

THE NEWS RECORD

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43 Graduate From Mars Hill

Forty-three seniors received their degrees Friday evening, Aug. 10, as Mars Hill College held its 10th annual summer commencement ceremony. The 43 graduates, coupled with the 279 seniors who received their degrees in May, brings the number of 1979 graduates to 322.

Graduates from Madison County include Carolyn Diane Fox, daughter of Ray Fox, who majored in social work; and Melanie Wyatt Willis, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Wyatt, who also majored in social work.

Assisted by Robert R. Chapman, associate dean for academic affairs, and Dr. John M. Hough Jr., dean for continuing education and director of the summer school, college president Dr. Fred B. Bentley conferred the degrees in a simple ceremony held in Moore Auditorium. The evening's invocation was given by Dr. David Smith, college chaplain. David Howard Johnson, a senior from Kingsport, Tenn., presented a short recital of organ music and performed the processional and recessional as well. Angella Jean Stephens, a senior voice student from Greer, S.C., performed a selection by Liddle.

President Bentley, the only speaker, presented a short address to the assembled faculty, administration, and families and friends of the graduates.

A Visit To Micro Switch

Madison County's Largest Employer Is World's Biggest Producer Of Small Switches

By ALAN ANDERSON

I stopped in the other day to visit the assembly plant of Micro Switch in Mars Hill. I knew that the plant turned out something like a million tiny switches a month, and I asked manager Tom Bodvig where they all went. He was lighting his pipe at the time, and with one free hand he gestured helplessly in all directions. "That's a tough question, believe it or not," he said. "That's something I even have a difficult time explaining to our people who make them. I start out by saying the switches are used to turn on and off refrigerators and washing machines and dishwashers, and then things get more complicated. I end up saying they are the most commonly used small switches used anywhere."

After leafing through some back issues of Micro Switch News and other publications, I had to sympathize with Tom Bodvig. To explain where all those million switches go is like explaining how modern machinery works. They are buried at the heart of automated bank tellers, aviation control consoles, hot

engine test lines, heating systems, self-operating hay-baling wagons, medical equipment and fuel injection systems. They turn traffic lights from yellow to red to green. They make electric golf carts stop and go. They turn irrigation systems on and off. They turn glove compartment and trunk lights on and off.

What these switches do is simple in principle, but more than 40 years of engineering lie behind the practice. In the most general terms, they either allow an electric current to flow in or they don't. In most Micro Switch products, this is achieved by a single flat spring made out of an alloy of the metals copper and beryllium. Copper is used for its ability to conduct electricity, and beryllium is a space-age additive that strengthens the copper. When a force bends the spring far enough, it touches a tiny dot of silver and begins to conduct electricity, making the golf cart go or the traffic light change. This copper-beryllium combination is so reliable, says Bodvig, that each switch is expected to perform at least a million on-off operations before giving out.

Bodvig guided me from his office to the plant floor, describing each step of switch assembly. Some operations are done by hand, some by machine. The entire floor hums with a sound similar to that of a busy laundromat. It is brightly lit by fluorescent lights hung among steel beams; signs read, "This is your home away from home - keep it clean."

No two operations seem to be the same. One person is drilling tiny holes through the plastic switch casing; another is fastening the electrodes with an air-powered screwdriver; still another is testing switches to see that they make contact when the proper pressure is exerted.

One complex machine, which its operator calls "Betsy," performs so many operations that it can nearly assemble an entire switch by itself. And, of course, it uses Micro Switches of its own to start and stop each operation.

The company gets about 450 separate orders each day, ranging from a single switch to a quarter of a million. There are so many uses for the traditional "basic switch" model that the company has made

about 40,000 varieties for customers all over the world. The switches are also made in the home office in Freeport, Ill., as well as in Marlborough, Mass., and in Canada, Japan, Germany, Mexico and Scotland.

Micro Switch is a division of Honeywell Inc. which is involved in an enormous range of aerospace, computer, photographic, and other activities. Micro Switch moved to Madison County in 1973, taking over the building of Hammarlund Manufacturing Co., which made short-wave and other transmission equipment. I asked Bodvig about the move and its effect on the county.

"We moved from Freeport because we needed people and we needed space. We had virtually exhausted the labor pool up there. We had a survey taken and we found that this area was very labor-intensive. And then this building was for sale, and it was just about the right size for us.

"We sent some people back to Freeport to be trained, and others learned here from people who were already trained.

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DONNA ROGERS, with the help of an air-powered screwdriver, assembles the electrical terminals of 250 switches an hour. Each switch gets three terminals.



JOE R. HENDERSON

Mayor Joe Henderson Of Hot Springs Dies

Joe Redmon Henderson, the mayor of Hot Springs for the past 28 years, died in an Asheville hospital on Aug. 11. He was 78 years old.

Henderson was a lifelong resident of Madison County. He was the son of William L. Henderson and Lennie Reece Henderson. His father came to the Big Pine section of North Carolina from Etowah, Tenn.

Henderson served in the U.S. Army from the onset of World War II until 1945. He continued his military career in the reserves until he retired with the rank of major in 1961.

During his terms of office he was instrumental in obtaining \$200,000 in federal grants for 20 units of low-income housing for the elderly. Hot Springs also received a \$106,000 grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development for a facility to provide recreation, day care, and a senior citizens' meal site.

Mayor Henderson also worked to make possible a number of improvements for the town, including modernization of the water system, the purchase of new fire engines and firefighting equipment, a sewage disposal plant, acquisition of new street paving and maintenance equipment, and installation of new water lines.

He was proud of his achievements during his long service as mayor, and at reelection time in 1977 he wrote his constituents: "In voting for new people you are taking a chance. It has been said, 'You will never know how your picture will look until after it has been made.'"

Henderson was active in the Region B Planning Council of Western North Carolina. He was also elected to the Board of Education of Madison County.

He was a prominent businessman in Hot Springs, where he and his family operated Henderson's Restaurant and Motel from 1946 to 1965.

Surviving are his wife, Hattie Ledford Henderson; a son, Dr. Robert R. Henderson of Nashville, Tenn.; two daughters, Carolyn H. Fite of West Hartford, Conn. and Madelon Henderson of Indianapolis; and a granddaughter, Lynda Fite Foster of Hampton, Va.

His son, Dr. Robert Henderson, is in private practice as an ophthalmologist in Nashville. He is married to the former Geneva Maynard of Hot Springs. She is a graduate of the University of Tennessee.

His daughter, Carolyn H. Fite, completed her dietetic internship at Walter Reed Hospital and worked for number of years as a therapeutic dietitian. She is now employed as an elementary school teacher by the school system of West Hartford, Conn. She was named Outstanding Elementary Teacher of the Year in 1975. She is married to Burges B. Fite, who retired from the Army as a lieutenant colonel and is now associated with the Hartford Insurance Group in Hartford.

His daughter, Madelon Henderson, is on a leave of absence as an associate professor at the University of South Carolina College of Nursing. A doctoral candidate, she will attend Indiana University College of Nursing for a year on a Robert Wood Johnson Fellowship in primary care.

His granddaughter, Lynda Fite Foster, is a medical laboratory specialist at Langley Air Force Hospital in Hampton. She is married to Paul Hasbrouck Foster of West Hartford, Conn.

Henderson received his commission as a second lieutenant in the Army in 1938. He was commanding officer at C.C.C. camps at Clinton, S.C., and Clarksville, Tenn. He was called to active service at the onset of World War II from Blue Ridge C.C.C. Camp at

Laurel Springs.

Henderson attended Mars Hill College and was a member of Mars Hill Baptist Church.

Services were held on Aug. 13 at Dorland Memorial Presbyterian Church at 2 p.m.

Active pallbearers were M.V. Chandler, Harold Baker, Leonard Baker, Carol Anderson, Gilmer Maynard Jr., and Gene Autrey. Honorary pallbearers were Jerry Ramsey, Tom Russell, R.L. Edwards, Burder Fowler, and Bernard Gesnell.

Mars Hill Men Attend Water Works School

Four residents of Mars Hill - Manuel Briscoe, Eddie Fox, Dale Hylemon and Dennis McCurry - attended the 40th annual Water Works Operator's School last week at N.C. State University at Raleigh.

The school is conducted by the Department of Civil Engineering, School of Engineering and the Division of Continuing Education, with the assistance and sponsorship of the North Carolina section of the American Water Works Association, North Carolina League of Municipalities, and the state of North Carolina Department of Human Resources State Board of Health.

The purpose of the school is to improve the general level of water plant operation. The latest developments and techniques are taught in classes organized by the North Carolina Water Works Operator's Association to meet the needs of operators at all levels. Operators who attend this school and pass the examination meet the requirements of the certification law passed by the 1969 General Assembly.

French Broad River Week

"Get Your Feet Wet" is the theme of the third annual French Broad River Week to be held Sept. 16-22 at various points along the river as it winds through Buncombe, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania Counties.

Numerous events are scheduled for the week including: "River Rambling" hikes; "Reflections on a River" luncheon, focusing on

history and folklore of the river; Southeastern Regional Small Hydro Conference; "Friends of the River" dinner; Conservation Methods Workshop; white water raft trip; float trips and river races; a river cleanup; river appreciation picnic; and a tour of industrial water pollution abatement facilities.

French Broad River Week is coordinated by the Land-of-Sky Regional Council, with numerous groups in the area sponsoring specific events. Bob Shepherd, executive director of the Council said that French Broad River Week was organized to involve

more people in protecting, enjoying and appreciating the French Broad River as a valuable natural resource in Western North Carolina.

"We are scheduling a variety of interesting events for the week that should appeal to almost everyone," Shepherd explained. "Thanks to the tremendous support we have received, the week offers everything from a picnic to a conference on small hydro technology."

For more information on French Broad River Week, contact the Land-of-Sky Regional Council, (704) 254-8131.



BACK TO SCHOOL MEANS BACK IN LINE - or so it seems for the first week, at least. Students lined up in the Madison High School cafeteria last week for locker assignments. Willa Wyatt (seated), a guidance counselor, shares a joke with Trina Breedlove, a 10th-grader, and Terry Meadows (dark shirt), a ninth-grader, as she records their names. "I believe we've had the best opening ever," said Principal David Wyatt at the end of the first week of school. Everything has just clicked.

And that is a lot of clicking. Just to get all 900 students to school, for example, requires 23 school buses

which, under the guidance of Tom Wallin, runs 1,700 to 1,800 miles a day up hill and down dale. Some students enjoy a trip of nearly two hours each way on their journey from the Spring Creek area to school and home again.

Wyatt particularly enjoys the feeling that students care more about their courses than they have in years past. "They seem to be thinking more about the subjects they want to take; they do more planning," he said. "We had pre-registration in the spring, and it was very successful. We haven't had anyone who wants to change their decisions. They seem to have thought it out quite carefully."

Boosters' Meeting

There will be a meeting of the Madison High School Boosters' Club in the school cafeteria on Aug. 31 at 7:30 p.m. This will be the most im-

portant organizational meeting to kick off the 1979-80 sports season, and all interested parents and children, both boys and girls, are urged to attend. The boosters will be supporting football, basketball, volleyball, track and softball.