Dear AYC Alumni,

Who can name the young man in this picture with Coach Mike circa early 1970’s? Hint...he attended Alumni Day this summer. Yes, it’s none other than Hal Heninger! Hal and the spirit of Coach Mike were present along with Jimbo Laboon (Dad and son), Frank Hodges, Hank & Mark Williams, Mitch and Mike Malcolm, Jim & John Summers, Terry Wingfield Sr. & Jr. and hundreds more who joined us over the weekend. The Lodge was packed for Sunday’s guest speaker, former Y Camp nurse and UGA cheerleader Pam Norman. Pam delivered a heartfelt and moving talk about her time at Y Camp and UGA and the incredibly positive influence Coach Mike and Y Camp both had on her formative years. Pam truly showed the “Y Camp Spirit”! Thank you Pam! I was also able to share with Pam the good news that my mysterious illness which plagued me all summer during her first year as Y Camp Nurse was miraculously healed soon after camp ended.

Alumni Weekend has become a great weekend to hang out at Camp or just get away with your spouse (or away from as the case may be?). You can stay at Camp for the weekend or at the surrounding lake hotels. Many fun activities await you such as golfing, boating, and hiking just to name a few. You can also spend time exploring the famous Y Camp Cove, the Tiger Drive-In, antique shops in Clarkesville and Clayton or the Tallulah Gorge. Regardless of your preferred weekend interest, the most enjoyable part of Alumni Weekend to me is sharing old Y Camp stories with old friends….reacquainting ourselves with lost friends and

Dear Alumni,

Greeting from the Paradise of Youth! I am happy to report that the summer camp season of 2015 was a tremendous success. We were blessed with full camps, wonderful staff, and an excellent safety record. Success was also measured in steady steam of smiling faces that raced back and forth across this valley of youth.

With each passing year, I have learned the value of looking back at what has gone before while also planning for what lies ahead. I cherish memories of days gone by and thank the Lord for His goodness. With these happy thoughts, I am drawn to ponder on the future of our beloved AYC and the memories that have yet to be made. I pray that the new campers coming in Summer 2016 will be able to experience the same joys as we did as Y-campers.

In my attempt to expand while also preserving, I have listed my goals for 2016.
• to continue to preserve the rich heritage and history of AYC
• to increase the activities available for the campers by building a ropes course at Camp Chattooga.
• to offer more scholarships to those children who are unable to afford a session at the Athens Y Camps.
• to remain diligent in maintaining the physical grounds and facilities of the camps

Save The Date!!! Alumni Day 2016 will be July 15-17.
making new ones (ie. I didn't like Jimbo back then, I like him ok now). There are plenty of housing options (Camp, Lake Rabun Hotel, Glenn Ella Springs, Beechwood Inn, plus many homes for rent on Lake Rabun, Burton and Seed by owners...see frbo.com) or feel free to call us to help find a good spot.

The report from Executive Director Edward Schaefer at the Sunday Event was very positive. Both the Boys and Girls Camps had GREAT SUMMERS with high attendance rates at both. Camp Chattooga continues to grow in numbers each summer and challenges Ed and the staff to keep improving the facilities and offering enhanced activities. Edward has many initiatives for both the boys and girls camps that range from much needed short-term fixes to longer-term facility and program enhancements. Edward and his team have had an extremely busy and productive year with last year's needed dredging and re-filling of Lake Pearson as well as the creation of a paved roadway through camp. The two projects are intertwined. The paving of the loose dirt and gravel prevents run-off into Lake Pearson and the improved road allows for the Camp to better move heavy equipment and vehicles through the property. Lake Pearson had also been taken over by a pervasive weed (Parrott Feather) that has plagued many area lakes and necessitated dredging and treatment of the banks. This exhaustive process took months and was completed in the spring well-prior to Camp's opening. We are happy to report Lake Pearson was crystal-clear and enjoyed all summer long! We are still researching the notion that the acidity on the bottom of the lake was somehow connected to Coach Poss' tenure as Water Director...inconclusive at this time. Another project Edward and his team focused on this year was the Renovation of the WT Shack. Not only was the look and feel outside maintained but the inside now is an incredible Y Camp memorabilia and artifact house which will soon have a digital version of the Camp's history including countless pictures, stories and tributes. The WT Shack will now become the destination spot for Alumni to enjoy and for families considering the Camp for their children. You will be extremely proud and excited to see this great enhancement to our Camp!

Moving into the summer of 2016, Edward and the staff plan to build a new Rope's course on the Chattooga property with a new wrinkle or two to the Boy's side as well. More long-term is the need to update and expand the existing bathrooms in all of the cabins. Believe it or not, it's been over 25 years since the bathrooms have been addressed and it's a critical issue for us in the next few years. The staff plans to update and expand the existing bathroom in Cabin #1, and once complete, use it as a “model” to show visitors, potential camper's families, and other guests. The hope will be to duplicate the expanded and updated bathroom plan in all the cabins at both Camps.

Your generosity in the Annual Fund and AYC endowment help us accomplish both critical short-term and long-term needs. **You can give to the 2016 Annual Fund (Tax Deductible) today!** Thank you for your participation and support in both.

What goes well with blue jeans? Apparently high-top rubber cleats and a Lakeside HS Vikings track team tank top! Is Anne Poss laughing at this fashion combination or the idea of Edward running track? Perhaps both Stan Smith beautifully teaches the art of the forehand. Notice brand-new AYC Digital Scoreboard against the fence in the back ground.

Lastly, a big Athens Y Camp applause goes to both Joe Wills and Hal Henninger for serving as AYC Alumni Presidents for the past 2 years. Their leadership and commitment to Alumni Weekend and everything Y CAMP is awesome! They helped teach me the meaning of “Y CAMP SPIRIT” back during my days as a Camper and Staff Member and they continue that lesson today. “Here we go...Clap, clap, clapclapclap, Clap, clap, clapclapclap....HOORAY!”

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Years!

*Ridley Williams, Alumni Association President*
Please partner with me in reaching these goals. The new memorabilia building would be an excellent location to showcase any old camp photos or artifacts that you are willing to donate. Your gift will be investment in our attempt to properly document the rich heritage of AYC.

My remaining goals are best met through the raising of funds. I wish that the day would come where I would never have to ask for money again, but that day is not today, unfortunately. In order for the proposed ropes course, camper scholarships, and ongoing maintenance to become a reality, we need your financial support. As you ponder your year-end giving, please prayerfully consider giving a charitable gift to AYC. If you would like to donate online, go to [www.athensycamps.org](http://www.athensycamps.org). Your gift is tax deductible.

Thank you for the part that you played in the history of Y Camp and I thank you in advance for the part that you will play in the camps’ future. May the Lord bless you and yours during this blessed holiday season. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Your friend in Christ,

Edward Schaefer, Executive Director
The 2015 AYC Hall of Fame Inductee was Jimbo Laboon. Laboon is the 6th alumnus to be inducted in this gathering of special and beloved Y Campers. A small induction ceremony was held on Alumni Day; Laboon was joined by his lovely family for this memorable occasion. Many old Y Camp friends were also present and cheered loudly for their friend.

Laboon became a camper at AYC in 1948, he later served as a staff member with 1955 being his last summer. He always maintained a great love and devotion for camp; therefore, he was thrilled to become the Chairman of the Athens Y Camp Board of Directors in 1969. He continues to serve as Chairman and is an integral part of the camp’s success.

One of the Laboon family traditions is completely intertwined with the Athens Y Camps. His children and now grandchildren are or have been campers and staff members at the Y Camp and Camp Chattooga. Other family members use their individual talents to serve the camp as well. The camps are better because of this precious family and the leadership of Jimbo Laboon.

Congratulations Mr. LaBoon!!
AYC alumnus, Milton Mills spent several weeks at camp this past summer helping with staff training. He was instrumental in completing the necessary steps needed to comply with the American Camping Association guidelines for riflery, archery and canoeing safety.

Thank you very much to Milton for so freely giving his time to AYC and for his invaluable assistance in our staff training.

Sean Cain

A big Athens Y Camp applause to Sean Cain for his “hands on” assistance at the camp this past summer. In honor of his time, he was awarded an Honorary Emblem by Edward Schaefer, since he; like Edward Schaefer never won one as a camper.

Sean spent over a month serving in the position of Alumni Leader and his camp days were anything but leisurely. He operated on the same schedule as the younger leaders and he accompanied the campers on all the trips. He even hiked down into the gorge multiple times.

Sean is very generous with his time and his talents. He even donated his camp salary plus a little “extra” back to camp. His willingness to give wholeheartedly to the camp over the years has been a tremendous blessing and has helped to complete many unfinished projects.

Sean is a wonderful friend to Y Camp as well as a shining example that “old” campers can still keep up with the young ones. The Y Camp Spirit is strong in this one!!