

Laurinburg Institute: Builder of Colored Youth

By JOHN MYERS

"Go forth and help in the common and academic training of colored youths." These words were stated by the Grand Old Man of Tuskegee, the late Booker T. Washington on the steps of Snow Hill Institute in Snow Hill, Alabama in the very early 1900's. Of the people who listened to his words on that day, two decided to follow his advice. These two were Mr. & Mrs. E. M. McDuffie. They had just finished their education at Snow Hill Institute and were quite aware of the struggles of the black man to receive an education. On that day they decided to do something about the situation. And the something they did witnessed the beginning of Laurinburg Institute in Scotland County, Laurinburg, N. C.

The year was 1904. The first structure was a dilapidated one room building donated by a concerned citizen. The major tools possessed by The McDuffies were faith and dedication. With these meager beginnings they set out to teach the black youth of a bigoted white world. And teach they did.

Two years after its opening the state of North Carolina chartered Laurinburg Institute as a non-profit educational corporation, and it operates today under the terms of this same charter.

A shrewd businessman as well as a dedicated teacher, President McDuffie nursed the venture carefully with his wife, who was also raising three sons and four daughters, always at his side.

The old frame house grew into a complex of brick buildings on a sprawling site in the heart of New Town, Laurinburg's Negro district. There were dormitories because it became evident early the school was destined to serve a much wider area than Scotland County.

The first gymnasium for whites or blacks was built and for the first time the Negro youths learned the values of team work and physical conditioning. Here in what was once referred to as the "Cracker Box" was produced great stars like Sam Jones of the Boston Celtics and Jimmy Walker of the Detroit Pistons.

From the beginning the school offered more than reading, writing and arithmetic. President McDuffie and his wife poured their life blood into the venture. They lived with the students, counseled and guided them, and wove religion and a deep sense of responsibility to God and country into the overall curriculum.

This was the foundation laid painstakingly by President McDuffie before his death in 1953. Since that time, a son, Frank, and his wife have carried on the heritage and embellished the dreams.

From the beginning adequate financial support was a major problem and the son of the founder, F. H. McDuffie, who became president, traveled far and wide selling the values of Laurinburg Institute to interested states, and the names of the present dormitories and other buildings reveal the identity of some of the major benefactors.

In 1958 the Institute was moved from its original site to a spacious, new campus a short distance north. New brick buildings were constructed and today the educational plant is valued at more than \$1 million.

BUILDINGS & FACILITIES: Laurinburg Institute presently has a 150 student capacity. Living quarters for its students are contained in four buildings. The girl's dormitory, Hale House, has room for 50 female students in its present arrangement. Three male dormitories, Morris Hall, Barstow Hall and Bidwell Hall, have a joined capacity for approximately 100 residents. There are 12 buildings composing the present campus. In addition to the four residence halls there is the Charles E. Johnson Student Center built in 1960 which serves as the hub of campus activity. It is a completely air conditioned building housing an auditorium,

grill and lounge area, and meeting rooms. This is the reception room of the campus. Kimball Hall, the gymnasium, houses an excellent basketball court, a junior Olympic sized, indoor swimming pool and is well equipped for all forms of physical education. It also includes the school library and home economics classrooms and laboratories.

The main academic building laboratories, plus administrative offices. It is a single story structure with 9,000 square feet of floor space. Other buildings include a cafeteria, a central storage building, music practice room, teacher's cottages, and a health center.

Mrs. Lillian Farrar R. N. has been in charge of the health center for the previous two years. She is equipped with an infirmary of a 20 patient capacity, a whirlpool bath and message facilities, conference room, examining room, oxygen equipment, and diet kitchen. Dr. David Williams is on call 24 hours a day from in-town Laurinburg. F. H. McDuffie, Sr., President of Laurinburg, concerns himself primarily in the roll of raising capital funds and supervising the physical operation and growth of the school plant.

He is perhaps better known nationally as Coach McDuffie the basketball coach who has turned out such stars as Sam Jones, Jimmy Walker, Spider Bennett, Charile Scott, and Charlie Davis. The Executive President, Mrs. S. E. McDuffie, has served in the role of executive director of the school program and is directly responsible as Principal to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction for all aspects of the academic work.

In addition to her other work, she is responsible for personnel (academic, operational and maintenance) as well as the school finances.

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS:

Laurinburg Institute is a prep-school with its academic stress going to grades 9-12 with an offering of one year post graduate studies in college preparatory courses. The Institute maintains an open door policy for entrance with major emphasis lying heavily on recommendations from community citizens. Two letters of reference are required for a student entering Laurinburg. A student must remain at the Institute at least two semesters unless otherwise granted permission by the school's president. Students must establish residence on the campus and must abide by dormitory regulations. Students who are atheists or agnostics are not knowingly accepted. Protestant and Catholic students are admitted but no denominational teachings are permitted. While Christian conduct is expected, the school remains fully nonsectarian.

All financial accounts must be kept current. A student who is delinquent in payments will be cut off from all school services if delinquent past 20 days.

COURSES & DESCRIPTIONS:

Ninth Grade: Sub-ninth-English 9 B, English 9-A, Social Studies, General Science, Modern math, Algebra,

physical education, and electives.

Tenth grade: English 10-A, biology 10-A, algebra, world history, languages-French and Spanish, and electives.

Eleventh Grade: English 111, U. S. History, languages, geometry and chemistry,

Twelfth grade: English IV, Social Studies, economics-sociology, physics, and electives.

OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES:

The social life of Laurinburg Institute, as with any prep-school, is varied to the tastes of different students. The activities are sectioned into interscholastic; football, basketball, baseball, track, tennis, and swimming. Recreational: creative dance, swimming, horseback riding, intra-

mural sports, and drama. Social Clubs; Omegas-boys, Sigma Chi-boys, and Jr. Deltas-girls. Service Clubs; Dormitory Assn. and the Honor Council.

The school gymnasium also serves as a gathering place for concerts, dances, and recitals.

FUTURE PLANS FOR LAURINBURG

Laurinburg Institute, in its quest for education for a minority group, as so many other facilities have done in the past, aimed for the brighter students. In the past the Institute concentrated on students in the top half of their class. This idea is presently undergoing close scrutiny by the faculty. In the future Laurinburg wishes to adopt classes for educationally deprived students as well as for the superiors. Under present planning for the fall are courses in remedial reading and mathematics. These courses will necessitate more teachers

with wider skills, a larger library, and more classrooms.

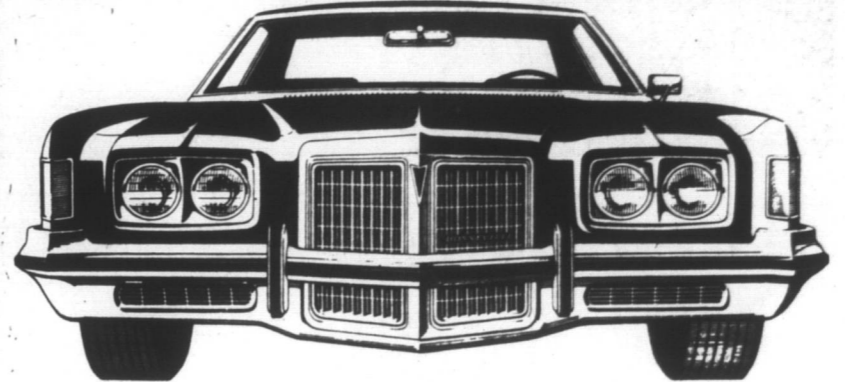
Also in the planning stages in the enlargement of the Institute to capitate an enrollment of 300 students. With this added number of campus residents will come the need of more dormitories and the building of a chapel. Presently the auditorium serves this purpose.

In 1904 Mr. & Mrs. E. M. McDuffie had a dream. They dreamed of an institution where their race could get adequate education to prepare them to become businessmen, doctors, lawyers, and engineers. They lived to see their dream take breath and live after them. Now, their son and his wife are dedicating their lives to see that the dream of their relatives never dies. The dream was hard work. The dream lives. The dream is Laurinburg Institute.

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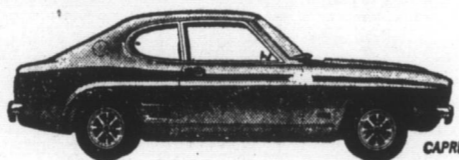
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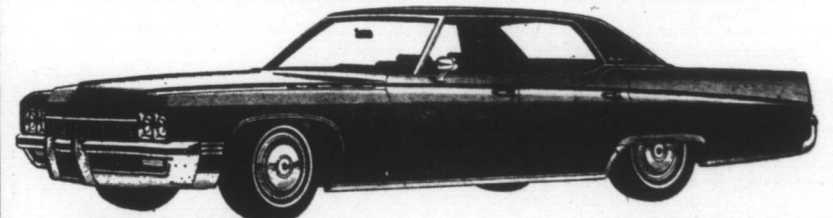
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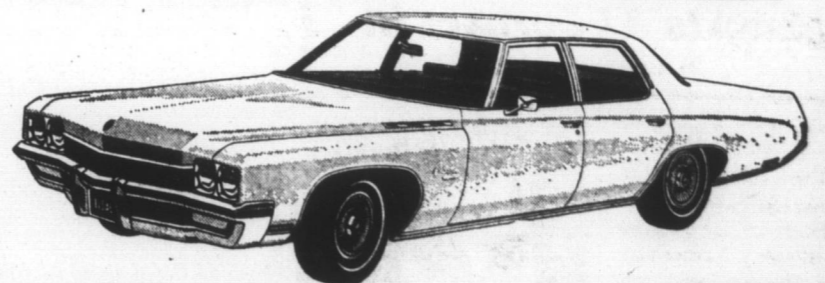
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