

Ann Johnson Heritage Center at Warm Springs

On November 14, 2008, Rotary International (RI), the World Health Organization (WHO), Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) were inducted into the *Polio Hall of Fame* in recognition of their ongoing global campaign to eradicate the poliovirus.

While Rotary immunization teams continue to halt wild poliovirus transmission, Rotarians in the Polio Survivors and Associates Rotary Action Group and in the Rotary Heritage & History International Fellowship of Rotarians began taking with Roosevelt Warm Springs administrators and Georgia Rotarians about the need to document and preserve the polio story — from how badly the disease disrupted lives, through development of the Salk and Sabin polio vaccines, as well as telling the story of Rotary's signature project: the global eradication campaign.

Eradication of the poliovirus

may rid the word "polio" from news coverage and even most personal conversations, but polio survivors and those who either lost family members to polio or have family members with post-polio syndrome will never forget the long and expensive struggle to immunize the world.

While Ray Taylor was touring the campus with Roosevelt Warm Springs Public Relations Director Martin Harmon, they discussed the need for a Polio Heritage Center to preserve this story.

Jack Mayo visited Warm Springs for discussions with PDG Steve Stanfield, Roosevelt Warm Springs Board Chair James Oxendine, Vice Chair Wayne Reece, Executive Director Greg Schmieg, and Director of Public Relations Martin Harmon with the result that an FDR-era building will soon become the *Ann Johnson Heritage Center at Warm Springs* in memory of Georgia's 1st female Rotary District Governor. It is a fitting memorial to a distin-



The late Ann B. Johnson served as Governor of Rotary District 6900.

guished lady.

In addition to being a charter member of her club and one of the first four female Rotarians in the city of Columbus, Ann plunged into club committee work, became club president and just a few days beyond the required seven years of Rotary membership she became the first female Rotary District Governor in the state of Georgia.

Civic leadership came naturally to Ann. Lamar Johnson points out that his late wife's mother had died when Ann was 15. She instantly became "mother" to her nine years younger brother and homemaker for her brother and father, a textile mill worker.

Ann was the 35th employee hired at AFLAC, starting as a secretary. She became one of the first female VP's (three were promoted in one day) at AFLAC and retired after 36 years as VP/Human Resources.

Before becoming a Rotarian, Ann was active in Toastmasters International. The year she became Toastmasters' District Governor, she took



To be known as *Ann B. Johnson Polio Heritage House*, this FDR-era cottage will preserve and display the story of the polio epidemic, development of a vaccine, and of Rotary's signature project, the global eradication of polio. Ann was Georgia's first female Rotary District Governor (1998-99); she was a charter member of the Rotary Club of Muscogee-Columbus where she held a number of offices including President in 1995-96. Built in the 1940's, this cottage originally served as apartments for those learning polio treatment techniques at *Roosevelt Warm Springs*.