

January 8, 2017

Richard M. Witt  
1111 Cornelia Circle  
Greenwood, SC 29646

Gov. Nikki Haley  
Office of the Governor  
1205 Pendleton Street  
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Governor Haley,

Have you selected this years winner of the Order of the Palmetto for 2017? If not I'd like to make a nomination for the highest civilen award that can be given to a South Carolinian for outstanding community service.

His name is Mr Alvin Rankin. Mr Rankin is the owner and manager of Greenwoods one and only book store. I was always a loyal customer to Walden book store in the Greenwood Mall or as I still like to call it Cross Creek Mall A large creek runs through it. When Walden book store closed it broke my heart. Where was I going to buy my books now.

One day I was sitting at the stop light on main street and I looked over to my left and saw the McCaslans book store it was sort of like the small store was waving me down. So when I came back through town I stopped by to check out this book store. I was impressed for a small book store he had a good selection and I took note of the History books he had.

I also recignized Mr Alvin from the days when he worked out at the Greenwood Sta-Fit Fitness center. Hr recignized me also. I've bought severl books from his book store. I bought the book I gave you about Leonard Peltier from McCaslans book store. I bought Coach Dawn Staley The Spirit of Crazy Horse about Leonard Peltier and the FBI's war against the American Indian Movement (AIM). I've ordered books and DVD's if it's out there he can order it for me. So it is safe to say I'm rooted into stay with McCaslan's book store. I'll let Books A Million, Walden and all the other big name book store stay in the larger cities we will hang with Mr Alvin here in Greenwood. Some times I just walk in to look around to see what he's got different then I'll say Well Mr Alvin I'll be back when I've got some money to spend in here.

The last time I walked in it was to check on a book I wanted to **order**. It was available that made me smile. I will also buy my typewriter ribbons and correction tapes from him. I use to get them from Greenwood Office supply. They discontinued them. Office Max got to where they could not order them any more. The Manager asked have you checked with McCaslans book store. I took off over there and he had the Ribbons on the wall hanger and he ordered

the Correction tapes and they were in my hand in two days. You can't beat service like that. He said, I'm not the only person in Greenwood that's still using the Smith Corona electric typewriter. I told him I guess if you can't get what I need anymore I will have to shoot my typewriter and put it out of it's misery.

I'm sending you an article about Mr Alvin that was printed in the Index Journal last year. I'm sure you will be impressed with his service to the community. He will be 66 years young this year. I hope the good Lord will keep Mr Alvin around with us for a good while. He may retire, but I don't think he will go too far from the book store. Unless he goes to church, football games or on vacation. I'm sure when God calls Mr Alvin home Jesus will put him in charge of the Heavenly library so he won't fill out of place with not managing his book store. We need more people in the world like Mr Alvin Rankin. That is why I'm nominating him for the 2017 Order of the Palmetto. Thank you for your time and consideration. May God bless you always and keep you in His Spirit.

Sincerely,



Richard M. Witt

RMW/attachments

PS Mr Alvin is also a big Gamecock fan so that makes him very Special in the Gamecock Nation.

Why does Heaven need a Library?

And I suppose that if all the other events in Jesus' life were written, the whole world could hardly contain the books!

John 21:25

A scripture to honor Mr Alvin.

Commit your work to the Lord, then it will succeed. Proverbs 16:3

# Fifty years in the books: Rankin reaches a McCaslan's milestone



KATIE PEARSON | INDEX-JOURNAL

Alvin Rankin, owner and operator, helps a customer sift through office supplies Thursday at McCaslan's Book Store.

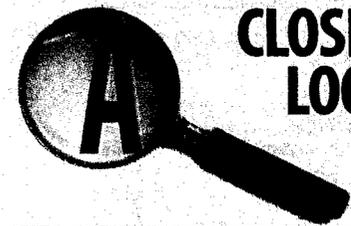
By **KATIE PEARSON**  
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At the age of 15, Alvin Rankin drove the Rambler Station Wagon around Greenwood, delivering books, gifts and office supplies to customers. That was in 1966, the very beginning of his career at McCaslan's Book Store.

He found the job through Miss Campbell, who taught distributive education at Greenwood High School. She told him about the job at McCaslan's Book Store, where he decided to go in for an interview.

"One of the things Mr. McCaslan asked when I came in for the interview was if I knew Greenwood," Rankin, 65, said. "I said, 'Oh yeah! I know Greenwood. I delivered the Index-Journal in the afternoon and the Anderson Independent in the morning.'"

McCaslan told him he would have to wait until one of his other employ-



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**ALVIN RANKIN**  
McCaslan's Book Store

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ees went off to college, but that he would call him back. That timeline didn't suit Campbell very well, according to Rankin. She suggested a job at Winn-Dixie so that he could get his paperwork in to the school on time.

"I don't want to work at a Winn-Dixie," said the younger Rankin. "My sister works at Winn-Dixie. My brother works at Winn-Dixie. I don't care to work at a Winn-Dixie."

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# McCASLAN'S

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So he waited, and McCaslan called Rankin just as he said he would. Rankin's first day was Monday, Aug. 15, 1966.

His first day was more than he expected.

"We had like 60 cartons of construction paper that had to be delivered to different schools," Rankin said. "When I went to lunch with my sister, I was sweating. I was so hot! I thought, 'What have I gotten myself into?'"

Despite his very hot first day, Rankin worked at McCaslan's through high school and college. He received his business degree from Lander University, but stayed at McCaslan's Book Store. He's now put in 50 years of service and plans to continue on the same path.

## Withstanding change

The bookstore has been operating since 1898, first under the ownership of F.M. Sheridan, school superintendent at the time, then co-ownership of Sheridan and George W. Hart, Sheridan's brother-in-law. Sheridan sold out his part of the bookstore in 1915, making Hart the sole owner until 1921 when the McCaslan brothers took over ownership.

Bart Robeson, nephew by marriage to the McCaslan brothers, takes over ownership of the store in 1973 after working for the McCaslan brothers for 26 years. In 1999, Rankin became a shareholder and partner with Robeson, but now owns the entire store.

The bookstore has now been standing in the same location under the name McCaslan's Book Store for 94 years. The store will turn 95 Dec. 1 of this year.

The store has seen many changes through the years. Before Rankin's time, it was once where all Greenwood schoolchildren would come to buy their books for school.

"They would line up around the corner," Clegg said. "That was before the state started buying books themselves."

Joann Goard, Rankin's sister, remembers when Ms. Ruth Langston, who retired in 1973 after serving 50 years at McCaslan's Book Store, made handmade bows for gift orders.

"Ruth Langston had a talent for creating the most beautiful bows," Goard said. "McCaslan's still offers free gift wrap. The bows aren't handcrafted anymore, but the store has developed a reputation for their beautiful wrapping."

Clegg said that at one point, McCaslan's was the only bookstore, only office supplier and one of the very few gift shops.

"Everybody came here," she said.

As other bookstores seem to suffer, or even close their doors, McCaslan's still stands firm, rooted in its original location.

"The community has always

■ According to friends and family, Rankin is an avid Gamecocks fan. His friend, Jamie Lyles, said when he goes to ball games he takes a bag full of snacks, nearly "enough to feed the stadium."

■ "If anything takes him away from McCaslan's, it would be church or a trip to a ball game," Anne Clegg, longtime employee of Rankin's said.

■ He also has a very strict 11 a.m. lunch time, at least during the work week. His sister Joann Goard and Lyles confirmed this to be true.

supported us," Rankin said. "We've just had very loyal customers throughout the years."

Children's books have been the store's biggest seller for books the last few years, but their office supplies and teacher resources, which has its own location downstairs, have been a hit for the past few generations.

## Rankin's reign

Rankin has developed a reputation for dedicating himself to his job and his community. One of his former employees, Chris Hammett, said that Rankin was the best boss he ever had.

"He is the epitome of a true, dedicated hard worker," Hammett said. "This was never a job for him. It really is his life."

Goard agreed, saying that Alvin really continues to enjoy his work.

"This has been a great career for Alvin," she said. "He believes all customers are very special."

Katherine Martin, a longtime customer and friend of Rankin's family, has known the man for a long time and said he is "friendly, helpful and community-oriented."

Even people who know him from outside of McCaslan's know his dedication to community to be true. David Dority, a friend of Rankin's from church and the Mathews Lions Club, said that Rankin is "a man that cares about his community and other people." Dority said Rankin rarely takes credit for the amount of good that he does, but that he is a man focused on business, friendship, faith and community.

"Anything he tells you, you can take it to the bank," Dority said. "He's truly a man of integrity."

Christy Randall, a family member of Rankin's who lives in Aiken, used to visit Greenwood as a child and remembered looking forward to visiting McCaslan's the most.

"There's just something about an office supply and bookstore," Randall said. "It's the climate of the place that I've always loved, and Alvin is an integral part of the atmosphere of McCaslan's."

She said she loved being able to spend her allowance at McCaslan's as a young adult.

"Even though I was really just a kid, I was always welcomed and treated with respect."

## Even Closer

Now, as a mother, she brings her children to McCaslan's as often as she can, finding special books for her and letting her children wander around the shop trying to decide what to spend their money on, just as she did when she was a child. She said that all of the employees are always very helpful and that there is never any sales pressure.

"McCaslan's is a treasure for the Greenwood community," Randall said.

Clegg said that Rankin has made those who work for or are customers of McCaslan's Book Store feel like family.

"I wouldn't want to be anywhere else," Clegg said.

## Rankin and the community

On top of his work at McCaslan's, Rankin tries to help his community however he could. During high school and college, Rankin served as the volunteer scorekeeper for church league softball at the YMCA.

Since college, he has been active with Uptown Development of Greenwood since the 1970s, having served as vice president of the Greenwood Merchant's Association and on the board of directors for the Uptown Greenwood Development Corp. Since 1973, he has been a member, treasurer and board member of the Greenwood Shrine Club. In the 1980s, he served as co-chairman of the business division of United Way. He won Sertoman of the Year in 2006 for his service with the Greenwood High Noon Sertoma Club and is also a member of the Lion's Club, having served as vice president in the past. He has been a longtime member of South Main Baptist Church, serving as an usher and Sunday School teacher.

Dority said that Rankin is "a very serious Christian man" and that he reflects that in his business, friendships and service.

"He really is just a good guy," Dority said.

Jamie Lyles, a friend of Rankin's for more than 40 years, said that Rankin strongly believes in supporting his community and local businesses.

"He would do anything he could for you," she said.

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