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CITY OF SUMTER'S MAYOR MCELVEEN WILL NOT SEEK REELECTION IN 2020

Sumter, SC (January 25, 2020) - After twenty years in office, Sumter's mayor has decided not to seek re-election. Mayor Joseph T. McElveen, Jr. announced today that he will not seek re-election following the completion of his current term. Elected in 2000, he is Sumter's longest-serving mayor. "Having the opportunity to serve the community and people I love has been a most rewarding experience," stated McElveen.

His tenure as mayor caps a lifetime dedicated to public service, including ten years in the South Carolina House of Representatives, where he also served a term as Majority Leader and chaired a variety of committees. Prior to being elected mayor, McElveen served as a member of Sumter City Council from 1984 to 1986.

The two decades of McElveen's tenure have seen great changes take place in the community since the dawn of the new millennium. Under his leadership, Sumter has established itself as a progressive city that takes a proactive role in growth and quality of life initiatives, as shown through numerous accomplishments, including:

- Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification in new construction and renovations to public buildings, promoting sustainability in construction and operations;
- Construction of three HOPE (Harvest Opportunity and Promoting Empowerment) Centers in federally-designated "empowerment zones," bringing community programs and opportunities to these areas;
- The rebirth of Sumter's historic downtown and the Sumter Opera House as a center for entertainment;
- Expanded sports and recreational opportunities, with the City of Sumter Aquatics Center and Palmetto Tennis Center becoming widely known and respected competition venues. The award-winning Palmetto Tennis Center hosts several major tournaments and generates millions of dollars per year in tourism revenue;
- Improvements to many city parks, including a revitalized Memorial Park, a completely rebuilt and upgraded Palmetto Park, and construction of North HOPE, Birnie, and Crosswell parks. The city's flagship park, Swan Lake Iris Gardens, has been continuously improved and boasts many added features, including important sculptures throughout with the latest, Grainger McKoy's *Seven Swans*, scheduled for unveiling in February 2020;
- Sumter has experienced a 22.5% decrease in vacant properties and the PRIDE program has partnered with 564 property owners to clean up blighted properties;
- Upgrades to public safety systems, including a new Public Safety Complex and 911 system, and receipt of a Class 1 ISO rating by the Sumter Fire Department;

- Sumter’s recognition as a Top 20 finalist in the 2019 All-America City competition hosted by the National Civic League, and more than 65 additional local, state and national awards;
- Sumter’s growth in educational options and initiatives for young people, specifically the Advanced Manufacturing Technical Training Center and the Health Sciences Center for Central Carolina Technical School.
- Maintaining a healthy unassigned reserve, that has signified how finances are well controlled and spent wisely, which has allowed the city to adopt 10 years of budgets without any millage (tax) increases.

One of the most important events during McElveen’s term of office was the extensive effort involving all sectors of the local government and community leadership, during the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC). It resulted not only in the survival of Shaw Air Force Base, but a major expansion accomplished by re-assignment of Third Army from Fort McPherson, Georgia to Sumter. Sumter welcomed Third Army in 2010, and USARCENT personnel have become a vital force within the community. The base and the city continue to work closely together, with tours and other resources made available to incoming personnel.

Sumter’s brand of “uncommon patriotism” comes naturally for McElveen, a Citadel graduate and USAF veteran. He has spent the majority of his career in private practice with the Bryan Law Firm, and also served as the attorney for Sumter County prior to being elected mayor.

During his years of public service, McElveen has received numerous prestigious accolades and honors from various organizations, among them the South Carolina Jaycees, March of Dimes, American Heart Association, Optimist International, SC Chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), Common Cause/South Carolina, SC Vocational Directors’ Association, SC Department of Education,

Mayor Joe McElveen’s Leadership Highlights:

- Attorney, Bryan Law Firm
- Compleat Lawyer Award, USC School of Law
- Board of Governors of the South Carolina Bar
- Member of House of Representatives
- House Majority Leader
- Chairman of the Sumter Legislative Delegation
- Member of Judiciary, Rules and Joint Insurance Study Committees
- Chair of the Committee on High School Apprenticeships (1991-93)
- Chair of the Welfare Reform Task Force (1993-94)
- Chair of the South Carolina School-to-Work Advisory Council
- Meritorious Service Award, South Carolina Chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving
- Public Service Award, Common Cause/South Carolina
- Legislator of the Year, South Carolina Vocational Directors’ Association (1994)
- James Award, South Carolina Department of Education
- Environmental Hero, Sierra Club of South Carolina
- Sumter City Council (1984-86)
- President, Municipal Association of South Carolina (2014-15)
- Advisory Board and Chair of the Veteran’s Affairs Task Force, U.S. Conference of Mayor’s
- Sumter City-County Planning Commission
- Sumter Family YMCA Board (1984)
- March of Dimes
- American Heart Association
- Director of the Sumter County Game and Fish Association
- Board of Governors of the USC Sumter Partisans Club
- President, Sumter Optimist Club (1979-80).
- Optimist of the Year (1978)
- Optimist International designated the Sumer Optimist Club as an Honor Club for the year of his presidency.
- President, Sumter Jaycees (1973-74)
- Legal counsel for the South Carolina Jaycees
- Outstanding Local President by South Carolina Jaycees
- Sumter Jaycees Young Man of the Year (Distinguished Service Award) (1980)
- Sumter Jaycees Outstanding Young Men of America
- President, Greater Sumter Chamber of Commerce (1983-84)
- Greater Sumter Chamber of Commerce Outstanding Achievement Award (2013)

Sierra Club, Greater Sumter Chamber of Commerce and the SC Bar Association. He has also served in leadership roles for the Sumter Legislative Delegation, US Conference of Mayors, Veterans Affairs Task Force, and during his term as mayor, president of the Municipal Association of South Carolina.

Joe McElveen has been married for 43 years to the former Kathryn Watson. They have two children, SC Senator Thomas McElveen (Bronwyn) and Kate Price (Nick), and two grandchildren Adelaide (6) and Joe (2) McElveen. The McElveens are members of First Presbyterian Church in Sumter, where he has served as deacon, elder, and Sunday school teacher.

“We are blessed to live in a wonderful community,” McElveen says. “We have so much to be proud of, but nothing more than our citizens. I know it is they who have given me the opportunity to lead our city. Nothing happens without their support. They are the judges of how our city is doing,” stated McElveen. “As I leave public office, I hope that our citizens believe that Sumter has made progress during the time they have allowed me to be their mayor.”

For more information on the City of Sumter, visit www.sumtersc.gov.

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