

AUTHOR/FORMER JACKSONVILLE CITY COUNCILMAN HOMER HUMPHRIES TO DISCUSS THE SEEDS OF JACKSONVILLE'S HISTORIC CONSOLIDATION

Wed. April 28, 6:30 p.m. at the St. Johns County Library in Ponte Vedra

Jacksonville, Fla. (April 13, 2010) — Homer H. Humphries, Jr., author of “Recollections of the Rebirth of a City,” will discuss the historic consolidation of Duval County and the City of Jacksonville on Wed., April 28, at 6:30 p.m. in the PGA Tour Room at the St. Johns County Library, 101 Library Road in Ponte Vedra Beach.

A 1966 Grand Jury investigation prompted a multi-year investigation of political corruption in the city and county that resulted in the indictment of many local politicians. It involved the city auditor, executive secretary of the recreation department, four of the nine city councilman, two of the five city commissioners, two of the five county commissioners, the county purchasing agent, and city tax assessor. Waste and political patronage included 168 luxury automobiles purchased (at top price) from a single dealer, TV sets, jewelry, and items from a sporting goods dealers that were then billed to the city recreation department as sports equipment. At the same time, the area's schools were discredited.

The Grand Jury recommended revising the government structure to deny unlimited power and authority to a few politicians and to prevent city officials and their friends from using city employees and contracts for private and political use.

Humphries, who was elected to the city council in 1967 just before the consolidation and served for three years after it, will describe the times and the process that led to Jacksonville's distinction of being the largest city in the United States.

Humphries book, “Recollections of the Re-Birth of a City,” will be on sale (\$12) at the talk and is also available at www.highpitchedhum.net and at Books-A-Million at Ponte Vedra Beach.

Humphries was born in Jacksonville, at home, 1315 Talbot Avenue, and graduated from Bolles. After earning his bachelor's degree from the University of Virginia and his law degree from Stetson University he returned to Jacksonville where he has lived since 1961. A former assistant district attorney, he entered the practice of law, concentrating on trial practice. In addition, he served as a pilot in the Florida Air National Guard for more than 27 years, retiring with the rank of Brigadier General.

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