Composed of Southerners, the Society is a non-profit, tax-exempt educational organization which includes Democrats, Republicans and Independents. The common bond of its members is not political ideology, but the desire to see the South achieve its full potential.

The Society's namesake, L.Q.C. Lamar, was a 19th-century Southern statesman whose eloquent pleas for reason among peoples and regions are particularly appropriate for the 20th Century South.

Organized in 1969, the Society brought together young men who believed the South's progress had been too long delayed by preoccupation with racial integration and disregard of other pressing regional problems. The founding members felt it high time that native Southerners begin forging solutions in these areas: rural poverty, low wages and per capita income, sub-standard education and housing, unemployment, an increasing rate of population growth, environmental pollution and inadequate planning by state and local governments.

It can be argued that the South has had very little to say about its destiny during the past 100 years. During Reconstruction (1865-77) the South was still under direct control of the federal government. Although in theory the reins of power were transferred back to the South around 1877, in practice the South remained at the mercy of Northern business interests for nearly 50 years. Until the late 1920's largely non-Southern interests exploited the region's resources—its land, timber, minerals and human resources—for short-term gain, without regard to the long-range implications of their actions.

Hard hit by the Depression in the 1930's, the region depended on the New Deal to survive. Again, the major decisions affecting the South were made by outsiders, not Southerners. And, of course, the story of the 1950's and 1960's is well known.

The Society is dedicated to supplanting empty rhetoric, long the solace of our region, with pragmatic dialogue. It hopes by means of a variety of programs to focus attention on regional problems and to spearhead the search for solutions.

Solving the problems will require the talents and involvement of the new breed of Southerner—Southerners who are long on imagination, innovation and professional competence, short on political dogma.

The Lamar Society welcomes all such persons.