



For Immediate Release

President of Conservancy Group Leaving Behind Legacy, Park Prepared For Expansion

ATLANTA (February 20, 2008) – Piedmont Park Conservancy announced today its President and CEO Debbie McCown will step down in May to begin a new life with her husband, Fred Bradley, who is retiring after more than 40 years with the YMCA.

For the last decade, McCown has led the organization that oversees the maintenance of the 186-acre Park.

She took the reigns of the Conservancy when the organization was still in its relative infancy, with only a handful of employees and an ambitious plan to resurrect Piedmont Park.

“We knew there was much work needed to turn Piedmont Park around, and we knew we could be successful,” McCown said.

Along with her team, McCown said she worked for years with one goal in mind – to build an organization and the resources that could bring real change to Piedmont Park, which suffered from years of overuse and neglect.

She guided the Conservancy through the implementation of its 1995 master plan – a 10 year plan that was completed in seven and included more than \$23 million in restorations to the historic portions of the Park.

Today, the Conservancy is an organization with a staff of 30 full-time professionals and volunteer board of nearly 50 members, all of whom McCown says are committed to maintaining and enhancing Piedmont Park as a vital urban green space.

Commitment is something McCown has not been short of while at the helm of the organization, said its current board chair and partner at the law firm of Alston & Bird, Mark Rusche.

“For the last 10 years, Debbie has pledged herself, both emotionally and intellectually, to advancing the Conservancy’s mission of improving Piedmont Park for Atlantans,” Rusche said. “Her sincere and steadfast dedication to the

Conservancy has resulted in phenomenal improvements to the Park's accessibility, safety, programming and sustainability.”

She has prepared the organization to move forward with a 53-acre expansion of the park by establishing guidelines for building a sustainable park, implementing an extensive multi-year strategic plan to focus the organization's goals, and is developing a business plan for the management of the park, Rusche said.

Former board chair Jan Harralson, AT&T, said, “A great leader is someone who leaves you in a better place and well prepared to continue on after they leave, and [McCown] has done just that.”

“The timing is right,” McCown said. “The Conservancy has a committed board, talented staff, a visionary plan, and support of the donor community needed to move the organization forward.”

With the historic portion nearly complete and solid groundwork established for the expansion, the Conservancy's board of directors has hired executive search firm of SpencerStuart to conduct a national search for a candidate to take the helm of the 19-year old non-profit.

McCown said the new president would guide the organization's work as it focuses on environmental sustainability and the expansion. She added she would continue to be involved with parks and green space, and will always support Piedmont Park.

Founded in 1989, Piedmont Park Conservancy is a member and donor funded non-profit organization, working with the City of Atlanta to enhance and preserve Piedmont Park as a vital, urban green space and as a cultural and recreational resource for Atlantans to enjoy.

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