

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY, DEPARTMENT OF ALABAMA

JUNIOR LEADERSHIP CAMP

In 1961 Azalea Wooley, Past Department President from Montevallo, Alabama approached our National Organization and asked for permission to begin a comprehensive training camp for the Junior Members of Alabama.

Azalea Wooley wanted our Junior Members to have the opportunity to come together and learn the programs of the American Legion Auxiliary, to elect officers and to establish friendships that would continue through the years.

This Junior Camp would be a program of the Past Department Presidents and would offer instructions that would give young Auxiliary members an opportunity to become more aware of the many fine programs and to instill in them a greater appreciation for the service rendered our country by their fathers, brothers and their grandfathers.

The National American Legion Auxiliary gave permission for the first program of this kind and in June, 1962 under the Leadership of Bernadine Thompson, the American Legion Auxiliary, Department President from Greenville, Alabama. The Junior Camp was established.

The first Junior Camp was held at Camp Mac in Munford, Alabama in June, 1962 and was owned by Ruby McBride, Past Department President from Talladega, Alabama. Thus began a long association with Camp Mac with Junior Camp being under the Presidents from 1962-1976.

The first year Junior Camp had 40 juniors in attendance with Past Department President helping. Azalea Wooley, Director: Emily Holmes, Assistant Director: Bernadine Thompson, Department President, Ruby McBride, Past Department and Joan Ellis Department First Vice President from Valley Head, Alabama. These juniors stayed four days and began one of the most important programs for Auxiliary youth in the Nation.

After Camp Mac, Junior Leadership Camp was being held at Camp Sumatanga in Sterrett, Alabama from 1977-1985. In 1986 Junior Camp was changed to Junior Leadership/Convention and moved to Huntingdon College in Montgomery, Alabama. In 2000 Junior Leadership/Convention moved to the 4-H Conference Center in Columbiana, Alabama.

Through the years there has been several Past Department Presidents as Directors, Emily Holmes, Joan Ellis, Anita Barber, Avis Knox, and Willie Mae Looney. Beth Hays a long time member of the American

Legion Auxiliary served also as Director. Gloria Fochtmann-Haygood, Past Department President is presently the Director and has been since 2000. Presently Junior Leadership Camp is being held at the Camp Booth in Greenpond, Alabama.

In 2000, Director, Gloria Fochtmann-Haygood asked the Advisor to the Sons of the American Legion to include their sons with the juniors as a good many of our programs overlapped with The American Legion and some of the Juniors had brothers that wanted to attend. Ron Haygood was then asked to be the Director and has served since 2001.

Again, this is a four day camp and during the week the participates are asked to go to the Flag Pole and participate in the raising of our American Flag and are also asked to participate in a non-denominational service followed by breakfast and a full day of activities.

During the week there are several speakers who represent the various programs of The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary. The Department Commander and the Department President among other prominent speakers in the community and state are asked to participate.

Other programs taught during the week are the Histories of The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary, Flag Etiquette and the proper way to dispose of the American Flag through a flag disposal ceremony. Protocol and elections are held during the week to elect honorary officers. These Officers help and assist the Counselors helping to keep order and making sure that everyone is participating and sharing to make the week a success. The volunteers for this week are dedicated members of The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary. Through cooperative efforts and service the members and officers of the Legion Family show personal involvement to this program which makes it a success.

There is an agenda for each day, but not all are meetings and speakers. The youth have the opportunity to participate in many fun activities including a talent and skit night and outside camp activities.

The American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Alabama has a vision for involvement of our Youth in our local communities and throughout the State. The goal of this camp is to help develop our youth, teaching them patriotism, volunteerism service, image, partnership and family. It's a program of involvement in many aspects of life. The Legion Family can help this vision be realized as we teach the "Youth of Today, to be the leaders of our Country in the future".

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