Citizens of Southwest Alabama can consider themselves fortunate to have a friend like John W. Mincy. Although a Mississippian by birth, by adoption he is a son of Alabama, and as such, he is tireless in his efforts to give back to the region where he has made his home for the past 13 years.

John retired in April 1997 after more than three decades with the Ciba-Geigy Corporation. In 1970, already holding a bachelor’s degree in chemistry from Mississippi State University, he earned a B.S. degree with honors in chemical engineering while working as a developmental chemist for the company, then known simply as the Geigy Corporation. A series of promotions moved him around the country, but in 1984 he was transferred back to Alabama, and since then he has been enthusiastic and significantly effective in his service to the community.

In the Mobile area, the activity for which he is possibly best known is his involvement in the development of the Alabama School of Math and Science. A group of area leaders in 1988 began pushing the idea of building a school for gifted secondary-level math and science students, and John took the principal role in providing leadership and momentum and in raising several million dollars. The following year a legislative act authorizing the creation of the school was signed into law, and today ASMS provides tuition-free education to more than 200 students from all over the state. John currently serves as the chairman of both the school’s board of directors and its foundation board.

Young people other than aspiring scientists and mathematicians are also benefitting from their association with John Mincy. Active with the Mobile area council of the Boy Scouts for more than 10 years, he has served in capacities ranging from council president and vice president of administration to camping chairman. In 1991, in recognition of his dedication to scouting, he was awarded the Silver Beaver award, the organization’s highest honor, and in 1994 he received the group’s James E. West fellowship award.

John’s generosity of spirit has benefitted those at the university level, too. Serving as a member of the governor’s commission on higher education, he fought for and won approval for graduate engineering curricula in electrical, mechanical, and chemical engineering at the University of South Alabama, programs that had been opposed by the larger engineering schools in the central part of the state. He later served on the college of engineering industrial advisory board during 1992-94.

He has been active in charitable organizations such as the United Way and the Red Cross, as well as in state-affiliated groups like Alabama’s business council, its chemical association, and its business-industry alliance. In recognition of both his professional and his civic contributions, he was named the Mobile area engineer of the year for 1992 and inducted into the state’s engineering hall of fame two years later.

His untiring work, as well as the depth and breadth of his activities, has won John many admirers. They point out that he rarely turns down a request for help and that he embarks on each new project with unfailing commitment and expertise. In an era when apathy sometimes threatens to overwhelm society, he brings to each project that most valuable of commodities — an enthusiasm that spreads to everyone he meets.