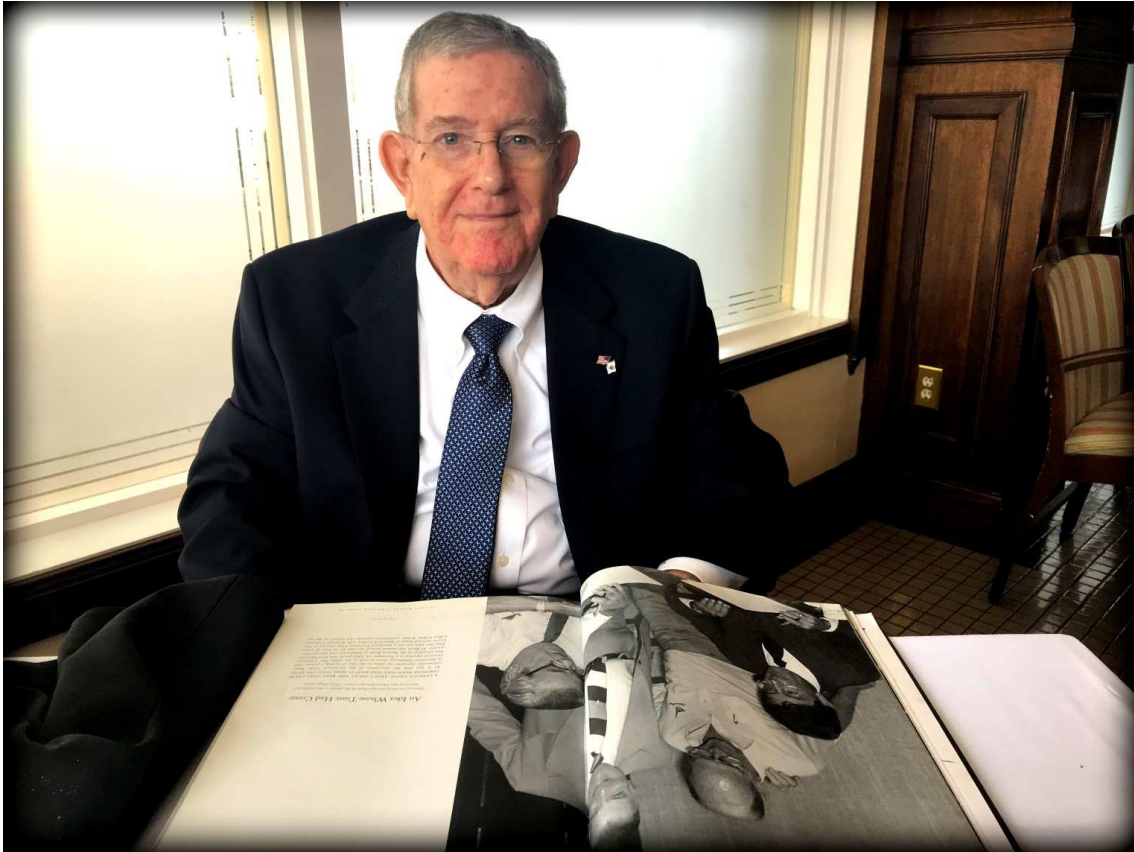


RECOLLECTIONS AND REFLECTIONS ON THE ORGANIZING  
AND  
EVENTUAL OPENING OF THE GOVERNORS CLUB



As I best remember I was initially contacted by Stan Tait sometime in 1980. He indicated that a group was forming to try to put together a private club to be located in downtown Tallahassee that would rival some of the more famous clubs of such nature around the country. I was at that time Chairman of the Board of the Tallahassee Area Chamber of Commerce and also General Counsel to the Tallahassee Downtown Improvement Authority.

He suggested that I should be part of the group given my interest in Tallahassee and its future and my relationship with many of the “movers and shakers” that might be potential members. Tallahassee at that time did not have any really nice places to have a “business meeting lunch or dinner” other than the two golf clubs and the Silver Slipper. These entities were quite a bit away from the downtown area and the Capitol and legislative and government bodies. It was thought that business people who frequented the downtown area and had relationships there would welcome such an establishment and would make great use of it.

Stan was talking about something a bit more upscale than facilities then available in the downtown area and something that would attract couples and families to come, especially in the evening hours. As I recall a number of persons had already been contacted and expressed a sincere interest in such an endeavor. These included Bill Horne who had experience in management of such an enterprise, Jon Shebel one of the foremost lobbyist at that time (may still be), Jack Madigan a prominent lawyer and lobbyist, Fred Baggett also a lawyer and lobbyist, Kinney Harley who was head of the Florida Builders Association and Fred McCord a senior officer at Barnett Bank. As my memory

serves me at least half of these had also served on the Board of the Tallahassee Downtown Improvement Authority.

The reception to the idea was tremendous and it became apparent that the need was there and a legal organization would need to be created. This was done at a general meeting of those who had signed up to be members, and was held in the Board Room of the then Lewis State Bank on Monroe Street. I was particularly honored when I was nominated for President by former Governor Leroy Collins. My father had served as Leon County's representative in the Florida Legislature along with Governor Collins as the county's Senator the year I was born. I still have memories of Sunday fried chicken dinners at the Grove with the Collin's family.

It became even more nostalgic when we were able to secure the leases on the Masonic Lodge and the I.O.O.F. Lodge on Adams Street as the site of the Club. Although he had not been active in either to my knowledge during my childhood years my father had also been a member of both organizations. All the spaces we were able to secure were upstairs above a florist shop and a camera shop. That did not take away from the ambiance at all for me but even added to it as you had to negotiate stairs or an elevator to get to the club's space at that time.

Things moved at a rapid pace from then on with new members being signed up, plans for remodeling being created and financing lined up. The initial opening gala was probably the most formal affair that I can remember in Tallahassee other than some weddings and Governor's inauguration. The décor was the finest I had seen in town, the beverages were outstanding and the food was like nothing I had experienced in Tallahassee in my life. During the Kirk Administration I served as General Counsel to the Florida Hotel and Restaurant Commission and as such along with the Commissioner I had eaten at some of the finest and most upscale restaurants in Central Florida and in the Miami area during that service. The ambiance and service topped anything I had experienced during those trips. Having a sweet tooth I was particularly fond of what I called the orange cake.

I truly don't believe we had any obstacles as such during the formation and organization of the Club. Although we had some difficulty with the selection of the Board of Directors to serve once we were open it was handled professionally and courteously by all concerned.

I was always impressed with both the service and the food when I was able to avail myself of the Club. I regret my personal situation did not allow me to continue to be a member for as long as I would have liked but have very fond memories of the whole endeavor. I was very impressed by the improvements that have been made over the years during my visit this month.

I am proud of my association with the Club and what it has contributed to what I still consider as my hometown. I was particularly pleased to see Barry Shields on my visit as I have been friends with his family for many years and he actually lived on the same street with my family during the late sixties.

W. Taylor Moore  
Hartwell, Georgia  
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