

The Idea And The Man

Landrum Trammell entered college late in life, at a time when most people are reaching the mid-point of their careers and lives. But he had already completed one distinguished career before he arrived at Gaston College, and he was ready to begin another.

Before he entered college he already had an education that most of us could never begin to appreciate, but he came here to learn. He gave his respect to all of us, and he praised us highly by wanting to learn what we had to offer him.

For twenty years he served in the United States military, almost all of the time as a pilot. He was one of the first helicopter pilots to enter the Southeast Asia wars, and he was qualified to fly everything that had wings. As testimony of his exceptional career, there is a desk drawer filled with decorations, and among them is the Distinguished Flying Cross, the first one to be awarded since World War II.

There are many other medals, but these had ceased to hold importance for him. He didn't discuss his military life except with those whom he respected, partly because he had begun to develop a strong reaction to American policy concerning the Vietnamese War. But while he may have felt a loss of respect for those persons who manipulated the war, he never lost an atom of respect and high regard for the ideals of the American military.

He was buried Monday, February 7, at Sunset Cemetery in Shelby. He had left instructions that, when he died, he would be given a full military funeral and be buried in the uniform he wore for half of his life. He was proud of the uniform, and he was prouder to have been a part of a unit of combat pilots that he rated as the best in history. But he was more than a credit to his uniform and to his country: the man transcended the uniform.

Foremost among his ambitions, once he returned to civilian life, was the chance to become a teacher — a college history instructor. He will never realize that ambition, and there is evidence to show that he knew he would never complete his degree, although he never voiced such beliefs.

On the last day that he attended Gaston College, he handed me the third in a series of papers he had typed during recent weeks, papers in which he was attempting to focus his ideas and beliefs concerning the war. During this time he and I had been working several hours each week on what Landrum hoped would become a book about the Vietnamese War, and it was his one major desire that we tell the story as he knew it to be.

What kind of man was Landrum Trammell? He was a man who loved his family; he admired his instructors; he honored his friends; and he respected his fellow students. But I suspect that he has already said it much better than I ever could. Here is how he saw himself, as he depicted his beliefs in the typed pages he gave me on that last day:

"I was just a warrant officer with an independent mind who always believed that you were dead when the moment of your birth occurred, but you had to wait for it, and that is why earth is so competitive, trying to outsmart or by-pass that moment when you had to return to the point of your origin.

"Maybe we hate death too much because we're trying to win our wings — not those shiny ones you pin on your fly suit — and I wonder if I am a bird of death. And you wonder what is going to happen to all the beautiful creatures who can only see and feel and hear but can never express what they know and feel.

"In Viet Nam the young and the good always die first because they are not flying; they are protecting their futures. We were the old pros and we didn't worry because we knew we had no future. We wanted no glory; we wanted to get a job done, and each of us who stayed and lived made it possible for others to go home or stay home.

"The professionals were there because they either had a good reason to be there or a better reason not to be somewhere else. There were those who said we sold ourselves to our government, but we bought too: we were there voluntarily, and the kids just out of school had no business there. The kids believed in too much or too little, and we believed only in ourselves.

"We liked to think that we were the Byrons of the choppers, but maybe we were the Huck Finns or one of the people like Hawthorne's 'Ambitious Guest.' We learned to close our eyes and ears and mouths and be blind and deaf and mute. But when you can't see or hear or talk, you must learn to feel more deeply than you have ever felt before, and then you can never stop feeling again for as long as you live.

"We learned that the best of anything is whatever force makes people take out their values, face them, and test them; and when people come face to face with the truth, they either live by it or are crushed by it.

"There is much more that I could write about the people who, I know now, felt as I do. But I won't write it. It will have to wait until we can talk again.

"This is the fourth time that I have tried to say something simple, but it never comes out the way I mean for it to sound."

I know the feeling. It would be a near-impossibility for a few pages to equal an idea; it would be a miracle for a few paragraphs to equal a man and a friend.

Robert L. Williams



Gaston Students' Pulse Beat Found

Those unkind critics of Gaston students have said for years that the students are dead, but hard facts now indicate that students here are very much alive.

It wasn't a wonder drug or adrenalin activity that did it: the miracle-working wonder is a tiny rectangular piece of paper that is slipped under the windshield wipers of cars that are improperly or illegally parked.

Students who haven't been fully awake during this entire year are up in arms, screaming for justice, and threatening everything short of mayhem. And all as a result of someone's tapping that Holy of Holies — the pocketbook.

Security Officer Ralph Miller reports that business has been brisk since the parking regulations went into effect. He says that if students want to hang onto that dollar, they can do so with a minimum of difficulty. Number one cause of the parking ticket is the failure of the student to display his parking permit properly — on the left rear portion of the bumper. Simply paying the parking fee is not sufficient; the permit must be visible.

The second leading cause of tickets is unauthorized or illegal parking, such as backing into spaces, taking up two spaces, or not parking at the proper angle.

Third major cause is parking in areas that are labeled "No Parking."

It's rewarding to see that students live and breathe; however, it's still a shame that they can't be motivated by a better cause.

Foreign Student Advisor To Speak

Mrs. L. A. Rogerson of the National Association of Foreign Students will be on the Gaston campus on February 25 to speak to representatives of local civic clubs. The conference will be held from nine till twelve o'clock on Friday morning in the Industrial Building.

The primary purpose of the conference is to discuss methods of helping students from other lands to adjust to living in the United States. Primary emphasis will be placed on sociological adjustment.

Horace Cline, Dean of Student Personnel, invites any students who are free at the above hours to attend the conference. Faculty members are also invited to hear Mrs. Rogerson.

Community College Drama Contest Set

Any community college student or faculty member who wants to try his hand at drama or who needs some ready cash is invited to take advantage of the invitation to enter the first annual playwriting contest.

The play must be a drama or comedy, full length (about two hours playing time); all manuscripts must be typed and accompanied by a self-addressed envelope and postmarked no later than May 15, 1972.

The winning play will be awarded a cash prize of \$250.

Manuscripts should be mailed to Dr. John Handley, Department of Speech and Drama, at Prince George's Community College, Largo, Maryland, 20870.

French Class To Attend Drama

Members of Ken Davis' French classes will attend the Le Treteau de Paris performance of Beaumarchais' drama "Le Barbier de Seville," which will be presented on February 19 at Queen's College in Charlotte.

The performance, which will be entirely in French, will be presented in Dana Auditorium and will be sponsored by the Charlotte Area Educational Consortium and the Charlotte area schools.

Tickets will be \$4 for adults and \$2.50 for students.

First Aid Class Is Offered Here

Dr. Michael Latta, Dean of the Continuing Education Division, has announced that a class in Multi-Media First Aid will be offered to the faculty and staff of Gaston College. The class, which is sponsored by the Continuing Education Division, will be taught by Ralph Miller and Jim Brown.

The class will be taught on February 26, 1972 (Saturday) from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the student lounge in the Academic Division classroom building.

Participation in the course will be restricted to the first twenty-five people who register. There is no charge for the course, which will consist of eight contact hours of instruction. The instruction will incorporate lectures, demonstrations, and individual practice work.



People's Park Is Dedicated To Gaston College

Members of the Ecology Club of Gaston College officially dedicated a park to the student body, faculty, and administration on Tuesday, February 1, 1972. People's Park, as the site is named, is for the use of any member of the college family who is in need of a place to meditate or relax. As the college grows, this area will remain to provide respite from the day's activities.

Ralph Brown, president of the Ecology Club, officiated at the ceremony. Dedicatory comments and ideas were brought out by other speakers, including Dr. Woody Sugg, Dr. Joseph Mills, Bill Farrell, Mrs. Judith Cole, George Ball, and Paul Whippo.

Brown emphasized the fact that the park would be open for all members of the college and that it was made possible by the united efforts of the college at large. He also noted that while a ribbon-cutting ceremony was part of the opening, the ribbon would find its way into the garbage can.

Paul Whippo commented that the idea of the park was worthy, especially in that it represents a joint rather than individual effort. He cited the fact that work on the park was done by club members in their spare time. He pointed out that the Saturdays that have gone into the work are too many to count and that the park will remain as a testament of what can be done if people have the dedication to do more than complain about the state of affairs in our country.

Mrs. Cole expressed the hope that the park will not be abused but used for intended purposes. George Ball echoed her views and pointed to the fact that so much of our land is being stripped of its natural resources and beauty. Bill Farrell, who was scheduled to provide entertainment for the dedication if the weather had permitted, expressed his desire to see more students become involved with ecological problems, not only on the

college campus but in the community.

Dr. Sugg, Gaston College President, complimented the members of the club for their energetic and meaningful work and thanked them on behalf of the entire college for a gift of permanent value.

Dr. Mills, Dean of the Academic Division, congratulated the club members on their successful work and offered his continuing support of their efforts.

Brown noted that, while much work has been done, much more work will be necessary before the park is completed. He expressed the hope that the students and faculty members will take an active part in the development of People's Park. At this point Dr. Sugg and Dr. Mills, assisted by Miss Gail Alexander, who made the sign that now marks the entrance, cut the ribbon and turned the park over to the members of the Gaston College family.