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(St. Petersburg, Fla.) February 9, 2010 – Through his leadership and advocacy, the Hon. Peter Rudy Wallace secured funding and support for the Florida Center for Teachers – a multipurpose building at USF St. Petersburg that opened in 2001.

The university will rename the building the Peter Rudy Wallace Florida Center for Teachers on Wednesday, Feb. 17 at 5 p.m. The public is invited to attend.

The building, at 599 2nd St. S, provides university classroom and meeting space, houses the university’s Department of Journalism and Media Studies and the state’s Florida Humanities Council. Complimentary event parking is available in the USFSP Parking Garage, 250 5th Ave S.

The university first dedicated the building when it opened on the same date in 2001 as the university’s newest classroom building since Coquina Hall opened in 1984.

The Florida Center for Teachers, named for the Florida Humanities Council teacher training program the building still supports, opened at the start of a transformational decade for USF St. Petersburg. In the years since, the university grew its undergraduate student body; earned separate accreditation; and constructed a seven-story residence hall, 1,100-space parking garage, a central promenade and the Science and Technology Building.

“Peter could see the direction and potential of the university,” said Margaret Sullivan, regional chancellor. “His confidence in the university’s future impact on the community helped create the dynamic institution we have today.”

Wallace, a St. Petersburg native, was elected to the Florida House of Representatives at the age of 28 to represent District 52. He started his legislative tenure three years after graduating from Harvard Law School. He received his undergraduate degree from Harvard College.

Wallace served in the House of Representatives from 1982 to 1996, the last two as Speaker of the House; he is the only person from Pinellas County to serve in that position. Known for his compromising skills and genteel demeanor, Wallace’s ability to strengthen partnerships led to the legislature’s funding approval for the USFSP building designed to serve the university and expand teacher education in the humanities.
Florida Center for Teachers “The Florida Center for Teachers represented a combined effort for the advancement of education in Florida at all levels,” Wallace said. “I’m proud to have been part of the team of leaders that supported the building and am very grateful for this honor.”

The Florida Humanities Council’s Teacher’s Center offers graduate-level content to outstanding K-12 teachers, media specialists, guidance counselors and administrators. Programs correlate directly to the Sunshine State Standards while offering rigorous study of humanities topics with noted scholars.

“When the FHC sought a permanent home in partnership with USF St. Petersburg, Peter did more than support the project,” said Janine Farver, FHC’s executive director. “He believed in our and the university’s capacity to illuminate the heritage, traditions and stories of our state.”