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Gettysburg Seminary Ridge Museum announces major gift

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Gettysburg, Pa. (July 16, 2013)—Texas resident David LaCook, Director of the FabEnCo Founding Fathers Foundation, presented the Gettysburg Seminary Ridge Museum with a check for \$150,000 on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg and the opening of the new museum.

“Mr. LaCook’s gracious gift helps further the Gettysburg Seminary Ridge Museum’s mission of educating and inspiring people with the stories of duty and devotion that took place here,” said the museum’s executive director Barbara Franco. “As we welcome thousands of visitors from all over the world, we are grateful to Mr. LaCook, and we know that nothing we do is possible without generous support such as this.”

A resident of Houston, Texas, LaCook’s connection to the museum goes back four generations to his great-great grandfather, John A. Womack, who was the lone survivor of five brothers who served Mississippi in the Civil War.

Womack and his brother, William, served in Company H of the 42nd Mississippi. On July 1st, 1863, the two brothers marched down the road from Cashtown, Pa., toward the crossroads town of Gettysburg, thinking they were going to make short work of local militia they thought were defending the town. Instead, they fired some of the first shots of the now-famous Battle of Gettysburg, which would involve 160,000 soldiers and result in more than 50,000 casualties—to this day remaining the largest battle ever waged in North America.

The 42nd Mississippi experienced significant casualties on the first day—an estimated 296 killed wounded and missing. On July 3rd, the two Womack brothers stepped off to advance in what is known as Pickett’s Charge. Both brothers were wounded--John in the arm and William in the hip. While John recovered and went home after the war and lived until his death at 90 years of age in Coffeerville, Miss., William died on July 15, 1863, in a Gettysburg field hospital.

“Gettysburg is truly hallowed ground for me”, says LaCook. “Of the almost 1,000 members of the 42nd [Miss.] that marched off to war in May 1862, I am grateful that John Womack survived not only this first great battle for the regiment, but also many others, to be captured once more at Petersburg on April 2nd 1865, along with the remaining members of the 42nd Mississippi--just 73 officers and men. Had he, too, given his life for southern independence, I would not have been anywhere at all this July 1. So, obviously, I was very pleased to be at the opening of the Gettysburg Seminary Ridge Museum and to provide these funds in honor of John, his brother William, and all of the brave men, North and South, who struggled to survive those three terrible days in July 1863.”

Gettysburg Seminary Ridge Museum

The new Gettysburg Seminary Ridge Museum opened July 1, 2013. The museum’s permanent exhibit—“Voices of Duty and Devotion” focuses on three main areas—*none of which are the focus of any other museum in Gettysburg*: the pivotal first day of the Battle of Gettysburg on Seminary Ridge; the care of the wounded; and the larger issues of faith and freedom. A one-mile outdoor trail complements a museum visit with wayside markers, and special exhibits, programs and events will be offered throughout the year. The project is a joint venture of the Adams County Historical Society, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, and the Seminary Ridge Historic Preservation Foundation. For more information and to reserve tickets, including reservations for the Exclusive-Access Cupola Tour, visit www.seminaryridgemuseum.org

FabEnCo Founding Fathers Foundation

Established in 2007 to honor and continue the generous nature of Hardy L. LaCook, Jr. (1928-2000) and Donald V. Henderson (1921-2001)—principal founders of FabEnCo, Inc., “The Safety Gate Company”,—the four directors, David LaCook, his sister Michele LaCook, along with Don B. Henderson and his sister Diane Henderson Holman, strive to further the mission of the FabEnCo Founding Fathers Foundation, which is: “Making the world a better place for at least one person.”