Elmer B. Harris believes in people—be it his colleagues, his employees, or his customers. He also believes in progressive ideals that make our world, and Alabama in particular, a better place. It’s natural then that, in his highly public position as President and Chief Executive Officer of Alabama Power Company, he has been able to pull people and ideas together to positively impact our quality of life.

Born in Chilton County, Harris is an alumnus of Auburn University. He received his bachelor of science and master of science degrees in electrical engineering in 1962 and 1968, respectively, and a master of business administration degree in 1970.

Mr. Harris began at Alabama Power as a cooperative student engineer in 1958 and progressed through various positions of responsibility. In 1979, he was appointed Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer. He moved to Senior Executive Vice President of Georgia Power Company, another Southern Company subsidiary, in 1986. In 1989, he assumed his current position at Alabama Power.

Mr. Harris was instrumental in developing the Geographic Information System (GIS) at Alabama Power. Designed to collect, maintain, edit, integrate, and analyze a wide variety of land-based information using a computer, GIS technology is demonstrated daily in the business community by providing solutions to current and potential problems.

Through his corporate leadership, Harris has had an extraordinary impact on education and economic development in Alabama. He has worked for years for education reform, calling for increased funding of underdeveloped school systems, higher standards for teachers, and for greater accountability. The Alabama Science Center, which opened in 1993 under his impetus, is designed to foster a greater appreciation of science among Alabama’s school children. The Water Course, which opened in May 1995, enhances the understanding of the many and varied uses of water in the State.

Mr. Harris’ expertise and leadership in the economic development of the State led to the creation of four Alabama Resource Centers located in key cities throughout the State. By providing both new and expanding companies with helpful information about the State, these Centers have proven to be instrumental in recruiting business and industry to Alabama. He envisioned an Economic Development Partnership that would join resources throughout Alabama to achieve common goals. This Partnership is now a reality, and Harris is committed to establishing the means necessary to provide economic development incentives throughout the State.

The honors and tributes bestowed on this leader are phenomenal. He currently serves on forty-six boards of directors and has received over 15 honors. These include the 1992 UAB Greater Birmingham Service Award, the 1994 Volunteer of the Year Award by the Southern Industrial Development Council, and the 1995 Quality of Life Award from Auburn University School of Human Sciences. In 1995, he was selected by The Retirement System of Alabama as one of twelve outstanding Alabamians as models for the advancement of education and commerce. He holds the honorary Doctor of Law degree from Troy State University in Montgomery and the honorary Doctor of Law degree from Faulkner University.

Mr. Harris is married to the former Glenda Steele of Alexander City. They have two children and three grandchildren.