

A MEMORIAL TO A DEDICATED FRIEND

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Visitors to George W. Pirtle Scout Reservation will be greeted with a new memorial dedicated to an East Texas forester and friend of Scouting. A bronze plaque explains that the newly established 37-acre forest south of COPE honors Mr. Joseph Brady Wadsworth, “Mr. Brady” to his friends and associates.

Mr. Brady understood that reforesting after a timber harvest is vital to the future of Texas’ forests. Realizing that little replanting was occurring on private forestlands, he and other forestry leaders founded the Texas Reforestation Foundation, also known as TRe. Its purpose is to provide private landowners with incentives to invest in forests for Texas’ future. Unique in that its funds come entirely from private contributions, the 24-year old foundation was the first and is still the only privately supported tree-planting program of its kind in the United States.

His widow, Mrs. Daisy Wadsworth, said that in his youth growing up on a turpentine plantation near Bunnell, Florida, Mr. Brady developed a passion for trees as a natural resource. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps during World War II and was seriously wounded at Guadalcanal while protecting his fellow soldiers from an enemy attack. On returning home, he married Miss Daisy, ran his own pulpwood operation, and graduated from the University of Florida with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Forestry.

In 1969 he accepted a job as General Manager of Wood Procurement with Southland Paper Mills in Lufkin and moved his family to East Texas. He retired as Regional Manager of Woodland Operations from St. Regis Paper Co., which had purchased the mill and its forests in the mid 1970’s. Mr. Brady at one time served as President of the Texas Forestry Association (TFA). Ron Hufford, Executive Vice-President of TFA said, “Brady had a passion for planting trees and wanted the public to understand that trees are a renewable resource and that with incentives we can grow our future forests.”

When I met Mr. Brady he was a Vice-President at the papermill and I was just a “pup” forester in my first job with another company in Lufkin. Searching for words that describe how I felt about him, I’d have to say, “He was a formidable man.” After all, here was a man of great stature who, as a Marine had served his nation valiantly in World War II, had run his own pulpwood business, was a vice-president of one of East Texas’ most important companies, and was the beloved patriarch of a large, close-knit family. I’m still in awe of him.

Mr. Brady died in late 2002. When it was time to plant the recently harvested forest at Camp Pirtle, ETAC’s Forest Stewardship Committee approached TFA about dedicating that area as a memorial to a true friend of forestry. Ron Hufford immediately suggested that TRe, along with contributions made in Mr. Brady’s memory, might fund a portion of the costs of reforestation and of building a suitable memorial kiosk. Seven months after it was harvested, GWP’s newest forest was planted with 27,100 pine seedlings.

The Texas Forestry Association, TRe, International Paper Company, the Texas Forest Service, Mr. Steve

Dean of Gilmer, Cassity-Jones Lumber Company of Longview, and other private donors provided seedlings, funds, and building materials for the memorial. The Arthur Temple College of Forestry provided educational posters for the kiosk and the GWP Forest Stewardship Committee, along with Ron Hufford, gave leadership to that important project. On May 11, 2004, family, colleagues, and friends of Mr. Joseph Brady Wadsworth met at GWP to dedicate the memorial forest and kiosk to his memory.

When you go to Camp Pirtle, you are invited to visit the memorial kiosk, located across the road from the dining hall and read its plaques and posters. Just a short hike through the camp, about ½ mile from the kiosk and south of the COPE course, you can see the beginnings of the new forest. It's true that Mr. Brady wanted people to plant more trees, but, just as much, he wanted people to learn about, understand, and cherish the many values of the renewable forest.

At the May 11 dedication ceremony, Mrs. Wadsworth said that Brady's mind was never at rest or far from what needed to be done to protect our vital resources. She told the group that when they lived in Georgia he enjoyed working with the Scouts – especially on the campouts. “He always said that seeing trees planted and growing reminded him of young people and life,” she said. “How fitting to have this dedication at the George W. Pirtle Scout Camp in Panola County.”