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We Remember Marvin Pittman

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Marvin Summers Pittman

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WE REMEMBER MARVIN PITTMAN

The testimony of 22 alumni

With selected statements of Pittman

Sponsored by
Smith Callaway Banks

Auspices
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Preface.

On the Georgia Southern campus today, it is not difficult to find reminders of Marvin Pittman. Most conspicuously, the Administration Building, one of the original buildings of the college, was in 1999 named for him. This action was taken after the closure of Marvin Pittman Laboratory School on Pittman Drive. Directly off campus, there is Pittman Park, and, in a nearby residential area, there are Marvin Ave. and Pitt-Moore Road. Thus, a figure who died almost half a century ago, and who was president of a teachers college whose enrollment only broke 500 soon after his arrival, remains centrally relevant to what is now a university offering 148 degree programs to an enrollment topping 14,000.

Few, and fewer, personally remember Pittman today, and that is why the testimony in this volume is so valuable. The alumni who share their memories here allow those many who never knew Pittman, or Georgia Teachers College, a glimpse into a very different but still vital past. This is a sounding in Georgia Southern history which should provide inspiration and instruction to those who came afterwards.

Soon after the renaming of the Administration Building, Special Collections began the Marvin Summers Pittman Research Collection. We have acquired almost all of Pittman's works, both books and articles, as well as material about him and the history of Georgia schools

and rural education, both in printed and manuscript form. A full listing of the present collection can be obtained from our website at http://www2.gasou.edu/special_collections/main.html, but we continue to collect and solicit new additions.

This compilation was originally published in April by the Zach S. Henderson Library's Special Collections. I am very glad that Bulloch County Historical Society has decided to make it available to a much larger audience. I must thank Ms. Julie Sikes and Mrs. Susan Moody of Special Collections for their indispensable help in this latest project.

Marvin Goss

Louise Bennett Class of 1943

After a long, round-about bus trip, just at dusk in September of 1936, I arrived at South Georgia Teachers College to an almost abandoned campus, no roommate, and lost luggage. I was there!

Early the next morning a very timid and homesick young lady sat in the very back row at the meeting of working students. The man up front said "Louise Bennett, come to the front." I meekly went down and sat on the front row. How did he know my name? Me! That was the magic of Dr. Pittman!

He was a very friendly person and was especially interested in the working students. He stopped students in the halls or on campus just to chat, and he and Mrs. Pittman frequently had groups of working students in their home for refreshments or dinner. I was there several times.

After my sophomore year, I began to teach and went back in the summer until I received my degree in August, 1943. Each Sunday I was in Dr. Pittman's Sunday School class at the Statesboro Methodist Church and grew to know him and his deep faith better.

One summer our hearts were saddened because the Pittmans' only son had gone on a walking tour in very unsettled territory and he had not returned. I was there when the news came: Marvin Pittman, Jr. had been killed by an uncivilized tribe, and his blood had been used to fertilize their fields. Later that summer I was privileged to be present at the baptism of the deceased son's only child.

I was there that terrible summer when Dr. Pittman was fired by Georgia's governor. He was accused of having students work in his private fields adjacent to the college. It was true -- but -- all summer long the Georgia Southern dining hall had benefited from that produce!

I will never forget that last assembly. Dr. Pittman

stood on the stage with arms outstretched as he told us good-bye. There was no bitterness or ugliness, only good will for all and hope and best wishes for each of us and for our college. Our tears flowed. I could think only of the Crucifixion.

That was a black summer for all of Georgia, for Georgia's colleges were no longer accredited. But this story has a triumphant ending! The college students and younger people of Georgia joined with other caring citizens in a massive political campaign, Georgia acquired a new governor, the Georgia colleges were accredited once more, and Dr. Pittman was vindicated!

Yes, I was there!

I loved Dr. Pittman and I can truthfully say that he was one of the greatest influences of my life.

Hugh E. Boswell Class of 1941

Dr. Pittman always recognized and knew you after the first meeting. He was aggressive in the field of education and mixed with the student body. You knew he was a friend.

Isaac N. Bunce Class of 1941

By a wonderful coincidence I began attending the old Laboratory school in its second year of operation. 1934 was the year Marvin S. Pittman was appointed President of South Georgia Teachers College. That year Miss Marie Wood was the seventh grade room teacher, meaning she was in charge of that grade and supervised the student teachers. I always thought I was most fortunate to have student teachers like J. D. Cherry, Shelby Monroe and

Aubrey Pafford. We were visited by Dr. Carruth, Dr. Destler and by the new President, Dr. Pittman. I remember that he came from Michigan, but was originally from Mississippi, as was Dr. Carruth. Miss Wood was instrumental in having her students accompany Dr. Pittman and Dr. Herty on the venture to find the first pine tree utilizing the clay cup, rather than cutting a cup in the tree, thus saving many pine trees from destruction by the winds. This tree was across the Pembroke road in the area now known as Georgia Avenue and adjacent to Herty Drive. She asked me to go with her to visit Marjorie Henderson when her son Gene was a baby, as the house was close to the School's south door. Dr. Walter Downs was director of the Lab School and was later president of Young Harris College. (Please let me digress a moment, because this should be known. This past Sunday, August 1, 1999, we visited Clara Lewis McMilkin in Wilkes County, who was Librarian at Young Harris. She knew Dr. and Mrs. Downs and remembered that they were lovely people. She also said that former Governor Zell Miller's mother spent much time beautifying that campus.)

My early recollection of Dr. Pittman in these circumstances was of his very black hair, his deep, husky "Yankee" voice. He visited our classes to keep informed as to the progress of his teacher training program. I felt very fortunate to be a part of this program. We received the very best education the college was able to provide.

It so happened that the Rosenwald Foundation out of Chicago provided funds for helping operate the Library and was a factor in securing funds for the new library to be built on the highest spot on the campus by Walter Aldred, Statesboro's gifted architect and builder. Just the name Rosenwald was enough to anger then-Governor Eugene Talmadge who did not want any Yankee influence in Georgia. This phobia led to his persuading the Regents not to reappoint Dr. Pittman as President. This action really upset Statesboro and for the Regents meeting in Atlanta on

July 14, 1941, a delegation of citizens were organized to go to that meeting to try to persuade the Governor to change his mind. My mother, a 1913 graduate of the school, was asked to be in the group, as was J. Walter Hendrix, the first president and a lifelong friend of my parents. The Governor did not change his mind.

This was the reason for Dr. Pittman's letter to my parents -- "We are grateful for people like you who have the right and stand up for it; who have ideals and strive to attain them; who contribute to the strength and stability of society by rearing a worthy family, maintaining the best standards of home life, succeeding in a splendid fashion as a farm family. These are worthy, noteworthy achievements. We are all indebted to you because of them." What a wonderful tribute to my parents and to Dr. Pittman, who remembered them as friends.

In 1943, Judge J. L. Renfrow was appointed to the Board of Regents and his first action was to have Dr. Pittman reappointed as president of Georgia Teachers College.

There was a war going on. I did not return to Statesboro until 1950. My last recollection of Dr. Pittman was at a Scout meeting in the Brooklet Primitive Baptist Church where we stood in the doorway talking. Our common background was of his son, Marvin S. Pittman, Jr., a very handsome young man who graduated from the Laboratory School a year ahead of me. This very intelligent man was working on his doctoral program, doing research in the Phillippines and was slain by the "Huks." Dr. Pittman died on February 27, 1954, and is buried in Eastside Cemetery. We are all better for his having passed our way.

Rev. Carlton Carruth Class of 1941

My knowledge of Dr. Pittman goes back to my childhood. He and my father, Dr. Joseph Enoch Carruth, were classmates at Millsaps College in Jackson, Miss., from 1902-06. My father became Professor of Education at South Georgia Teachers' College in 1928, serving until 1947. In 1933, Dr. Guy W. Wells, President of S.G.T.C. announced he was leaving to become President of Georgia State College for Women at Milledgeville. Shortly after that announcement, my Dad wrote to the Board of Regents and suggested that Dr. Pittman should be elected President of S.G.T.C. Dad thought Dr. Pittman was the outstanding man in Teacher Training in the United States at that time. The Board of Regents did elect Dr. Pittman, and he led the college to new heights.

Our Carruth family were close friends to the Pittmans. My twin brother, Edward, and I were in high school with their son, Marvin Jr. We also knew their daughter Katherine.

Rev. Carruth's brother Bruce recalls of Millsaps days:

In 1902-06 there were several large "boarding houses" in which groups of students lived. Marvin Pittman lived in one of those, and our Dad lived in another. They were built of rough-sawed lumber and by 1948 (when I was a student there) all except one had been removed and replaced with brick dormitories.

Our Dad related that one year the students pulled a prank on Major Millsaps at Homecoming time. Millsaps lived in a large mansion and kept a milk cow in the back yard. The men students secured logs from a sawmill,

erected a rude platform on the campus, and during the night before Homecoming Day, they hoisted Major Millsaps' cow to the top of the platform, about 40 feet high, and left her there through the festivities of the day. Pittman and Carruth were participants in the prank.

Cherry Waldrep Clements Class of 1938

I was in a very unique group of students at GTC - the Rosenwald Scholarship Group - and we received special attention from Dr. Pittman.

Young men and women who had been teaching for several years without a college degree were given the opportunity by a philanthropic foundation to complete their degree work in one or two years - as was needed. A very special group of teachers skilled in rural education headed by Nan Lacy and Jane Forsyth had been chosen to direct this project.

At the time I was chosen to be in this group, I was teaching mathematics in junior high school in the school system from which I had graduated - Dublin, Georgia. My experience with people of Dr. Pittman's stature was limited! In fact, I stood in awe of him. He soon dispelled any fear or reticence I might have felt. I came to realize that the higher the quality of the man, the less pretentious he was. The Rosenwald Group (Rosie we were called) met with Dr. Pittman often and in the president's home frequently. I came to appreciate and love Dr. Pittman!

Recently, I was asked to share with the young women in our church the major influences in my life. It did not take me long to single out outstanding people who had influenced me, one of the first being Dr. Pittman. Later, I served as G. T. C. alumni president (possibly the first female) and assumed the responsibility because of the contribution G. T. C. and its leaders had made to my life.

After two years of teaching, one with Nan Lacy in Lexington, Kentucky, I was offered a Rosenwald Fellowship to get my Master's at the University of Georgia. Emphasis was on rural county supervision just as it had been at G. T. C. During this year, Dr. Walter Cocking, Dean of the Graduate School, was fired by the Board of Regents for seemingly bigoted and narrow-minded reasons. The same fate befell Dr. Pittman. I grieved over these actions and as a result became an activist for social justice. Each of these men went on to higher and better opportunities after leaving Georgia. Each college was discredited for these actions. My husband Hal Clements, also in the Georgia Rosenwald Program, and I are happy that we have lived long enough to see these two institutions become reputable educational institutions.

While serving as alumni president, I accompanied a group to Atlanta to ask the Board of Regents to make G. T. C. a graduate school. It took a good many years for this to become a reality! But Dr. Pittman helped to establish Georgia Southern as a school of integrity and quality.

My husband and I received Alumni Awards in the field of education from Georgia Southern during the period where Gene Crawford was alumni secretary. Many of the great things that have come to me during my lifetime had a beginning in 1938 at G. T. C. I am proud to give this "testimony" which you may or may not elect to use.

Nell Pittman Franklin Class of 1945

My fond memories of Dr. Pittman happened because we had the same last name. I attended GTC in 1938-39, working in the dining hall on the government NYA program. I was assigned to wait on the faculty table and each time that Dr. Pittman had a meal there, he told the others I was his daughter. Of course, they all knew it

wasn't true, but it made me feel important, and I needed that.

In the fall of '39 I was student-teaching at the outlying school (Was the name Ogeechee?) when Dr. Pittman and an agent for student loans came to see me. They may have talked with the other teachers, also, but the fact that he didn't just send someone to see us but that he brought him to the school made a great impression on me.

I didn't accept the loan because I had been promised a teaching position at the beginning of the new year. Each summer I went back to GTC until I graduated. It took a long time but it was in one of those summers that I met Dr. Pittman's son. When he learned that I was a Pittman, we sat on the grass and talked and talked. He was extremely nice and would probably have become as outstanding a person as his father was.

Mary Edith Andrews Geiger Class of 1939

Dr. Marvin Pittman was one of the people who made it possible for me to continue my college education.

As a graduate of Andrew Junior College (which was seven miles from my home), I had applied for admission to Georgia Teacher's College for the 1937-38 school year. It was to be my junior year. My funds were very limited. Therefore, I also applied for a campus job and was accepted for both. That job was essential if I planned to continue my education.

My father thought attending college was a waste of time and money. Despite being accepted and promised work he told me I was not going. Therefore, I wrote the college and told them I would not be attending after all.

A few days before the beginning of the school year, a cousin of mine, Marvin Smith (a graduate of Georgia Teacher's College), visited my home. He talked my father

into letting me borrow money so that I could continue college. That loan plus the money from my campus job would pay my way.

In the rush of preparation that followed, I neglected to notify the college that I was coming! I arrived with other students who were to receive work assignments. Every student except me was assigned a job. I was told my name had been taken off the list of students needing jobs and no other jobs were available!

In much distress, I immediately went to Dr. Pittman's office and told him my story. He pulled open a drawer of his desk, pulled out a folder, and studied it. In less than a minute he stated: "You have a job!"

Dr. Pittman was so thoughtful and personable with everyone. Without the encouragement he provided, I'm sure many of the students during the Depression would not have finished college. I am sure many would consider him a hero of his time as I do.

I join with others to salute the memory of Dr. Pittman.

Eloise Mercer Daniel Hodges

I feel honored to write my memories of Dr. Marvin S. Pittman. I considered him to have been a very special friend.

It was the fall of 1935 when I enrolled at South Georgia Teacher's College. I had been awarded a scholarship to work only one hour each day. I knew that would not be enough for me, so on Monday morning I was waiting at Dr. Pittman's office door when he came to work. I've always been grateful for his compassion and inspiration. I was given two and a fourth hours of work per day and in the library at that!

Enrollment had increased in the summer of 1936 at the college. Dr. Pittman called me to come to his office.

He asked if I would give up my room in East Hall and go room out in Coach Crook Smith's little cottage somewhere out in the field beyond East Hall, probably behind what is now Cone Hall. Of course, I couldn't refuse. There were four or more others that went to live in the cottage. I remember only Hilda Tippins, my roommate, from Claxton, Georgia.

There was an occasion for Dr. Pittman to attend some function in Wrightsville, Johnson County, Georgia. I don't remember the reason for his visit. He asked Annie Lou Price and me if we would like to go with him and visit our parents in Donovan, Georgia. We were highly honored, not only to go with such a distinguished person as Dr. Pittman, but also with the opportunity to see our parents and families.

After teaching school four years in Bellville, Georgia, I went to Girard High School in Burke County. Dr. and Mrs. Pittman had organized Reading Clubs in rural areas around Statesboro. I don't know why my school was picked. Others who were former students from South Georgia Teachers College participating in the reading clubs were Joe Buxton, Mary Sowell and Marjorie Bacon. We always served refreshments or a light supper at these functions. I remember after one of these functions, which took place on a cold night, we had oyster stew, grapefruit slices and white grapes and coffee. The Pittmans arrived unexpectedly early, and sat watching us fix supper in that cold Home Economics Building. Tommy Wall was principal at that time.

The last time I saw Dr. Pittman was in Americus, Georgia, during the late 1940's or early 1950's. There was an occasion where people were assembled in the street in front of the Windsor Hotel. I looked up and saw Dr. Pittman standing on the balcony of the hotel. Naturally I waited until I could go into the lobby and speak with him. My small son, Carolus Daniel, Jr., was with me.

I was most saddened when I learned of the death of

Dr. Pittman's son. With family and leading a busy life and time passing so quickly, I don't remember ever reading about his or Mrs. Pittman's death.

Surely, I was one of the fortunate ones to be influenced and inspired by this wonderful, compassionate man and educator. The impact of the life of Dr. Pittman and the contributions and influences he made on the lives of so many people, the college and to the advancement of education in this part of the state is the legacy of this outstanding individual.

Eloise Hodges attended South Georgia Teachers College from 1935 to 1937. She later received her B. S. in Education in 1958 from Georgia Teachers College, M.Ed. in 1964 and Ed.S. in elementary education in 1966 from Georgia Southern College. She retired in 1981 after 31 years of public school teaching and presently resides in Bellville, Georgia.

Jewell Vandiver Holleman Class of 1935

I remember that Dr. Pittman's reply to my note of condolence when his son was killed by the Huks in the Philippines implied a complete trust in God and His government of all events. His faith and praise were unshaken.

Thank you for working on this tribute - well-deserved!

Dr. Alvin L. McLendon Class of 1939

I entered South Georgia Teachers College in the fall of 1937 as a junior, transferring from Georgia Southwestern

College, Americus, Georgia. I had worked for a year in my hometown, Dawson, which is in southwest Georgia and saved enough money to make a start. I wrote to Dr. Pittman and he had responded, promising me a job to help with expenses. I worked both my junior and senior years.

Dr. Pittman knew his students and took special interest in them. I met my future wife during my first quarter at SGTC. She, also, had been promised and given campus work by Dr. Pittman. We both felt indebted to him for the boost he had given us, making it possible for us to advance in our education.

My first teaching position was in Metter High School. During that year, Dr. Pittman visited that high school and spoke to the students. He encouraged them to continue their education after high school graduation.

I was employed for my third year as a science teacher to teach in the Laboratory High School on the campus of South Georgia Teachers College. I was thus again exposed to the personality and professionalism of Dr. Pittman as a part of the faculty. It was during this school year that Dr. Pittman was ousted by Governor Gene Talmadge, who appointed Dr. Gates in his stead. Under the leadership of Mr. Walter Downs, Principal of the Laboratory School, a group of some six or eight faculty of the School marched across campus to the President's office to protest the Governor's actions and Dr. Pittman's replacement.

Dr. Pittman weekly held a student assembly. Attendance was mandatory, and Dr. Pittman led the faculty into the auditorium and to the stage, where they sat, and participated in the program. Through this I learned to respect the college faculty and administration. Dr. Pittman gave me a zeal to continue my education and to prepare myself well for the challenges I would face in my career.

Emolyn Rainey Mount Class of 1941

Dr. Pittman was indeed a special person. He and his family attended the Methodist Church where my father was minister during my high school days, so I was privileged to know the family before I started my college days.

Dr. Pittman was there to guide and inspire us for the four years I was at G. T. C. I do remember how upset we all were when Gov. Eugene Talmadge fired Dr. Pittman - I believe it was because he was too friendly with people of the "wrong" color. We had a big campus protest and demonstration.

Dr. Pittman did much to get our school off to the success it enjoys. I have returned to Georgia after fifty-three years in Pennsylvania and Connecticut and am so glad to be "home" again - I'm not close enough to be active on campus.

Hilda Tippins Parker Class of 1941

I remember when Dr. Pittman came to South Georgia Teachers College. It was the summer of 1934, and he came at the beginning of the 2nd session of summer school. He asked all the students to choose a talent to develop for the next 5 weeks, and to select a group to work with. I chose folk dancing. This period was for only five weeks. We met each day at the same time, and practiced. The experience was fun, and I did learn more about folk dancing.

Dr. Pittman was an outstanding leader, and he encouraged all students to participate. He was interested in all the students, and wanted to help them in their studies.

After his son was lost in the Far East, he decided to visit some of the students and encourage them. He came to

see me, and I did appreciate his interest. He enjoyed seeing one of my children. His visit to me showed how interested he was in my life. I really appreciated his encouragement. He was an inspiration to me.

One year the Alumni Association met on Dr. Pittman's grounds. Everyone seemed to enjoy his hospitality.

I feel he made a big difference in my life. I knew he was counting on me to try and do my best. I am truly thankful for the privilege of knowing Dr. Pittman.

Alice Hill Pierce Class of 1939

In 1934, I was a freshman at Georgia Teachers College, and Dr. Pittman was the incoming president. There were two dormitories on campus at that time, East Hall and West Hall. Although there were fewer than 300 students, enrollment was up and additional living quarters had been made in Anderson Hall, upstairs over the dining room. That still was not enough space for all the students, so the overflow had to find rooms in town in places the college recommended. My sister Skeet and I were part of that overflow, and we were staying at the Rushton (or was it Rushing?) House. One of our first mornings there, when we went down for breakfast, the hostess sat us down at the table with a gentleman and his family. When the introductions were made, who should our tablemate be but the new college president!

Dr. Pittman was such a very caring man. He genuinely cared about people, especially his students. He cared about who we were, where we were from, and where we were going. Every year at the beginning of school, he would go down a list of the counties in the state and call the names of every student from each county and ask if they had brought some friends with them. He could remember the

name of each student as well as the town they were from.

Dr. Pittman had a memory like no one I've ever seen. Years after I had graduated, after WWII, my husband Graydon and I were living in Albany. Dr. Pittman came to town to either organize or strengthen the Albany GTC alumni association and he spend the night in our home. After all those years, he remembered that time when we first met when he came to Statesboro. He even remembered that I was from Bainbridge in Decatur County and that Graydon was from Rocky Ford in Screven County. The alumni meeting was held in Radium Springs, and he remembered the names of every one of his former students. That was one of the special things about him. Once he put a name and a face together, he had it. If he attended a banquet with over 100 people, by the end of the evening he could remember every one of them.

He always kept in touch with his former students. I feel quite blessed to have been a student while he was president of GTC.

Joseph D. Purvis Class of 1939

It is a pleasure to have a part in Georgia Southern University's commemoration of Dr. Marvin Pittman. He was a good man. I knew him as a strong leader.

A single incident which occurred in my presence clearly defined his character. Once I entered his office as he was dictating a letter rejecting and returning tickets to a big football game in Atlanta. The letter was directed to the publisher of textbooks with whom he did business. The contributor had crossed Dr. Pittman's threshold of integrity.

I think our students and faculty, generally speaking,

came to a fuller appreciation of him following the bigoted and grandiose humiliation by Governor Talmadge. We defended him without exception against false charges being circulated. We held in contempt the teacher who originated some of these.

Possibly the deed contained a reversionary clause when Dr. Pittman bought a piece of land near the college entrance for personal use but the source of my information thought not. She was a member of the Trapnell family of Portal, the seller. Her name was Sibyl Starling. She told me that when the Pittmans were about to leave he contacted the seller and offered the property back to him for the same price Dr. Pittman had paid for it.

Dr. Pittman was a member of Rotary International and frequently attended the weekly meetings of the Rotary Club in Savannah. Influential members of Statesboro's business community were sometimes his guests. He took me to the meeting at which mayor Thomas Gamble announced the establishment of Armstrong Junior College, now a senior institution. (I was editor of *The George-Anne*.) Dr. Pittman was building a foundation for organizing a Rotary Club in Statesboro, which came about in due course.

The Rotary Club of Statesboro came into existence 63 years ago. During all the years since it has been a major factor in the community's progress in the field of education and civic endeavors.

The class which entered South Georgia Teachers College in 1932, my class, had about 200 members, the most ever. Total enrollment was about 600, representing primarily the rural areas and small towns of Southeast Georgia. Many performed tasks of one kind or another to help themselves along financially. Remember, those were the years of America's Great Depression.

I was able to attend because an older sister had borrowed \$24 from our local bank in Willacoochee at no interest for four years to get me enrolled. Thereafter I had

two scholarships of \$10 each valid only during my first year and a job sweeping McCroan Auditorium. That is where dating couples sat during limited hours on Saturday and Sunday nights.

Dr. Guy Wells, who preceded Dr. Pittman, was known to all the boys and girls as "Wa-Wa." This was because of a slight stutter and his constant repetition of the question "Wha-Wha-What do you want?"

Teachers and students maintained a close and caring relationship with each other and expressed a genuine welcome to visitors. While recruiting personnel in later years at a dozen or so institutions of higher learning I felt such warmth at only one --- Washington and Lee in Lexington, Virginia. I was to learn that W & L was widely noted for that very thing.

I daresay that in the atmosphere that prevailed at TC we were consciously prepared for the realities to follow. We were challenged. I would also venture the opinion that the net result was upward movement of the level of teaching all over Georgia.

We had some exceptional students, of course. Leonard Kent of Graymont-Summit, later Twin City, scaled the academic heights for a professorship at the University of Chicago, or so I've heard. Others I am sure about. George Donaldson of Claxton established a nationally known outdoor educational program for the Kellogg Foundation. Joe Lambright of Brunswick, quarterback on the football team, became editor of the *Savannah Morning News*. He had a scholarship which consisted of one of the campus jobs. Elizabeth Fletcher of Statesboro practiced pediatrics in Bulloch County in the 1940's. She was among the early women medical doctors of the state.

Mable Rocker of Crawfordville, another pioneer, ran for and was elected Superintendent of Schools in Brantley County. There she so inspired her board that for many years after leaving office they met again for old times' sake

during the Christmas season --- just them, no spouses. High expectations bred high performance. A teacher told Tully Pennington that inasmuch as he was a gifted individual he should try to go far, so hit those books. Tully did and himself became a professor at TC.

Mrs. Pittman, gracious and cultivated, made it a point to become acquainted with many of the students, some of us fresh out of the boondocks. She enhanced and broadened our learning experience. For example, she was hostess for dinner parties given in her home for various groups. The most outstanding social event of my college attendance was such a party she gave for the 17 staff members of *The George-Anne*. She went all out, the whole kit and caboodle. This does not sound like much today, but to unsophisticated children of those depression days it was. Believe me, it was.

Troubled by what he termed the cynical immorality of his country, John Steinbeck wrote to his friend Adlai Stevenson: "If I wanted to destroy a nation I would give it too much, and I would have it on its knees, miserable, greedy, sick."

At Georgia Teachers College well over half a century ago, the students and faculty alike shared with happiness their deficiency of plentitude. For this there was a counterpoint for the poverty part. A friend of Dr. Fielding Russell, for a long time Professor of Literature and formidable tennis player and boxer, told us about such a predicament in these well-chosen words. "Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head...." With treasured memories and happy thoughts.

Frank Quattlebaum Class of 1935

I graduated from GTC in 1935, and I believe '34/'35 was Dr. Pittman's second year as President. In that brief period, I was greatly affected by his presence in two specific areas. Please note that I came from a rural south Georgia community, and was affected greatly by the years of the Great Depression. It was only possible for me to remain in school by working at the college, in addition to accepting a football scholarship. I was the first graduate from GTC to be accepted in a medical school. Six hundred students, all white, were enrolled at that time.

I had seen very little of the world beyond South Georgia. I was born and reared in a culture that perceived the African-Americans (*Negroes*, then) to be an inferior race, and one meant to serve the whites.

Dr. Pittman brought a breath of fresh air. He was a "Yankee" with ideas contrary to those of many local leaders. He saw things that needed changing, and changed them. I am vague about the political furor created that resulted in his being fired by Governor Eugene Talmadge. I think that this incident, plus other academic activities by Talmadge, caused the temporary disaccreditation for a year or more of GTC, University Medical College at Augusta, and University of Georgia in Athens.

Dr. Pittman was one of the leaders who helped usher in the new South. He paid a personal price, but his legacy survived. I am pleased that you are honoring him.

The second area in which Dr. Pittman influenced me on a personal basis was my awakening to the race problem that was a blot on Southern culture. Dr. Pittman invited Dr. George Washington Carver, a son of a slave, to address students from the auditorium podium. This was a first -- no black man had ever been there, except in a janitorial role.

As Dr. Carver spoke, I was mesmerized. I thought that if he had not had a northern relative, who took him in, educated him, and returned him to the South, we would have been deprived of a great intellect. This quiet, humble man gave an immense gift to Southern economics and education.

The above event was a personal and moral "watershed" for me. From that moment I became a citizen of the world, struggling to overcome the belief that brotherhood excluded one on the basis of race. On that issue, we are becoming a better nation. Thank you, Dr. Pittman.

Roxie Remley Emerita Professor of Art

Retired President Marvin S. Pittman was actively engaged in other needs at Georgia Teachers College. I recall meeting him in Nashville, Tennessee, where he was searching for G. T. C. faculty at Peabody College for Teachers. He had remembered Georgia Watson, a summer school student at what was then South Georgia Teachers College in the 1930's. He offered her a faculty position at G. T. C. for then-President Zach S. Henderson. Georgia had completed work for the M.A. degree. She refused his suggestion, having begun work toward the Ph.D. He assured her that he would be back.

He returned the following year asking her again to return. Her degree work completed in August, 1949, other job offers in the wings, Dr. Pittman succeeded in his mission.

A letter followed from President Henderson with the salary offer and a footnote by secretary Miss Mae Michael, "Don't you stay in Tenn. Come on back home. We think you're the 'kitten's paws.'"

C. D. Sheley Class of 1939

Dr. Pittman provided an orchestra for our Sunday meals in the school cafeteria. This was my first exposure to good music. It was only very much later that I realized this was typical Dr. Marvin S. Pittman, the man and the educator. It was his desire to broaden the horizon of every student.

I remember when I first met Dr. Pittman. My dad and I carried velvet beans as part of my tuition. Dr. Pittman treated us as visiting royalty, not as a poor farmer and his son. He was business-like but friendly and there was a twinkle in his eyes that promised humor and a love for humanity.

It was my special privilege to interview Dr. Pittman for *The George-Anne*, the student newspaper. He was always cordial and friendly and gave me plenty of copy for the paper.

In my junior year, 1938, as associate editor, it was necessary for Dr. Pittman to call me in on the carpet. I had written that the umpire in a close football game should be in the State Institution for the Blind or in the Insane Asylum. When Dr. Pittman talked to me I felt I was being taught and not chastised, that it was a valuable learning experience. I did not feel beaten-down but enlightened.

As Editor in Chief of *The George-Anne* in my senior year, 1939, I never felt pressured to write in a certain way, Dr. Pittman believed in freedom of the press and I enjoyed it very much.

Once again, though, he had to discuss protocol, with me on the carpet. The Rosenwald students came to the college for the short Spring Quarter on scholarships. I wrote an editorial saying that these were brilliant people, already experienced in teaching, and should not be graded

on the same basis as regular students. I meant no harm, but Dr. Pittman felt that I wasn't showing proper sensitivity and after our talk I felt the same way. He was never overbearing and whether in our interviews on the carpet, I felt that I had participated in a good learning situation. I felt that I truly benefitted from my association with Dr. Pittman and always hoped that a little of his polish would rub off on me. It did me worlds of good to be around him.

In my sophomore year, Dr. Pittman helped by giving me a job under the provisions of the Roosevelt Youth Program. I swept floors in Sanford Hall and it helped me learn humility.

When I was about to assume the responsibilities of being editor, Dr. Pittman had the usual financial crunch and called me in to tell me that I would receive only one-half the regular salary for being editor. That would've been disaster for me and my family because we were depending on the financial aid to see me through graduation. I was struck by an inspiration. I said: "Dr. Pittman, have you already hired a business manager?" When he said "no," I asked him if I could serve in both positions, thereby getting one complete salary. He replied in the affirmative and I was really grateful. Of course, I didn't have much leisure time.

When he was ousted by Governor Eugene Talmadge, the entire state felt sympathy for him and it led to the defeat of Mr. Talmadge. In all the time I was at South Georgia Teachers College (1935-1939) I never heard Dr. Pittman comment one time on the racist policies of the state. He did a sermon one Sunday at Sylvania Methodist Church and all of my family went to hear him. Only when he read the wrong part in the responsive reading could one tell what terrible strain he was experiencing. The sermon was well received and he made many friends that day.

I wrote a letter of protest to the *Savannah Morning News* and they printed it. It was the first such letter they had published. They admitted they had been so swamped

with letters of protest and against their editorial policy in support for Mr. Talmadge, they decided to print them.

My wife and I were teaching and decided to run by to see him. He and his charming wife gave us a hearty welcome and made us feel right at home.

When I left the service in 1946, I went by to see Dr. Pittman and Miss Mae Michael. I asked for advice and he gave it. He suggested that I attend George Peabody College for Teachers and that I seek work in Augusta. I accepted his advice and have never regretted it. I received a principal's certificate as a result of my stay at Peabody. My wife and I were able to enter the Richmond County School System and we put our roots down and resided and worked there for 31 years before retiring and moving back to the farm in Bulloch County. I must add that I did not retire early but had amassed 38 years of experience. I gave credit to Dr. Pittman for this successful experience.

It was a real pleasure to see the Administration Building named for Dr. Pittman. He made it! He richly deserved that honor!

Julian Cecil Stanley, Jr. Class of 1937

(who came to SGTC from East Point, Georgia)

I remember President Marvin S. Pittman well because of two events at South Georgia Teachers College, 1936-1937.

1) His brilliant, ill-fated son was in the chemistry class I practice-taught in the laboratory school under Mr. Roberts.

2) When I asked for an NRA 25¢-per-hour job tending the tennis courts, Dr. Pittman himself interviewed me, apparently to determine whether or not I was worthy

of such a "plum." (I got the job.)

Dr. Pittman was a far-seeing president, eager to improve that little teachers' college in rural Georgia, which of course he did.

Jackie A. Strange Class of 1947

I came to Georgia Teachers' College as a freshman in 1943, and remember with fondness and great admiration Marvin Pittman and his wife. As a young woman of fifteen, I was very impressed with the admiration he seemed to feel for each student. No one escaped his words of wisdom or the gentleness of his voice and smile.

Throughout the earlier part of my career, I was privileged to sit in some of his classes. I feel that the wisdom he imparted to us students and the leadership he provided for a fairly young college was instrumental in shaping individual careers and the future of the college.

Dr. Pittman loved what he was doing and that plays a very important part in the success of one's career. The instrumentalism of his values was paramount to the future of the students and to the college. We were very fortunate to have had a person of his caliber giving guidance to the future of education.

One of the things I remember most about Dr. Pittman was his generous contribution of land for us charter members of Pittman Park United Methodist Church to build a sanctuary close to the college that would give students close proximity to a church. I am also the recipient of some gifts that his wife gave to me after he died. In my home is a collection of plates he had gathered from around the world during his travels. I also have a pair of bronze fish bookends that he used in his office. Therefore, I have a part of him

that lives with me every day and reminds me of a giant of a man who had a great influence on my life. I am thankful for that opportunity.

I started my postal career in the post office at Georgia Teachers College during his tenure there and went on to become the Deputy Postmaster General of the United States of America [during the Carter Administration.] I feel that some of the credit goes to him as one of my first mentors outside of my home.

Ben C. Tillman Class of 1942

At age 18, I was working on SGTC Farm when I happened to be alone with Dr. Pittman one evening. I told him that I wanted to enter college and maybe become a teacher. We talked for a while and he told me that I was a smart guy but he didn't believe I was teacher material.

Most of my four years at GTC were rough. Disintegration was being pushed from the state and Dr. Pittman was fired and a very disliked man was sent to replace him. The school was in conflict.

After December, 1941, many students, including seniors, went out and got drunk, a dozen or so. Some came on campus late Saturday night screaming and throwing bottles. They were discharged, sent home, all credits lost.

Lestina Stanley Webb

Although I attended South Georgia Teachers College only a year (1937-38), memories are etched in my mind and heart 62 years later. My life has been enriched by my freshman year there, prompting me to continue and

graduate from Brenau College in 1941.

Dr. Marvin Pittman was a superb President. He listened to our needs and cared deeply about the campus, his students, their conduct and a dedicated team of faculty and workers.

He was assisted by Miss Mamie Veazy, the matron of the dormitory where I lived. She operated the hall as would be expected by a prim, stern housemother of that generation. We respected her and were known as "Her Girls."

Miss Malvina Trussell gave outstanding talks of her trip to Europe and I listened in rapt amazement thinking how wonderful it would be to travel *that far* and I dreamed of imaginable places. Yes, I've been to Europe four times and thought of her while in Venice recently.

The Late Christopher Bean was directed by Dr. Thomas Stroup and I was fortunate to have a major role. As a joke for the cast and displaying immaturity, I ate the bread and drank the milk that were "props" at the rehearsal. He was furious but forgiving.

Since this remembrance relates primarily to Dr. Pittman, I wish to state further that he knew personally all of the 500 students there. The natural beauty of the campus and the progress begun by him have resulted in a large university. He laid the foundation, and it is with joy that I learn of the Administration Building being named for him.

Delmas Wheeler Class of 1935

In an attempt to adequately describe this outstanding gentleman, many complimentary words must be used, such as: confident, professional, capable and compassionate. He was truly a man of vision. Dr. Pittman was not a native of

Georgia. His frequent referrals to Ypsilanti, Michigan, never allowed us to forget from whence he came.

Dr. Pittman reached out to bring in faculty from other sections of the nation, and even some with international schooling. He exposed us to people, situations and experiences that, up until this time, we had not had the opportunity from which to benefit and enjoy. He brought in outstanding chapel speakers who had great diversity in their respective backgrounds. I especially remember the noted scientist, Dr. George Washington Carver, one of the most humble men I ever had the privilege to meet. This stands out in my memory as this was many years before integration. Another speaker was an industrialist from Chicago that he met while traveling on one of his business trips. This man, with only a secondary education, had spent his lifetime studying and memorizing great literature. When asked questions by the student body about passages from literature, he could quote verbatim page after page from most any particular work.

It has taken some maturing for us to look in retrospect and have a deep appreciation for the opportunity to have studied under his administration and to have been associated with him - a great educator.

CHRONOLOGY OF DR. MARVIN SUMMERS PITTMAN

- 1882, April 12 – Born in Eupora, Mississippi, to Ellen Bradford and John Wesley Pittman, a Methodist minister, farmer, and Confederate veteran
- 1905 – A.B., Millsaps College, a Methodist college in Jackson, Mississippi
- 1905-1906 – Teacher of science and mathematics, Monroe, Louisiana
- 1906-1907 – Principal of Crowley High School, Crowley, Louisiana
- 1907-1909 – Superintendent of Public Instruction, Madison Parish, Louisiana
- 1909-1912 – Professor of History, Louisiana State Normal College, Natchitoches [now Northwestern State University of Louisiana]
- 1912 – President, Louisiana State Teachers Association
- 1912 – Manager for unsuccessful campaign of James B. Aswell (Independent) for Governor of Louisiana. Aswell, who resigned his position as President of the State Normal College to run, had made substantial improvements in public education as State Superintendent of Education during 1904-1908
- 1912-1918 – Instructor in Education Department, Oregon Normal College [now Western Oregon University], Monmouth
- 1915, February 13 – Married to Anna Mary Terrell of New Iberia, Louisiana
- 1917 – M.A., University of Oregon at Eugene. Thesis: "The Rural School Problem"
- 1921 – Ph.D., Columbia University, New York
- 1921 – *The Value of School Supervision Demonstrated with the Zone Plan in Rural Schools* [his doctoral dissertation]; *A Guide to the Teaching of Spelling* [with Hugh Clark Pryor]

- 1921-1929 – Head of Rural Education, Michigan State Normal College [now Eastern Michigan University], Ypsilanti; organized Lincoln Consolidated School, 1923, a training school for Education students
- 1922 – *Successful Teaching in Rural Schools*
- 1923-1926 – Taught summers at University of Michigan
- 1924 – *Problems of the Rural Teacher*
- 1927, Summer – Taught at University of Manitoba, Winnipeg
- 1927-1928 – Sabbatical year in Europe. He visited schools in eleven countries
- 1928, Summer – Taught at Pennsylvania State College [now Pennsylvania State University], University Park
- 1929 – Survey study of rural education in Mexico
- 1929, Summer – Taught at University of Nebraska, Lincoln
- 1929-1934 – Director of Laboratory Schools and Teacher Training, Michigan State Normal College
- 1931 – *The Practical Plan Book for Rural Teachers* [with Delia E. Kibbs]
- 1932 – Rural education study in Cuba (Autumn); *Profitable Farming* [a high school Agriculture textbook; with J. Milton Hover]
- 1934, April – Elected President of South Georgia Teachers College, to begin July 1; President Guy Wells became President of Georgia State Women's College
- 1935, March 8-9 – First Georgia Progress Day highlighted education, with guest speakers
- 1935, April 15 – Dr. Charles Holmes Herty honored for invention of the turpentine cup; forest christened "Herty Pines"
- 1935, June 9 – Gov. Eugene Talmadge gave commencement address
- 1935, December – S.G.T.C. accepted as full member of Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools
- 1936 – Reorganization of the faculty into seven divisions of specialization

1936, **April** – Rosenwald Fund announced a grant of \$30,000 over 5 years, for which Pittman had campaigned
 1936, **December 10** – Sanford Hall dedicated; named after University System chancellor

1937 – First issue of the Literary Supplement to *The George-Anne*, later *Miscellany*

1938 – President, Georgia Association of Colleges

1938, **June** – Gov. E.D. Rivers and Mrs. Helen Coxon were commencement speakers

1938, **December** – Three new buildings dedicated: a library building (later the Rosenwald Building); a women's residence hall (later Lewis Hall) and the west wing of a laboratory school (later Marvin Pittman Laboratory School; main construction completed 1952, three annexes added, 1969, 1975)

1939, **September** – The Board of Regents changed college name to Georgia Teachers College, a change Pittman had sought

1941, **May 30** – Board of Regents hearing, dominated by Gov. Eugene Talmadge, raised fraudulent accusations against Pittman and other University System figures

1941, **June 16** – Over fifty Bulloch Countians drove to Atlanta to speak in support of Pittman, but were denied an opportunity to do so

1941, **July 14** – Removed from his position as G.T.C. President by Board of Regents vote, 10-5

1941, **August 1** – Defended himself in radio broadcast on WSB

1941, **August 11** – Albert M. Gates, President of Brewton-Parker Institute for twenty years, appointed President of G.T.C. by the Regents

1941, **October 29** – G.T.C. student body unanimously approved a resolution of protest

1941, **December** – The Southern Association of College and Secondary Schools voted to disaccredit sixteen units of the University System of Georgia for "unjustified political

interference"

1942, **February 9-1943, February** – Director of Instruction at Louisiana State Teachers College, Natchitoches, [now Northwestern State University of Louisiana], where he had begun as a college teacher

1942, **April** – G.T.C. Student Council unanimously voted to join the statewide Student Political League to "fight Talmadgeism and restore the University System of Georgia to its proper ranks"

1943, **January 26** – The Board of Regents, reorganized by new governor Ellis Arnall, voted unanimously to reinstate Pittman

1943, **February 8** – Returned to Presidency of G.T.C., as Gates relinquished the position by order of the Board of Regents; Pittman re-hired Miss Mae Michael, who had also been dismissed, as President's Secretary

1943, **May 31** – *Atlanta Constitution* editor Ralph McGill was commencement speaker

1943-1945 – Marvin Pittman, Jr., an Air Force bombardier, captured and held prisoner by the Germans

1947 – Marvin Pittman, Jr., awarded B.S. at University of Chicago with thesis on the Port of Savannah

1947, **February** – Announced his retirement as G.T.C. President; succeeded by Dr. Judson C. Ward; Pittman became President Emeritus and student advisor, with office in the Administration Building

1947, **March-June** – Served as member of a special commission on rural education sent to West Germany by the War Department

1948 – Under assignment of the U.S. Army, worked to organize South Korean teachers' colleges and departments of education

1950, **January 15** – The bodies of Professor Marvin Pittman, Jr., 30, who taught Geography at the University of the Philippines, and of Dr. Robert S. Conklin, 59, exchange English professor, found in a deep Philippines canyon near

- Ifugao. They had been slain by tribesmen with spears, while on a hiking expedition
- 1951 – Educational Consultant to the Institute of International Education
- 1951-1953 – Headed a special UNESCO mission for educational reform to Costa Rica
- 1954, February 27 – Died of heart attack in Statesboro, aged 71
- 1955, May 15 – Laboratory School officially named for him
- 1999, April 18 – Administration Building given his name

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AT END OF SUMMER SCHOOL

(From *The George-Anne*, July 16, 1934)

The conclusion of this summer school marks another important mile post in the history of South Georgia Teachers College. It has been a banner year in numbers. Good as numbers may be, though, the summer school has been even better in other respects – the earnestness of purpose, the seriousness and thoroughness of work, the enthusiasm and intelligence of the play, the carry-over quality of all that has been done, and many other features not necessary to mention.

You – the summer school students – serious-minded, ambitious and experienced as you are, have been a source of great pleasure and inspiration to the faculty. We have felt that you have been our friends and co-laborers. We have not been conscious that we were teachers and pupils but rather fellow students working together on the common problem of public education in Georgia.

You shall soon be separating. You will go back to the eighty-two counties and four states from which you came. Next fall, many of you will be teaching in the public schools

of the state. We wish you success and happiness. Some of you will come back to this school next fall. We shall await your coming with pleasure. Each and all of you can do much to advance the interest of this college in the following ways: First, be a success in your work; second, send us other good students of the sort who will make successful teachers, and third, give us the benefit of your suggestions and your counsel.

PITTMANS REPLY TO GOVERNOR TALMADGE'S CHARGES

WSB-Radio, August 1, 1941

(Text from *Atlanta Journal*, August 2, 1941)

Friends of the radio audience:

I wish first to thank WSB for the courtesy of the privilege of speaking at this time. I shall speak tonight not only in my own behalf, but also in behalf of those four other teachers who have been dismissed by the Governor from the University System of Georgia. But in speaking in our behalf I do so not for ourselves as individuals, but as members of faculties of which we are but representatives. What has happened to us can happen and may happen to any one of the 1,500 other faculty members of the University System.

In a larger sense, I am speaking in behalf of all teachers in Georgia – those in the University System, those in the public schools, and also those in our private and church schools. We have problems, purposes, hopes in common, and what concerns the happiness, the well-being, the justice of one of us is of concern to all of us. I speak tonight, therefore, in the general interest of all the children of all the people. I am speaking in behalf of the general cause of education whose high and holy purposes may be lynched even as our good names have been assassinated at

the hands of the Governor.

I would not take from our Governor one honor to which he is justly due; doubtless there are many. There are those who would dispute this concession and would charge him with many offenses. Of this I cannot and do not wish to speak. Tonight I shall charge the Governor with only one offense – that of unfairness. I shall submit my argument and leave the decision to the citizens of Georgia as to whether or not my charge is justified.

I think the Governor is unfair to the entire State of Georgia when he assumes that he knows so much or could know so much about the many difficult and important matters of the state that his own judgement and his own wish should prevail over that of all the good and the wise people who are associated with him in the administration of state affairs.

If the Governor can get consent to be so unfair to all the people of Georgia, it is no surprise that he would be unfair to a few professors who happen to have offended him or some of his political satellites. Some of these he fired for reasons so trivial that he cannot even remember the reason, as he said about Bush of North Georgia College. He gets his reasons confused, as in the case of Davis of the University Extension.

He gives as his reason for firing Dixon that he was once associated with the Rosenwald Fund. Cocking is fired because one woman, with a grudge, suggests to the Governor a theme which he thinks will make a good plank in his next political platform, and Pittman is fired for anything whatever that can be used, however untrue or unfair, if it will only serve the purpose of confusing the public.

No one has charged that any of these men has failed to do the job for which he was employed. In fact, all of them have been highly praised for their work by those who knew it best and were best able to appraise it. They were all

fired not for any failure of duty, but to satisfy some grudge and to put the fear of the big stick into all other employees of the University System – I ask you, was that fair?

I propose, now, to show how the Governor's spirit of unfairness operates by showing in detail how it operated in my own case. On the night of May 30, I heard over the 10:15 newscast from WSB that "all administrative officers of the University System had been re-elected except Dean Walter Cocking of the School of Education and President Marvin Pittman of the Georgia Teachers College." No explanation was given as to the reasons for these exceptions but the papers of the following morning stated that "Pittman had not been re-elected because of too-enthusiastic participation in partisan politics and he just don't fit in at Statesboro."

This announcement met with instant and complete denial. The student body struck at once and sent strongly worded protests to the Governor and to the Board of Regents. The faculty, with one exception, signed strong resolutions of support, and all of the following organizations sent resolutions refuting both charges *in toto*:

Statesboro Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, Lions Club, Woman's Club, The Bulloch County Farm Bureau; hundreds of parents distributed over Bulloch County, all of the county officers, all of the city officers.

All of the lawyers of the county with the exception of one who was in the employ of Robert F. Wood, who was working to secure affidavits for the Governor in his efforts to support his charges against me.

Besides these, strong letters were sent by all the ministers of the city and by many other citizens.

Now, one would think that in the face of all this evidence, the Governor in a spirit of fairness would have said to himself, "Well, those boys down there at Statesboro who have been bringing me these tales about Pittman have evidently been giving me a bum steer. Surely all those good

people who are members of all those leading organizations, all the ministers, all those hundreds of parents, surely they aren't all sending these resolutions, petitions and letters unless they know what they are talking about. My talebearing friends down there must be wrong, and I must be wrong, also."

But Governor Talmadge does not work that way. He never likes to admit that he makes mistakes. Having made one, he sticks to it regardless of what he finds the facts to be and regardless of the cost.

As the Governor said in his radio address last week, his dismissal of Dean Cocking at the Athens meeting of the regents caused quite a disturbance in the Board of Regents and almost caused the resignation of President Caldwell. The result was that a hearing was agreed upon for Dean Cocking on June 16 at the Governor's office and I was included in the invitation to appear before the Board along with Dr. Cocking. On the appointed date, we, with our witnesses, appeared for the hearing. The entire day was consumed in the Cocking hearing. He was re-elected and my hearing was postponed until July 14. The Governor was disappointed and dissatisfied with the results. He was unwilling to abide by the decisions of the Board.

So he proceeded to change the membership of the Board, by what methods and for what purpose are now known by all the world.

The Governor was determined to have a Board of Regents that would vote as he wished. He was also determined to have evidence against Cocking and Pittman that when presented would make them appear as terrible fellows and thereby make his efforts to fire them appear as a noble service to the state.

For that reason he took his faithful, obedient servant, Robert F. Wood, whose official salary is paid by the Revenue Department to serve as an oil inspector, and sent him to Athens and to Statesboro to dig up evidence that

would be sure to convince the public and convict the professors. The now notorious Athens picture incident and the efforts to bribe Dr. Cocking's house servant and the Cannon affidavit about the Pittman farm were the results. As Wood went about his task of getting evidence to besmirch the reputations of Cocking and Pittman, he found it difficult to get evidence and affidavits. If a prospect hesitated, he would assure the prospect that his affidavit would never be used in public, that no one but the Governor would ever know his name, and that the Governor wanted it merely to force the resignations of Cocking and Pittman.

Well, that was the next card, the trump card, which the Governor played - to try to force Cocking and Pittman to resign. If he could get us to resign, then he could save his face. By implication we would have admitted our guilt and all would have been as merry as a marriage bell.

The Governor sent a member of the Board of Regents to see me to ask me to resign. That regent is a man of honor, of patriotism, and has a sincere desire to serve the state unselfishly. He had a difficult and embarrassing assignment to perform. He was trying to save the University System some terrible embarrassment, caused by the rash and unwise acts of the Governor. He was also trying to help the Governor to save his political face; and at the same time he thought he might do both of these in such a way that it would prove not too awfully unfair to both Cocking and me.

He said that if Cocking and I would resign he felt sure that the Governor and the regents would be disposed to deal generously with us, and that then the entire matter could be forgotten.

I informed him that I could not and would not resign, because to do so would be to admit the Governor's charges, and that I would not do so because the charges were false.

that bunch and bring 'em up here for the trial on Monday."

Wood spent Saturday in Statesboro, busy trying to get more evidence and busy showing the picture of the Clarke County Draft Board with the Negro selectees. He would go about the streets of Statesboro and show the picture to Bulloch County farmers and would say: "This is what Gene is up against. This is what is going on in our colleges. This is old Cocking right here." Cocking was not even in the picture, but that made no difference to Wood.

The Governor was showing the same picture to visitors who came to his office and making the same claim, and in addition, threatening to publish it in all the Sunday papers.

Well, Monday, the fourteenth of July came. So did the regents, so did the throng who wanted to see the fun, so did Cocking and Pittman, so did the educators of Georgia, so did the newsmen and the photographers, so did men and women who love the state and its good name and wish to preserve and advance its honor and its well-being.

I shall not retell the details of the trial, so full of sham and of shame. The news reporters whose business it is to get all facts and tell them have already done that job well and with more accuracy than I could.

It is sufficient only to point out that the Governor had announced the verdict repeatedly in public addresses and in newspaper interviews previous to the trial. His ministerial friend, the Rev. Norris, had done so when he preached at New Hope two weeks before. And then to cap the climax, Regent Robert had a carefully prepared body of resolutions giving complete condemnations of Cocking and Pittman, resolutions filled with fulsome praise of the Governor, had it typewritten and ready for presentation at the confused completion of the trial. How must every sincere Georgian feel in the knowledge and consciousness of such fraud, such flim-flam, such manifest effort at deception of the public by the Governor of the state?

He then reminded me that the Governor is a very determined man and that if I did not resign he would use any means, however ruthless, in order to fire me, and in doing so he would probably smear my reputation.

I replied that I had done no conscious wrong, either in my professional duties or in my private life, and that I was willing to have both fully explored in the presence of my employers, the regents, and also in the presence of the general public.

He then said that the Governor did not have to give me a hearing; that when the regents met again the Governor would have a majority of the Board who would vote exactly as he dictated; the Governor could then forget all charges against me and simply have the Board refuse to re-elect me.

I reminded him that twice the regents by official action had voted to give me a hearing; that the Governor had talked much about it in public addresses and by interviews with the press, and if the regents did not give me a hearing the public would want to know why, and the answer would probably prove embarrassing to somebody.

When the regent interviewed Cocking and asked for his resignation, the results were practically the same as in my case. They would have been the same with any educator of honor because teachers who have character would always rather preserve their own self-respect and the respect of their students than to be re-elected to any position.

The regent saw me on Monday, July 7. He saw Cocking on Tuesday, the eighth. Cocking agreed to resign provided the Governor and the regents would make certain fundamental changes in the administration of the University System. Consideration was given to the matter for about two days and the Governor announced that he expected some resignations and that the meeting of the Board of Regents on Monday would probably be a very tame affair. But when he failed to get the resignations, he then ordered his ally, Wood, to "go down to Statesboro and round up

Now, let us look at these charges the Governor made against me:

First: He said I did not fit in at Statesboro. To this the student body, the faculty, and every organization of the community replied that the Governor was mistaken. So the Governor dropped that issue.

Second: He said I had been too active in partisan politics. To this charge, the same people declared it was not true. So the Governor dropped that issue also. Neither of these two original charges were ever mentioned in the trial.

Third: Then the Governor came forward at the trial with a charge that I had been trafficking with the college with my farm to my advantage. Now, friends, let us look at that charge. The college at Statesboro has no residence for the president. I had to live down in the city for five years. In order to be of greater service to the college, I bought an old country place which was located near the college. I remodeled the house and made it a suitable place to perform the services which it seems to me the residence of the president of the Teachers College should render. I have used that residence for those purposes as our faculty, our students and our guests to the college will testify.

Now, that house is located on a 50-acre tract of land. Four or five acres are included in the yard and house site but I had to buy the entire tract in order to get the house site. When I bought the place, I had no use for the farm land but the college did have need for it. The college has a large dairy herd and more than 100 hogs.

The college farm is not sufficiently large to provide all of the corn, hay and peanuts needed for the cows and hogs. I decided to give the college the use of the land. I tried to do it in such a manner that every one would know that I was giving it, not renting it, not trafficking with the college, not trying to get something for myself but trying to give it to the college.

In order that this act might be perfectly clear to all

and be a matter of record, I sent the following letter to Mr. R.D. Pulliam, our teacher of agriculture who also serves as our farm supervisor. I also sent a copy of the letter to Chancellor S.V. Sanford and it is on file in his office, and a copy to Hon. John Kennedy, of Savannah, the regent at that time from my district. Here is the letter as sent and certified by Mr. Kenndey.

“Dear Mr. Pulliam:

“I have recently come into possession of the Hunter farm which is located very close to the college. On it there are about 30 acres of good arable land, about 10 acres of good pasture.

“It is not too late to make any definite arrangements for its operation for the present year. I am, therefore, going to turn it over to you to be operated in the interest of the college. There will be no charge whatever for the use of this land other than that I ask you to use it to the best advantage for the benefit of the college. Proceed with it on the same basis as you do the farm and pasture land which is the property of the college.”

“This is to certify that the above is a true and correct copy of a letter received by me as a member of the Board of Regents in due course of mail, and a copy was also sent to Chancellor Sanford and should be on file in the regents’ office.

“This the 28th day of July, 1941.”

“(Signed) John G. Kennedy.”

“Sworn to and subscribed before me this 28th day of July, 1941.

“George E. Oliver, Notary Public, State at Large, Georgia.”

I also discussed this matter fully both with Chancellor Sanford and Mr. Kennedy and had their entire approval to make this gift.

The college used this land during the years of 1939 and 1940. By so doing, the college profited more than

\$500.00 over and above all cost of labor, seed and fertilizer as is sworn to by the farm supervisor. I did not profit from the farm to the extent of one dime. Furthermore, in order that there could not possibly be any misunderstanding about this, I instructed both the foreman and the supervisor that I would pay for all wire, all posts and all extra labor which might be expended on the farm which was not a legitimate charge against the crop. They were instructed to report any and all such improvements.

Now, friends of the radio audience, for fifty years I have enjoyed the reputation of being a truthful and an honest man. For thirty years I have been teaching boys and girls. I have been trying to be a worthy example to them. For seven years I have been president of Georgia Teachers College and have borne a good name in Statesboro among the people with whom I live. Now, if I had been the Governor of Georgia and someone had brought me a tale which seemed to reflect upon the character of the president of one of the leading colleges of the state, I would have doubted the truthfulness of such a report and would have given the matter very careful, intelligent, and fair investigation. I would have looked into the character of the talebearer also. Now, the Governor has many truthful and trustworthy friends in Bulloch and adjoining counties. Anyone of them would have been pleased to have made an intelligent and honest investigation and would have reported the truth to him. Carlton Mobley, the Governor's executive secretary, is an honorable man. He could and would have made such an investigation.

I think if I had been Governor in a matter of this nature, I, myself, would have gone, in friendly fashion, and made the investigation. But the Governor did not use any of these natural, sensible, fair methods. Whom do you suppose he sent to make the investigation? You will not be surprised when I tell you he sent his stealthy, night-riding servant, Robert F. Wood. Whom do you suppose Wood

saw to get his information? He did not see me. He did not see the farm supervisor. He did not see the college bursar.

He did not see any of the reputable citizens of Statesboro, any one of whom would have been happy to help him find out the facts. He did see the ex-farm laborer who had quit his job because, as he said, "We were on different sides in politics," and he expected his reward for his testimony. The ex-farm laborer knew all the facts about the use of that farm but he did not report all the facts in his affidavit or if he did report them, Wood did not want all the facts. He wanted only that portion of the facts which he could use to serve his nefarious purpose.

Wood got the affidavit and turned it over to the Governor, but the Governor kept it carefully concealed until the day of the trial and then sprang it as one of the trump cards of the trial. He did this in spite of the fact that he knew the falseness and injustice of it. He knew all the facts about the farm. I had sent to him and all of the regents the full facts sworn to nearly four weeks before the trial. They had been printed in the daily press.

Mr. Thrasher, the state auditor, had verified the facts nearly four weeks before the trial and had reported them to the Governor. In spite of all this, friends of the radio audience, this baseless, dishonest, unfair charge was made at the trial. May I ask you, honestly, what you do you think of that charge?

Fourth: The Governor charged that we were teaching communism at Statesboro. The charge was based upon the fact that we have in our library, along with 30,000 other books, one which is entitled *Calling America*. Upon examination, this book proved to be the 1939 issue of the *Survey Graphic Magazine*. The issue was devoted to a world survey of the minority groups among which is the Southern Negro. This issue of the magazine is one of many references used in a survey course in social science.

It was selected by a committee of the Social Sciences

Departments of the University System, which committee was appointed by the chancellor. This magazine is in every library in the University System and, I imagine, in every other reputable library in America. Upon this flimsy, baseless, dishonest excuse, we were charged with teaching communism. Fellow citizens, what do you think of *that* charge?

Finally, on the day of the trial, for the first time I was charged with advocating social equality of the races because *three years ago* I permitted five teachers from Tuskegee Institute, a school known and respected by all Southern white people of good will, to come to the college and spend a half day observing the operation of our practice schools so they might see how we train teachers from our rural schools.

It was even charged that the Negro visitors ate with the college students but the surprise witness on this point failed to support the charge in the face of sworn evidence to the contrary. I do not need to defend myself on the race issue. I am a Southerner by birth and rearing. I am the grandson of a slave owner, the son of a Confederate soldier. I have the same attitude on that question as has every other intelligent, right-spirited Southern white man. I am not afraid of that issue if we can prevent some of our white people who have fears for their own social standing from getting excited and getting insulting over "social equality." Fellow citizens, the sooner we forget that silly charge, the better for Georgia.

Since the trial was over, I note that the Governor has made another charge against me.

His charges proved so weak that they cannot stand up under the light of truth and criticism, so he keeps changing the charges. Well, I am charged with being tied up with the Rosenwald Fund. Since I personally have never received one cent of compensation from the Rosenwald Fund, I am happy to state my opinion on that issue also. That fund was

established by Julius Rosenwald, one of the nation's great merchants and great philanthropists.

Through it and in cooperation with both the whites and the blacks of Georgia and of the entire South, thousands of school buildings for Negroes have been erected. Six years ago, the fund became available to whites as well as blacks. We here in Georgia have benefited from it a great deal. Six years ago, the fund in agreement with the regents, entered upon a program of service at the Teachers College. The program expires this year.

Through it at the Teachers College, a lively library building was made possible. The teaching of agriculture, industrial arts and music was made possible. Fifty of Georgia's most excellent teachers were given two years of college opportunity at the Georgia Teachers College through its aid. I cannot speak for the other units of the University System, but as for me and our faculty, I can say on my word as a Southern gentleman that never a word has been said, never a hint given that there should be any change in our attitude of race relations.

After entering upon the program at Statesboro, the Rosenwald Fund, upon the invitation of the Board of Regents entered upon a program of co-operation at the University and a still more extensive program at West Georgia College at Carrollton. I shall leave it to Chancellor Sanford, President Caldwell and President Ingram and to the regents themselves as to what they wish to say about the influence of the fund in those two institutions. This is the point which all should see and ever bear in mind, the Rosenwald Fund is not a Pittman-Cocking affair. It is a Board of Regents affair.

Pittman and Cocking have been the employees of the Board of Regents. They have not been the directors of the Rosenwald Fund. Yes, fellow citizens, the Governor was right when he said: "What a tangled web we weave when we practice to deceive."

Enough has been presented, I believe, to show conclusively my original charge that in this *entire matter* the Governor has been *unfair*. Let me summarize:

Governor Talmadge has been unfair in making himself the master of the University System. He does not know educational administration and under the circumstances should have nothing to do with its administrative details. Good school administration would forbid that the Governor should be even an *ex officio* member of the Board. For him to be, is certain to introduce politics into its administration.

The Governor has been unfair to our own beloved and admired Chancellor Sanford, the official, professional head of the University System. It is a proper function of the chancellor that he should be accepted by the regents.

The Governor has been unfair to the Board of Regents itself. He found the Board the one official body in Georgia, which was honored by all the enlightened citizens of the state. By his recent acts, he has made the Board of Regents a stench in the nostrils of all who love the State of Georgia. He has been unfair to Bush, of North Georgia College; to Davis, of Agricultural Extension; to Dixon, the vice chancellor; to Dean Cocking, of the School of Education, and to me by firing all of us merely to satisfy someone's petty grudge or to try to create for himself a political issue.

He has been unfair to conduct a sham of a trial with the hope of self-justification when the decision was made and sealed in advance. He has been unfair to Cocking by trying him twice for the same offense with a packed jury. He has been unfair to use methods thoroughly un-American in order to secure evidence with which to carry out his previously determined purposes. Hitler has done no worse.

He threatens to be even more unfair in the future by firing anyone in the University System without even the privilege of a hearing as he has

already done in the cases of Bush, Davis and Dixon. He has been unfair to charge that we are teaching communism in the University System merely because we have endeavored to provide adequate library facilities so that our young college people of Georgia may keep abreast of the times with the social and economic forces operating in our rapidly changing society.

He has been unfair to raise again the old race issue of the South, the cause of so much pain and heartache in the past and for the cure of which all men of good will have striven so earnestly. He has been unfair to attack a great philanthropic fund which has given and worked with such good will to aid a suffering South.

He has been unfair and continues to be unfair to use his exalted position as Governor of the State for his attacks on the stump, through the press and over the radio to try to injure Dean Cocking and me, to try to besmirch and destroy our good name and our usefulness when he knows full well the baselessness, the falseness of his charges.

The Governor is unfair to mislead those citizens of Georgia who still believe in him and follow his leadership. He owes to them the duty of honest, honorable, truthful statements and of upright, unquestionable conduct.

Above all else the Governor is unfair to try to cover up such deeds as these listed above with the cloak of Christianity. To do so is blasphemy, and is resented by every true follower of the world's greatest teacher.

From personal observation, a fair evaluation of the Governor's conduct during recent months, I must assert with all the forcefulness possible, and I believe that all people who love truth, and who believe in fair dealing, will agree that Governor Talmadge is unfair! unfair! unfair!

PITTMAN'S RETURN ADDRESS

February 8, 1943

I am grateful for your gracious welcome. I am deeply moved and made humble by your loyalty and faith. I hope I may prove myself worthy of the loyalty you have shown in the past and I may not disappoint the faith that you have in me to serve the future.

As you have said, we have a difficult task before us — the resurrection of this college. For many of you, this college has long been a fond dream of a greater tomorrow, but at the very moment when your dream was becoming a reality, the destructive hand of politics turned its course from success to failure. As a consequence, wrongs have been committed; they must be undone. Mistakes have been made; they must be corrected. Some obstructions to progress lie in the way; they must be removed. A splendid faculty, selected with the greatest professional care, had been assembled here. Some of its members have been dismissed, others through discouragement have withdrawn, and all have seen the sweet tonic of success turned into the bitter brew of failure. Clear-eyed, ambitious youth, seeking light and inspiration to guide them on their way, have lost faith and turned to other sources for instruction, for guidance and for inspiration.

To correct these mistakes and to create here the basic essentials and true characteristics of a worthy institution of learning, we this day dedicate ourselves. We shall strive to create here a college which is worthy of our great state, sensitive to and a servant of its intellectual, material and social needs. We shall endeavor to create a college whose ideals and whose practices are such that parents with high hopes for their sons and daughters will feel that this is a good environment in which to trust them, in which they can develop worthy manhood, noble womanhood. We shall strive to create a college in which youth will grow; in which

their minds will be stimulated, their hands will be made skillful, their manners will become refined and their wills shall become fixed upon the achievement of worthy objectives. May God guide and inspire us as we labor at this task.

In working at this task, we shall associate with us as faculty members men and women of noble spirit and of accurate knowledge who are dedicated to the ideals of service; men and women who love mankind, who have skill in teaching youth, who love the truth and have the courage to pursue it and defend it.

We shall invite to come here and remain here as students only those young men and women who sincerely yearn to pay the high price of learning; youth who recognize that true learning cannot be inherited, cannot be absorbed, and cannot be bought with mere money; youth who understand that true learning can only be acquired, and must be paid for with earnest toil, honest sweat, intelligent sacrifice, and sometimes even bitter tears. We shall invite to come here youth who have the capital stock of brain and character necessary to justify the state's investment which will be required to transform them from diamonds in the rough into efficient tools for industrial service and into prized jewels for the ornamentation and inspiration of society; youth who fully recognize that they are thus selected and thus served not because they as individuals are to be served and honored, but to be used rather as instruments that they may more effectively serve others less fortunate and less capable than themselves; youth who recognize that every gift they possess, every accomplishment they acquire, and every benefit they enjoy have their resultant responsibility and obligation.

The world is now in the tragic death grapple of war. Our nation and all civilization calls upon every one of us to do their full part. There is no time and no talent to be wasted. Let each of us therefore find our place quickly,

assume our task cheerfully but seriously, and do it well as becomes a true soldier, a loyal citizen, and an honest workman.

I am happy to be with you again. I shall strive to be a better man, a better teacher, and a better executive than ever before. I invite your counsel and solicit your cooperation. Let us all do our best that we may achieve here what good sense, clear vision, and high purpose would make possible. Nothing less will be worthy of us or will satisfy the needs and opportunities of our times.

OUR PRESIDENT SPEAKS: OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

(From *The George-Anne*, October 14, 1946)

Dear Students:

I greet you as the most numerous, the most prepared, the most mature, the most purposeful, and the most fortunate student body that ever assembled at Georgia Teachers College in the fall quarter – more than 600 of you. That is a good omen for you as individuals, for teacher education in Georgia, and for society in general – 600 people of the right sort in this institution can help to create, promote, and conserve a much better Georgia.

This student body is more numerous than is the State Legislature or the Congress of the United States. It is within the realm of possibility that you might do more for society than they. This will depend upon the quality of your thoughts, your purposes and your achievements.

By age and experience you are better qualified to capitalize your time and opportunity than your predecessors have been. You are more at ease, financially, than any who have preceded you. A grateful people are paying the expense for the education of the veterans. No veterans in

all history have been anything like as fortunate. Besides the ripening which time, training, travel, and travail have given them, the Government is now providing academic opportunity for the enrichment of life and preparation for useful service. All these should result in a type of citizen superior to any that America or the world has ever known.

Not only are the veterans fortunate in this respect, but also the rest of you. Finances have never been so plentiful. Few of you are cramped or embarrassed financially. This may be to your advantage if you use it wisely, but it might be to your everlasting hurt. If you use the ease which fortunate circumstances have provided to make the best of your opportunities, then ease will be a blessing. If, though, this ease causes you to assume that finances will continue to be plentiful, then it will be a great misfortune to you. Plenty and ease are often a curse, while poverty and hardship are often blessings. It is wise to rely upon yourself – your energy, your thrift, your vision; then if hardships come, you can master them.

Here at this college are doors of opportunity that open into workshops of useful service. Choose your door, enter it with a clear purpose. Master the tools with which to labor. Prepare yourself for constructive effort. Here and now is your opportunity to determine your paycheck and your social evaluation for the days ahead. The college can and will help you, but it can only help; you must provide the character, the motive power, and the goal. We wish you success.

Joyous Living for Fifty Years

by Marvin S. Pittman

With this statement, I am concluding fifty years of joyous living as a teacher. I began the thrilling adventure of teaching in a remote rural school in the hills of north

Mississippi. Up to that time it had been my intention to become a lawyer with the hope that some day I might become a District Prosecuting Attorney – which to my youthful mind was the acme of achievement. Only a few days of teaching changed life's major objective for me. I had aspired to bring evildoers to justice and see that they were punished for their wrongdoing. By teaching, I discovered that it was a much more constructive and much more joyous task to so influence children that they would desire the right and do it and thus avoid the wrong with its unhappy consequences. To accomplish that was the opportunity, the privilege, the function of the teacher.

In the pursuit of this objective, my life as a teacher has been active, interesting, joyous and satisfying. As a public school teacher I had the privilege of teaching children of all age and grade levels. It would be difficult for me to choose which age or grade group I most enjoyed, for each had its charms, its surprises and its peculiar satisfactions, and all of them were challenging and rewarding.

For forty years now, I have been primarily concerned with the preparation of teachers for the public schools. I have taught in teachers colleges in five different states, served as special instructor in a number of universities, participated in state teachers meetings throughout our nation, and served on special educational missions in five foreign countries. In all of these situations I have found the problems of education much the same.

In spite of the difficulties which hinder, progress is being made almost everywhere. Slowly but surely a higher degree of democracy is coming into being. More children are being taught for longer periods of time by better-prepared teachers whose salaries are more nearly fair. Slowly the public is coming to realize that teachers must be well-bred, well-educated, publicly appreciated, and adequately paid. The school-house is truly becoming the "people's house" and, usually, it is the largest and most

highly prized building in the community.

The greatest of all my joys, though, have come from the observation and realization of the possibility of growth displayed by young teachers in the course of their college careers and during the years immediately thereafter. All that is required to assure such growth is wholesome surroundings and wise and inspiring friends. With such, within a few years they change from self-centered youngsters to women and men – thoughtful, generous, and devoted to the interests and needs of others. As I recall the thousands of young people whose dreams I have shared and in whose success I have rejoiced, it is understandable why my fifty years as a teacher have been both joyous and satisfying.

from *Georgia Teachers College Alumni Quarterly*, June 1952

Bulloch County Historical Society

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