

THE GREENVILLE NEWS EDITORIALS

Helping others came naturally to John McCarroll

Mentor was a guiding force at Phillis Wheatley Center.

John McCarroll spent his life helping other people, and that was something he enjoyed. "I think I like it because I've received a lot of help in my life," McCarroll once told a reporter. For 31 years, until he re-

tired in 2001, McCarroll was the driving force behind the Phillis Wheatley Center.

McCarroll, 67, died Sunday following a long illness. He devoted his life to helping young people, especially those who needed a helping hand and words of encouragement. McCarroll came up the hard way, and once he made his way in the world, he decided to help

others do the same. He was 6 years old when his mother died and 13 when his father, a sharecropper from Tiggerville, died. McCarroll, the seventh of eight children, became the first in his family to go to college.



McCarroll

After a few years as a teacher and coach at his alma mater, Lincoln High in Taylors, McCarroll began his association with Phillis Wheatley. Through his work, he touched the lives of thousands upon thousands of young people.

He was hired in the fall of 1970, he once told reporter Abe Hardesty, when the center was in a three-story home on Broad

Street. The ceiling was falling in, and the future of the center was far from bright. McCarroll guided the organization to its new home a couple of blocks off South Pleasantburg Drive, on a street renamed for him when he retired.

Carl Muller, an attorney who worked closely with McCarroll for almost 30 years, told a reporter this about the Phillis Wheatley leader: "I never met

anyone like him. He improved as many lives as there are stars in the sky. Those lives are shining as bright as the stars." That's a wonderful tribute to a man who helped so many young people. An equally fitting tribute will be for this community to ensure the long-term future of the Phillis Wheatley Center, which has seen a new round of challenges in the past few years.

More kids staying safe

The accidental death rate falls for children in our state

Here's some great news about South Carolina: Over the past few years, South Carolina has reduced the number of children who die in summer accidents by 26 percent. And over the past 10 years, the Upstate has reduced the number of children who die because of accidental injuries by 24 percent.

This dramatic reduction means more children will grow into adulthood. It means fewer families will go through the shock and grief of losing a child because of an accident. It also means fewer life-altering injuries that leave children paralyzed or with brain damage.

Something's being done right in our area, and it's this: People and institutions who care about young people are being proactive. They are teaching families the importance of making sure young children not only are in car seats, but also in seats properly fitted for the child. And they are teaching children the importance of wearing helmets while riding a bike or hopping on a skateboard.

This dramatic decrease in accidental deaths is not an accident. Much credit goes to organizations such as Safe Kids Upstate, one of more than 450 coalitions affiliated with Safe Kids Worldwide. Credit also goes to generous financial supporters of Safe Kids Upstate, including the William Bradshaw family that was honored earlier this week.

Linda Brees, Safe Kids Upstate Coalition leader, can put her finger on why the accidental death rate is decreasing. There's the strong lead role played by the Greenville Hospital System Children's Hospital. And there are the solid partnerships with other groups and professionals in the community, such as law enforcement, educators and foundations. And, there is the impressive support from people such as the



FRED ROLLISON

Saving lives: Dr. William F. Schmidt III recognized the William Bradshaw family for their contributions to saving the lives of children. Schmidt, left, and Linda Brees, leader of the Safe Kids Upstate coalition, presented the "All For the Love of Children"

award to William Bradshaw, his mother Frances, his wife Annette, his son Wes, his daughter and son-in-law Angie and Bill Donovan, and grandchildren Carline, Carson and Ellie Donovan.

William Bradshaw family, which has made the largest gift to a single Safe Kids coalition throughout the history of Safe Kids Worldwide. The Bradshaws were honored Tuesday for their personal and financial support of Safe Kids. The Bradshaw family received an annual GHS Children's Hospital Award, "All For the Love of Children," for the family's contributions to saving the lives of children.

"When you're involved for nine years, and you see that the

money that you're contributing is going to such a good cause, it's easier to become involved at a larger level," Bradshaw, president of the Bradshaw Automotive Group, said at a news conference.

Also at the event was the chairman of Safe Kids Worldwide, who called the outstanding work in making child safety improvements "not good news; it's great news." Dr. Martin Eichelberger, who also is director of emergency services at Chil-

dren's National Medical Center in Washington, D.C., was in Greenville earlier this week to help local leaders celebrate South Carolina's Top 20 National Status in Child Safety.

Sharing the spotlight were the organizations and individuals who have done the hard work that has helped our state earn an 18th ranking out of all 50 states and the District of Columbia based on children's unintentional injuries in summer. The 101 days of summer are the most

dangerous time for children who are enjoying carefree days and more playful activities. The summer months — called the "trauma season" by the professionals who treat these children — are when the overwhelming majority of these accidental deaths occur.

With the celebration comes a challenge, however. There's more work to be done. As Brees said, "Every child killed by a preventable injury is one too many." More children need to learn

to buckle up in the car. More parents need to make sure their children are in properly fitted safety seats. More helmets need to be on the heads of children riding bicycles and skateboards.

The celebration that took place Tuesday in Greenville was well-deserved. It showed us what can happen when groups and individuals who care about children join forces to make them safer. Now we need to take those safety lessons to even more children.