

## HONORARY LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP TOUCHDOWN CLUB OF ATLANTA



The Honorable Richard (Rick) P. McCully, recently retired, esteemed United States Administrative Law Judge, becomes only the 32nd person in the 84-year history of the Touchdown Club of Atlanta to receive this coveted recognition, afforded only to individuals whose decades of dedication and contributions to the organization were considered above and beyond in the truest sense of the term for their commitment to the great game of football.

Some of the previous recipients of this special recognition includes names such as Bobby Dodd and Bill Curry of Georgia Tech, Vince Donley and Wally Butts of Georgia, Erk Russell of Georgia Southern and Frank Howard of Clemson, legendary coaches, sportswriters Furman Bisher, Jesse Outlar, Ed Miles and Charlie Roberts, and such dedicated club members as John F. McMullan, Lee Baker, Rudy Lumpkin and George Matthews, as well as such luminaries as Loran Smith and sportscasters Art Eekman and Verne Lundquist. Of that group of less than three dozen, only 11 are alive at this time.

Judge McCully spent more than a quarter of a century involved in the functioning of the TD Club of Atlanta. He moved to Atlanta in 1994, when he was appointed a U.S. judge in the Northern District of Georgia. He had been an officer and president of the University of Miami Broward County (FL) Hurricane Club and had experienced the aura of three national championships of that collegiate gridiron powerhouse. To illustrate the respect that Judge McCully commanded from the University of Miami, in 1998, he became only the fifth "Honorary Alumnus" ever honored by the university. In 2004, he was singled out by Miami's Iron Arrow Society and presented that organization's highest tribute.

Through an article that he read in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, he contacted the club's executive director, D. L. Claborn, who had attended the University of Miami briefly on a scholarship in his youth, and a bond was formed that greatly benefited the TD Club of Atlanta, as the "Judge," as he became known to everyone, became Claborn's "unofficial" assistant, designating the luncheon head table, delivering the speaker's honorarium, and helping to bring in such big-name speakers from Miami as Coach Butch Davis, Coach Larry Coker and UM Athletic Director Blake James.

Around 2003, Judge McCully was elected to the TCA board of directors and served in every officer position except treasurer, culminating in service as president in 2007. When Lee Baker succeeded Claborn as executive director, the judge continued to help him with luncheon set ups and various other items of business that needed to be addressed on a weekly basis. Unlike many of the past presidents, once his time as president expired, Judge McCully stayed active in the club. He was elected as chairman of the board and serviced in that capacity for a number of years.

McCully's life has been one of dedicated service in each facet of his life at the time. For example, in 2010, he was the commencement speaker for Howe Military Academy, where he attended before joining the U.S. Navy in 1960, where he served two years active duty stateside. He joined the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary in 1972 and is about to complete 50 years as a certified coxswain. He still performs safety patrols and search and rescue patrols on Lake Lanier, GA. In 2018, McCully, '65 Memphis graduate, was awarded the The Highest Effort award from Sigma Alpha Epsilon, in recognition for his 61 years of effort and achievement, both in supporting and advancing the ideals and principals of that organization, but as well his achievements in his professional and service life.

Three fellow honorary lifetime members -- McMullan, Baker and Tony McIntyre -- of the club, along with the club's latest president, Tyler Caswell, offered their insight as to the judge's contributions to the club. Said McMullan, "Rick McCully was greatly appreciated for his long-standing commitment to the club, his work behind the scenes, and for being a passionate football fan, especially for the Miami Hurricanes. All honor to his name." "When I first got involved with the TCA, the Judge was the first person I took note of. He ran the meetings. He kept us on track. He knew the bylaws. He understood the history of the club and always made sure we were honoring our history," Caswell recalled. "Frankly, his leadership was critical at that time, as we transitioned into this new era. He bridged the gap from old to new. His passion and commitment to TCA was invaluable. He ranks up there as one of the most important figures in the wonderful history of the TCA." Said Baker, "Rick McCully's contributions to the Touchdown Club of Atlanta over the years as president and board member have enabled the club to continue its long-standing mission of promoting the benefits of what football does in developing young men both on and off the field. His commitment of time and devotion to the club went far beyond just being a member, and I am elated that he is being recognized at this time in such a positive and well-earned manner." "In various facets of life there are so-called 'work horses' and 'show horses,' said McIntyre. "The judge, to me, epitomized the 'work horse.' He was there at every function to do what it took to make the activity take place in an organized and first-class manner. He was a 'chief' who did not mind being one of the 'Indians.' There was a job to do and he was ready and willing to do whatever it took to make certain that each function took place in a manner befitting our organization. First and foremost, I always appreciated being associated with him because as long as he was part of the club, it would be run with class and distinction."