

Naming honor richly deserved

Official's contribution extends beyond roads

By EMORY MORSBERGER

It was an incredibly fortuitous day for Gwinnett County when Wayne Shackelford was transferred from Haralson County to the Gwinnett County Cooperative Extension Service in 1960. Whether serving as county extension agent, Com-



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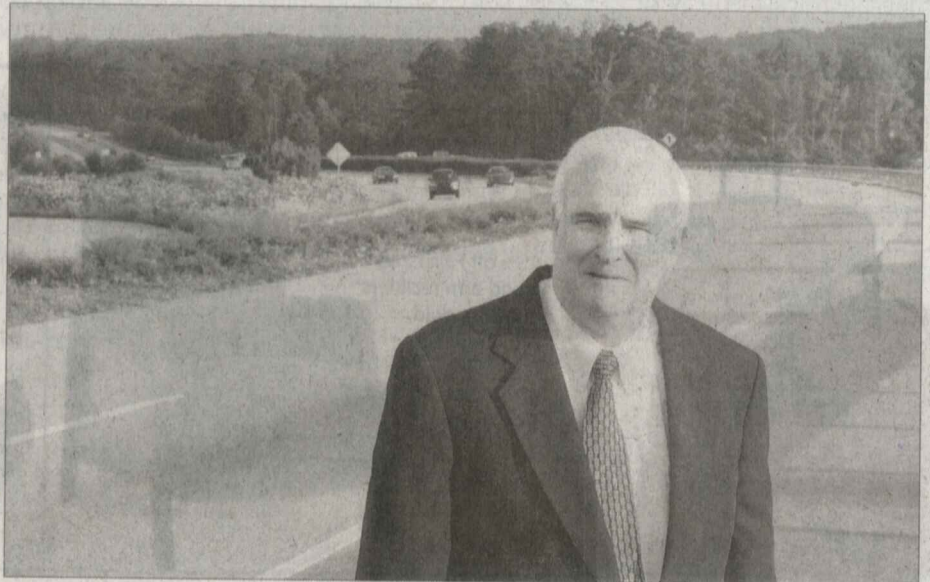
missioner of the Georgia Department of Transportation, in private real estate, or in a volunteer position, Shack, as he is affectionately known to his friends, has served his county, his state and his nation in an exemplary fashion.

On Thursday, the Georgia Department of Transportation honored this giant of a man by naming the newly constructed I-85/Ga. 316

connector the Wayne Shackelford Interchange. I know of no one who more richly deserves such a distinction.

Our friend grew up the son of a sharecropper in Carroll County and as a child, plowed with a mule. His high IQ and insatiable thirst for knowledge ensured that his family's history of sharecropping would end with him. After graduating from high school, he went to Berry College, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture. He then continued his education with graduate studies at the University of Georgia.

His decade of work with the Gwinnett Commission in the '70s and '80s resulted in a future that guaranteed public safety



Wayne Shackelford, former director of the Georgia Department of Transportation, has his name on the I-85/Ga. 316 connector, an honor for his years of road system service.

BITA HONARVAR / 2000 photo

buildings and infrastructure for water, sewer, and streets. These insightful plans made it possible for us to have the quality of life we enjoy today.

Shack then served as Georgia DOT commissioner in the '90s, where he did a phenomenal job serving not just Gwinnett but the entire state. He was president of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials and chaired the board of directors of the Intelligent Transportation Society of America.

Though Shack has made sure we have an excellent system of roads in Georgia, he is not simply a road guy. He is a transportation guy and understands all aspects of how different modes of transportation can benefit everyone. In that regard, he is recognized for his interest in multimodal and intermodal transportation issues.

Although Shack presently has some

health challenges, he still is working with a planning and engineering firm and takes several days a week to work on numerous volunteer projects. Personally, Shack has been like a father to me. He is the brains behind the proposed Brain Train from Atlanta to Athens.

I think it is significant that from Thursday forward, when thousands of people drive to and from I-85 and Ga. 316 on a daily basis, they will see his name on the interchange and be reminded of his years of service. I only wish that each and every driver and passenger could fully understand the substantial, unselfish and unending contributions Shackelford has made, not just to the transportation system locally and nationally, but to his community in ways too numerous to count.

Georgia will never have a better friend and neighbor.

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