

## The Emmett F. Thompson Deanship

The Auburn University School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences has announced the establishment of the Emmett F. Thompson Deanship. Dr. Thompson, an SAF Fellow and Golden Member is the founding dean of the Auburn School of Forestry. Thompson, an Oklahoma native studied forestry at Oklahoma State University, North Carolina State University and Oregon State University, where he earned his doctorate in forest economics.



Thompson came to Auburn in 1977 after nearly a decade of service as a faculty member at Virginia Tech and several years as a Department Head of Forestry at Mississippi State. He began his career at Auburn, in 1977 as head of the Department of Forestry, which was then part of the School of Agriculture. In 1984, he became the School of Forestry's first dean. He retired in 1998 and has maintained an active role in the SAF at Chapter, Division and Society levels.

Since his retirement, Thompson continues to serve the School. He established the Thompson Family Scholarship, has served on the School campaign committee, maintained a strong relationship with the many benefactors and industry contacts and makes himself available for any school event that takes place.

Among Thompson's many accomplishments, he also led the effort to create the Solon Dixon Forestry Education Center, a one-of-a-kind facility in Andalusia, Alabama. This 5,300-acre School Forest which includes dormitory, dining and classroom facilities, serves as a premier field-experience for forestry and wildlife science undergraduates. Additionally, Thompson established a forestry engineering program, created the Forestry in the Private Sector class and worked with other departments in the university to round out and improve educational opportunities for students.

Dean Janaki Alavalapati said "Dr. Thompson truly deserves to be honored with a deanship in his name. His achievements as dean of the School of Forestry have had a major impact on developing this school to become the outstanding research and educational institution that it is today."

A deanship is an endowed fund used at the discretion of the current dean to direct funds toward a school's major goals without undercutting budgetary priorities. The deanship was established by Thompson's children, Chuck, Meri and Juli, and received a leadership gift from the Solon and Martha Dixon Foundation, in addition to gifts from a host of other friends of the School.

“The Emmett F. Thompson Deanship will benefit the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences by elevating the school’s status, positioning it to become a college, launching new initiatives, continuing a culture of excellence and helping to recruit and retain highly qualified deans in the future,” said Dean Alavalapati.