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GOVERNOR AND GEORGIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY TO NAME FIRST NEW GEORGIA TRUSTEES IN 260 YEARS

Savannah, GA—December 19, 2008. The Office of the Governor and the Georgia Historical Society (GHS) will honor Atlantian Bernard Marcus and the late Marguerite Neel Williams, of Thomasville, as new Georgia Trustees at the Society's Georgia Days Birthday Bash and Annual Awards Gala, in Savannah, **Saturday, February 14, 2009, 7:00 p.m.** Mr. Marcus and Ms. Williams will be the first Georgians in 260 years to receive this honor, which recognizes their profound commitment to philanthropy and service in their communities and throughout the state.

"We are pleased to begin this ongoing partnership with the Governor's office to honor distinguished Georgians," said Phil Jacobs, a member of the Board of Curators of the Georgia Historical Society, in making the announcement. "In being named new Georgia Trustees, Mr. Marcus and Ms. Williams are the inaugural recipients of what is now, by gubernatorial executive order, the highest honor Georgia can bestow on its citizens."

The Governor's Office, in partnership with the Georgia Historical Society, has reconstituted the Georgia Trustees, a governing body originally chartered and appointed by His Majesty King George II of England in 1732 to establish a new colony in North America. Between 1732 and 1749, seventy-one leading Englishmen served as Georgia Trustees. The original Georgia Trustees founded the Georgia colony upon the principle of *Non Sibi, Sed Aliis*, "Not for Self but for Others" and through their vision and philanthropy they established and governed the colony until their disbandment in 1752 when Georgia became a royal colony. Each year, the Governor will annually appoint new Trustees whose history-making accomplishments and service reflect the original Trustees' ideals.

The newly re-instated title is meant to recognize and honor those "whose accomplishments and leadership in their fields, communities, and state, and whose character and commitment to service, reflects and carries on the highest ideals of the distinguished body known as the Georgia Trustees," says Dr. W. Todd Groce, president and CEO of the Georgia Historical Society, the oldest cultural institution in the state, and one of the oldest historical societies in the country. "Designees must reflect in their accomplishments and life a commitment to service embodied in the motto of the original Georgia Trustees: '*Non Sibi, Sed Aliis* – Not for Self, but For Others.'"

The names of the new Trustees will be placed on the roll with the original Trustees from 1732 and they will be inducted by the Governor at the Georgia Historical Society's annual *Georgia Days* Birthday Bash and Awards Gala in Savannah on the site of the founding of the Colony of Georgia. This highly-anticipated event will take place on the Riverfront in Downtown Savannah, at the Hyatt Regency, and will include dinner, dancing, and a keynote address featuring Washington political insiders **James Carville** and **Mary Matalin**. The Gala will conclude two weeks of educational events designed to bring history to life for Georgia's schoolchildren.

Bernard Marcus is co-founder of The Home Depot, Inc., an innovative Georgia company that revolutionized the home improvement business with its warehouse concept. He served as chairman of the board until his retirement in 2002. He remains director emeritus, and is Chairman of The Marcus Foundation. While perhaps best known for his generous support for the Georgia Aquarium and Georgia Tech's nanotechnology center, Marcus and his wife Billi, through The Marcus Institute at Emory University, have championed the cause for children and adolescents with neurological disorders including autism, cerebral palsy, developmental delay, behavioral disorders, and fetal alcohol syndrome. In 2005, they received the Salvation Army's highest honor – the Others Award for their efforts. Recently, Marcus created Project Share in conjunction with Atlanta's famed Shepherd Center under which he has pledged to underwrite the costs of treatment, housing, and transportation for any U.S. soldier who has incurred brain and spinal injuries in Iraq or Afghanistan, a humanitarian act for which he received the USO's 2008 Patriot Award. In September 2008, The Marcus Institute joined forces with Children's Healthcare of Atlanta to create the Marcus Autism Center, which will offer expanded services for children with autism.

Marguerite Neel Williams' advocacy for historic preservation ensured the survival of many landmarks throughout the state, and her civic activism created a safe space for the children of Thomasville. Throughout her life she provided leadership for civic, political, and educational organizations throughout Georgia.

Marguerite Neel Williams (1917 – 1999) was a tireless, lifetime supporter of history, historic preservation, and education in Georgia. She was a member of Thomasville Landmarks and founded several groups dedicated to preservation, including the Thomasville Genealogical History and Fine Arts Library, the Thomasville Cultural Center, and the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation. She was a member of the Board of Curators of the Georgia Historical Society and was instrumental in helping that institution to grow its capacity. In her hometown of Thomasville, she was instrumental in the restoration and preservation of the Thomasville Cultural Center, the Neel House, and All Saints Episcopal Church. A passionate advocate for education and the arts, Mrs. Williams served as a member of the University of Georgia President's Club and as an advisor for the Georgia Business Committee for the Arts, the Georgia Fine Arts Academy, and the Fine Arts Committee for the U.S. State Department. Her civic activism further included the founding of the Community Foundation of Southwest Georgia and the Boys' and Girls' Clubs of Thomas County, which bears her name.

For more information about the Georgia Trustees, *Georgia Days*, or the GHS Birthday Bash and Annual Awards Gala, please visit www.georgiahistory.com or call 912.651.2125.

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 educational outreach programs, publications, and research services. For more information visit:

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