

## Bryce Historical Committee Formed by Commissioner Houston



The Bryce Historical Committee is made up of 20 diverse members appointed by John Houston, Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Mental Health. Several engaged, involved observers also attend each meeting. All are welcome.

*Dr. Tom Hobbs*

According to Dr. Tom Hobbs, committee chairman and executive director of Western Mental Health Center, Inc., the committee's purpose is to advise Commissioner Houston of the historical elements associated with the Bryce Hospital campus and physical plant in Tuscaloosa, and make recommendations about how it might best be preserved as a memorial to all those people who have worked and lived and died at Bryce since its opening in 1861.

The committee members include mental health consumer advocates, architectural and cemetery historians, family members of former superintendents of Bryce, facility administrators and mental health professionals, and several others representing all stakeholders in Alabama's mental health system.

The committee meets in the main administration building at Bryce about every three weeks. The committee has held nearly a dozen meetings.

"One of the other things we hope to do is provide education to make the public aware of why this place is so important to our state and nation," Hobbs said. "In addition to the main buildings and the beautiful grounds, we are considering ways to preserve the cemeteries and work toward the preservation of our documents and archives. We hope that in time we will help bring Bryce the national recognition it deserves and develop a museum on the site."

"It's an honor to be on this committee with so many people who are truly dedicated to the task, and we especially appreciate the sincere support of Commissioner Houston for initiating this effort and following its progress so keenly."