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AGENDA #3(a)2

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May 19, 2003

Mayor Kevin Foy and Chapel Hill Town Council Members
c/o Town clerk
Chapel Hill Town Hall
306 Columbia Street\
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27516

Re: Hope Rice Trail

Dear Kevin and Council members:

I am writing to respectfully ask you to name a trail through a Town park the Hope Rice Trail, honoring a long-time resident of Chapel Hill.

Mrs. Rice owns a house and lot located on Clayton Road. Her lot adjoins a private road with the name, Audubon Road. This year, Hope sold a small portion of her land to the Town to allow the Town to open a trail through Pritchard Park.

Hope is 92 years old and still quite vibrant. She moved to Chapel Hill with her husband, Oscar, in 1947. Dr. Rice was a member of the Chemistry Department of the University and a world-renowned chemist and physicist. In May of 1978, as he lay on his death bed at UNC Hospitals, he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Sciences by the University. The citation described him as "the most distinguished chemist to have ever lived in North Carolina."

One aspect of Chapel Hill that drew the Rices here was a minister named Charlie Jones. They had heard of his support for the rights and dignity of African-Americans and after they arrived, Hope joined his church, I believe named University Presbyterian. Hope, who played the piano, came to teach and play songs at the black school she recalls being located on Merritt Mill Road. This occurred in approximately 1949. One of her special memories was bringing white and black children together to sing at the church. No one had seen that done before.

Over the years, Hope provided joy and inspiration through her piano teaching and songs to countless persons and many children in Chapel Hill. She also entertained,

on behalf of her husband, Nobel Prize winning scientists who came to Chapel Hill to visit the University. There were so many she can't remember them all!

Hope lives in a home that is two-story but has no steps! Due to her interest and love of people from all walks of life, and her husband's international scientific reputation, her home has been a place of solace and assistance to scientists and families from over 27 countries. She says she had not heard of some of the countries before her visitors would stay with her and Dr. Rice! Most of them had PhD's or almost had PhD's, and she helped them with whatever they needed - getting medical care, spiritual guidance, friendship and kind listening, help with the language, and so much more.

Hope Rice epitomizes the true spirit and residents of Chapel Hill who have come to live here - open, accepting, welcoming, holistic, energetic, and ecumenical. Establishing the trail to the Chapel Hill Public Library in her name is a most appropriate honor.

Thank you for your help and kind consideration of this request.

Sincerely yours,


Jay Bryan

Cc: Mel Rashkis
Rita Rice
Pam Rice