the host for the G8 Summit that brought President George W. Bush and other world leaders to the 2005 meeting on Georgia's coast. He is a charter member of Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue's Commission for a New Georgia, serves as a director for the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, and is a trustee for The Nature Conservancy of Georgia. A former chairman of the Georgia Ports Authority, Jones is a trustee and past chairman of the Georgia Research Alliance, and is a director for Synovus Financial Corp. and Total Systems Services Inc. He was named "Georgian of the Year" in 2004 by *Georgia Trend* magazine and was the 2003 regional winner of the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award for Principled Leadership. In 1994, he received the Freedom Award from the Brunswick, Ga., branch of the NAACP.

Mr. Brown is president and CEO of R.L. Brown & Associates, one of Georgia's most highly recognized and respected architectural firms. He has been honored as "Small Business Person of the Year" by the Metro Atlanta Chamber, "Entrepreneur of the Year" by the Atlanta Business League and was recognized by *Georgia Trend* magazine as one of the state's 100 Most Influential Citizens,

Mr. Helmken is the president and chief executive officer of The Savannah Bancorp, Inc. and serves on the board of directors for both The Savannah Bancorp and The Savannah Bank. He is a graduate of Leadership Savannah and Leadership Georgia, and is past president of the Downtown Savannah Rotary Club. He received a BA in Finance from the University of Georgia.

Mrs. Knox holds a BS degree in Special Education from the University of Georgia. She currently serves on the board of the Georgia Writers Hall of Fame, Georgia Appleseed, The Nature Conservancy of Georgia, The Georgia Museum of Art, and The Greater Central Savannah River Area Community Foundation. She is also a member of The Junior League and Colonial Dames.

Chris Humes is the General Manager of the Elba Island Terminal of Southern LNG. A native of Oklahoma, he received his BE in Chemical Engineering from Oklahoma State. He is involved in many community activities including the Rotary Club of Savannah. Mark Smith is the owner of Mulberry Inn and South Atlantic Utilities where he serves as managing hotel partner and chief executive officer, respectively. A graduate of Georgia Tech, Mr. Smith is also currently Chairman of the Georgia International Trade Center. Michael Thurmond is the current Commissioner of Labor for the state of Georgia. In 1986 he was the first African-American elected to the Georgia General Assembly from Clarke County since Reconstruction. He was elected Labor Commissioner in November of 1998 and was re-elected in 2002 and in 2006.

*The Georgia Historical Society, headquartered in Savannah, is the oldest cultural institution in the state and one of the oldest historical organizations in the nation. It is the first and only statewide historical society in Georgia. For nearly 175 years, GHS has collected, preserved, and shared Georgia history through a variety of dynamic educational outreach programs, publications, and research services. For more information visit: [www.georgiahistory.com](http://www.georgiahistory.com).*

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