

Chief Executive Officers of Fayetteville State University

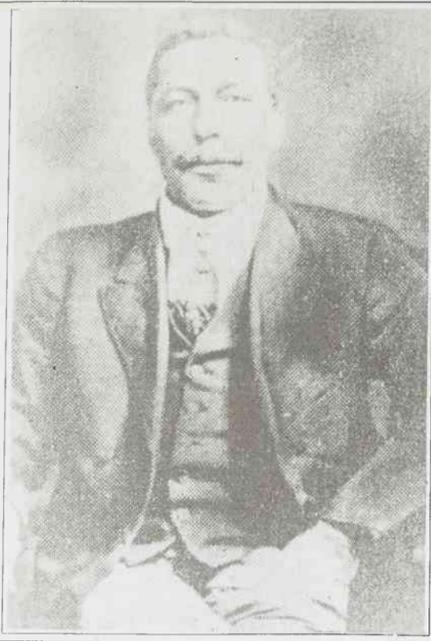


Robert Harris

Robert Harris was born in Fayetteville, North Carolina in 1839. His family moved to Cleveland, Ohio where he received his education. When the Howard School was established in 1867, Harris was chosen as the principal. When the State of North Carolina assumed responsibility for the school in 1877, Harris remained as principal until his death in 1880.

George H. Williams

George H. Williams was born in Fayetteville, North Carolina in 1861. He received his early training at the Howard School and graduated from the State Colored Normal School in 1879. Williams, who was a mail carrier, well-known churchman and businessman of Fayetteville, joined the faculty of the State Colored Normal School in 1880. In 1888 when Dr. E. E. Smith was appointed minister resident and consul-general of the United States to Liberia, Williams was chosen to guide the destiny of the institution. He served as principal until 1895.



Dr. James Ward Seabrook

Dr. James Ward Seabrook, educator, was born in Sumter, South Carolina, the son of Morris James and Lucy (Hadden) Seabrook. He received his college education at Biddle University, New York University, Columbia University and the University of Chicago. He taught at the Slater State Normal School in Winston-Salem (1910-1912), Kittrell College (1912-1913), and Johnson C. Smith University (1914-1922). He served as dean of Fayetteville State Normal School (1922-1933) and was elected its president in 1933. During his administration, the institution became a four year college and the name was changed to Fayetteville State College. By 1939, the college had eight new brick buildings and received both state and regional accreditation. In addition to this, the school acquired membership in the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. Dr. Seabrook retired as president in 1956. After his retirement from Fayetteville State Teachers College, he served as interim president at Johnson C. Smith University.



The Reverend L.E. Fairley

The Reverend L. E. Fairley was a graduate of Lincoln University in Pennsylvania. He was appointed pastor of the Haymont Presbyterian Church in Fayetteville, North Carolina in 1890 and served there with distinction. In 1897, Reverend Fairley joined the faculty of the State Colored Normal School. During the Spanish-American War, when Dr. Smith was called to serve as Adjutant of the Third North Carolina Volunteer Infantry, Reverend Fairley became acting principal of State Normal during his absence (1898 - 1899).

Dr. Ezekiel Ezra Smith

Dr. Ezekiel Ezra Smith, educator, clergyman and U.S. ambassador, was born to free parents in Duplin County, North Carolina. Since there were no schools for Blacks at that time, he had no formal education during his early childhood, but learned from his White playmates. After the Civil War ended, he walked three miles each day to attend a school in Wilmington that had been established by the Freedmen's Bureau. He continued his education at Shaw Collegiate Institute in Raleigh where he graduated with an A.B. degree in 1875. In 1897, he



was chosen principal of a school in Goldsboro, where he founded the *Banner Enterprise*, one of the first Black newspapers in the state.

In 1883, Dr. Smith was chosen to fill the vacancy created when Charles W. Chesnut resigned from the position of principal at Fayetteville State Normal School. The school was still located in the old Howard School Building on Gillespie Street. In 1888, Dr. Smith was appointed by President Grover Cleveland to the post of minister resident and consul-general of the United States to Liberia. After two years in Liberia, Dr. Smith returned to the United States and accepted the position of principal at the Catholic High School (later Stephens-Lee School) in Asheville, and later at the Normal School in Goldsboro. He served at each of the schools for one semester before returning to Fayetteville State Normal School.

In the year 1898, the United States declared war on Spain and once again Dr. Smith was called upon to leave his post as head of Fayetteville State Normal School to serve until 1899. He then returned to Fayetteville State Normal School. During his administration, the school moved to its present location (1907) and the first building was erected in 1908. Later, he and his wife gave enough land to increase the size of the new campus from 50 to 92 acres. By the time Dr. Smith retired in 1933, there were eight brick buildings and several cottages on the campus.

Charles Waddell Chesnut

Charles Waddell Chesnut was born in Cleveland, Ohio on June 20, 1858. His parents, Ann Maria and Andrew Jackson Chesnut, who were free Negroes in Cumberland County before the Civil War, had moved to Ohio. They returned to Fayetteville when Charles was eight-years-old. Young Chesnut entered the Howard School and studied under Robert Harris. He had a brilliant mind and was thirsty for learning. He read widely to gain knowledge of the classics, French and German. The Howard School became the State Colored Normal School in 1877, and Chesnut, who had gained considerable teaching experience, was made assistant to the Principal Harris when he was only nineteen-years-old. When Harris died in 1880, Chesnut became the second principal of the institution.

In 1878, he married Susan Perry and to this union four children were born. His daughter, Helen, has written a book on her father's life which was published by the University of North Carolina Press in 1952. Chesnut proved to be an inspirational educational leader for three years. During this period of time, he used much of his spare time to become a qualified stenographer. He resigned as principal of State Normal in 1883 and moved first to New York City and then to Cleveland, Ohio. While earning a living as a stenographer and a court reporter, he studied law and passed the Ohio bar examination in 1887. Chesnut's real ambition was to be a great writer. He spent much time writing and seemed to be driven by a strong urge to create. His works began to be published regularly in 1885. They were so well received that in 1899 he gave up his business as attorney-at-law and set up a literary office in his home. He still worked as a court reporter since earnings from his writings were not sufficient to support his family. His first book, *The Conjure Woman*, a collection of his stories, appeared in 1889. It was followed by *The Wife of His Youth and Other Stories of the Color Line* (1889), *The Life of Douglass* (1889), *The House Behind the Cedars* (1900), *The Marrow of Tradition* (1901), and *The Colonel's Dream* (1905). In addition to these, many short stories were regularly published in various magazines. In 1928, he was awarded the coveted Springam Medal at that time given annually by the NAACP for distinguished achievement. Chesnut's last literary production, *Post-Bellum-Pre-Harlem*, was published in 1931. He passed on November 15, 1932 at his home in Cleveland after having lived a rich, full life. He is recognized as one of the first North Carolinians to achieve eminence in the field of literature and letters.



Dr. Rudolph Jones

Dr. Rudolph Jones was elected as president of Fayetteville State Teachers College in 1956 upon retirement of Dr. Seabrook. He was born in Winton, North Carolina, the son of E.R. and Annie Walden Jones. He received his undergraduate college education at Shaw University and his graduate work at Catholic University of America where he earned both the master's and doctorate degrees in economics. Dr. Jones served as teacher and principal in the public schools of North Carolina. In addition, he served as an administrator of the NYA program in North Carolina and with the Office of Price Stabilization in Washington, D.C.

In 1952, he came to Fayetteville State Teachers College as dean. During his administration as president, significant changes were made. The charter of the college was revised in 1959 which authorized the expansion of the curriculum to include majors in secondary education and programs leading to degrees outside the teaching field. The name of the institution was changed to Fayetteville State College.

Also during Dr. Jones' administration, additions to the physical plant were provided to take care of a rapidly expanding enrollment. Two new dormitories, Zebulon R. Vance Hall and Dunie A. Bryant Hall, the Emil Rosenthal Building, the Science Annex, the Charles W. Chesnut Library and the Women's Physical Education Building were completed. The new Administration Building was under construction and the Rudolph Jones Student Center was on the drawing board when Dr. Jones resigned in 1969. In 1976, the board of trustees honored him by naming him president emeritus.



Dr. Charles "A" Lyons

In 1969, the college was designed as a regional university by act of the legislature, and Dr. Charles "A" Lyons Jr. became president. Under his dynamic leadership, Fayetteville State University has evolved into an institution poised on the launching pad for flight into the mainstream of higher education. By legislative act, on July 1, 1972, Fayetteville State University became a constituent institution of the University of North Carolina and Dr. Lyons became its first chancellor. During Dr. Lyons' administration significant progress was made relative to enrollment, academic programming, and capital expansion. Of considerable importance was the addition of the Fort Bragg University Center and expansion of the University's Continuing Education Program.

Dr. Lyons was born in Conetoe, North Carolina. He received his undergraduate degree from Shaw University and his master's and doctorate degrees from the Ohio State University. He also studied at John Hopkins University, Columbia University, Gokhals Institute of Politics and Economics (India), and the Harvard School of Business Administration. He began his professional career as a teacher of English and social studies in the Raleigh City Schools. Afterwards, he was a teaching graduate assistant in the department of political science at Ohio State University; associate professor of political science at Grambling College, Grambling, Louisiana; professor of political science at Elizabeth City State College; dean of the college, Elizabeth City State College; executive secretary, North Carolina Teachers' Association; and director of admissions, Howard University.

Following his appointment as president in 1969 and Chancellor in 1972, Dr. Lyons worked diligently to develop Fayetteville State University into a "full service institution." During his administration, additional property was acquired for expansion of the university. Several physical improvements took place on the campus to include the G.L. Butler Learning Center, a new dormitory, a Continuing Education Building, a Pre-School Laboratory School Building, a new Student Center and extensive campus beautification and landscaping. Major renovations were also done in the J.W. Seabrook Auditorium and the Communications Center. Fayetteville State University grew to a campus of 155 acres with 29 buildings, and an enrollment of 1,940 on the main campus.