



A Heartfelt Dedication...

Dr. J. Robert McClure **PRESIDENT & CEO**

The JMI Journal is typically published in hardback annually. So, it has been a while since our last edition. I would be remiss if I didn't share that during the interim a great friend of the Institute passed away, George Gibbs. George led a magnificent life, believed completely in the mission of JMI and was part of a small group of board members who decided to hire me 17 years ago. I remember driving

from Tallahassee to Jacksonville early on for a meeting with George and I was late because I had gotten a speeding ticket. Typically, a man of few words, all he said was "Well, I bet that was expensive."

George, and his lovely wife Ann, who still spends her time with friends, family and her favorite causes have been supporters of the Institute for over two decades. Kind, generous, smart and devoted to one another

and to the cause of freedom, I will always be grateful to what they've meant to me both personally and professionally.

George Gibbs descended from a long line of Jacksonville natives and shipbuilders. He was immersed in the industry from an early age, working for his father's and grandfather's shipyard and shipbuilding companies.

Both companies, Atlantic Marine and Atlantic Dry Dock, provided critical industrial infrastructure to downtown Jacksonville, Mayport and Fort George Island.

At the age of 27, George followed his dream of forming his own shipyard, Atlantic Marine.

During its early years, Atlantic Marine mainly built steel-hulled fishing boats. As the company grew, Atlantic Marine expanded its capability and expertise to include aluminum patrol and steel research vessels, tugboats, ferries and supply boats.

Notably, the company was one of the first shipyards in the country to build casino boats. The company also built two shuttle-booster retrieval ships for NASA — the Liberty Star and the Freedom Star.

In 1966, George expanded the business to include Atlantic Dry Dock, as he sought to provide the best in ship repair and conversion. Atlantic Dry Dock performed hundreds of overhauls on U.S. Navy vessels ranging from small minesweepers to mighty aircraft carriers, including the USS Forrestal and USS Saratoga. George's work culminated in the largest reconstruction job ever performed outside a Navy shipyard on the USS Kennedy.

Following the successful conversion

of the Miami yacht, The Floridian, the mega-yacht world discovered Atlantic Dry Dock, which led to many other successful overhauls.

With his sharp business acumen, George continued to expand his shipyard business in 1990 by acquiring a shipyard facility in Mobile, AL. Under George's leadership, the new construction shipyard greatly expanded their services by adding an 853-foot dry dock capable of lifting 40,000 tons. This addition enabled the company to work on some of the largest ships in the world such as Royal Caribbean's Monarch of the Seas and Carnival's Imagination.

Under his quiet and strategic leadership, his companies became highly successful, all while becoming globally recognized for their careful consideration of each customer's time schedule and budget considerations.

In total, Atlantic Marine built 350+ new construction vessels for businesses all over the world. During Atlantic Marine's peak, the two locations had over 3,000 employees.

In addition to his own business enterprises, he was deeply involved in Jacksonville's business and civic community. In 1982, he served as the Vice-President of Business and Industry for the Chamber of Commerce, and later served on the boards of Jacksonville Federal Reserve, The James Madison Institute and the Episcopal School of Jacksonville. George never took for granted the business environment that allowed him to create his own success through his entrepreneurial endeavors and firmly believed in maintaining these opportunities for generations to come. He believed in and

lived out the principles of free markets, property rights and personal responsibility.

Serving on The James Madison Institute Board of Directors for 18 years, George supported several organizations that upheld his belief that the free-market system must be preserved and that the government that “governs least, governs best.”

In addition to spending his workdays around boats, George’s favorite past-time activities always involved being close to the water. He was an avid sailor his entire life and owned many sailboats and trawler boats. While he explored many areas via sailboat, he was always drawn to cruising

the Bahamas and the British Virgin Islands.

Before passing, George committed a Legacy Society gift to The James Madison Institute.

By making a planned gift, George joined the distinguished few that have made the decision to join JMI’s Legacy Society.

I am truly grateful to George and Ann for their commitment to JMI over the last two decades. The Institute has lost a friend and I have lost a mentor. However, there is no doubt that George’s memory will live on through his generous Legacy gift in defense of the principles we shared.