

## "He Stood Tall"

### Newspapers Comment

Newspapers large and small expressed in editorials the feeling of great loss the passing of Dr. Douglas M. Branch holds for the many who knew him, and what this great tragedy will mean to North Carolina and Christian education. Here are a few editorial comments:

#### More Than An Administrator

The Baptists of North Carolina have suffered a heavy blow in the death of Dr. Douglas Branch. Men who serve well in such posts are usually described as hard workers, devoted servants and effective administrators. But these are not the words that come to mind when Baptists think of Dr. Branch. Rather, they call upon such terms as diplomat, statesman and strong leader when describing him.

He was a diplomat in the sense that he was a moderating influence. He was a statesman in that he did not push himself, but his cause. He was a strong leader because he tried to harmonize the divergent views of those he served and so solidify them into a working force. One might not be able to put a finger on what he did, or when he did it, because his role was not to take part in controversy, but to remove controversy. He performed that role with integrity.

Dr. Branch's ability to lead may have come from the respect he had from all elements. He was a good preacher who had served pastorates in little churches and big churches. He had developed into the churches number one leader, having served as vice president and president of the Convention before being chosen for the top administrative post in 1959. It might be said that he was just coming into his own, had only begun to exert his influence as general secretary. This, and the fact that he was only 54 when he died in the automobile accident, increases the loss.

The Winston-Salem community may feel his absence particularly. Dr. Branch was a friend of Christian education, of Wake Forest College and other Baptist institutions here. He sensed the need of students and was a champion of ministry to them. But above all, he was a servant of all Baptist. The Baptist Convention, with its million members in North Carolina, needs a leader who is devoted to all and who can pull them together. Douglas Branch was that sort of leader, and all Baptists will miss him.

—Winston-Salem Journal

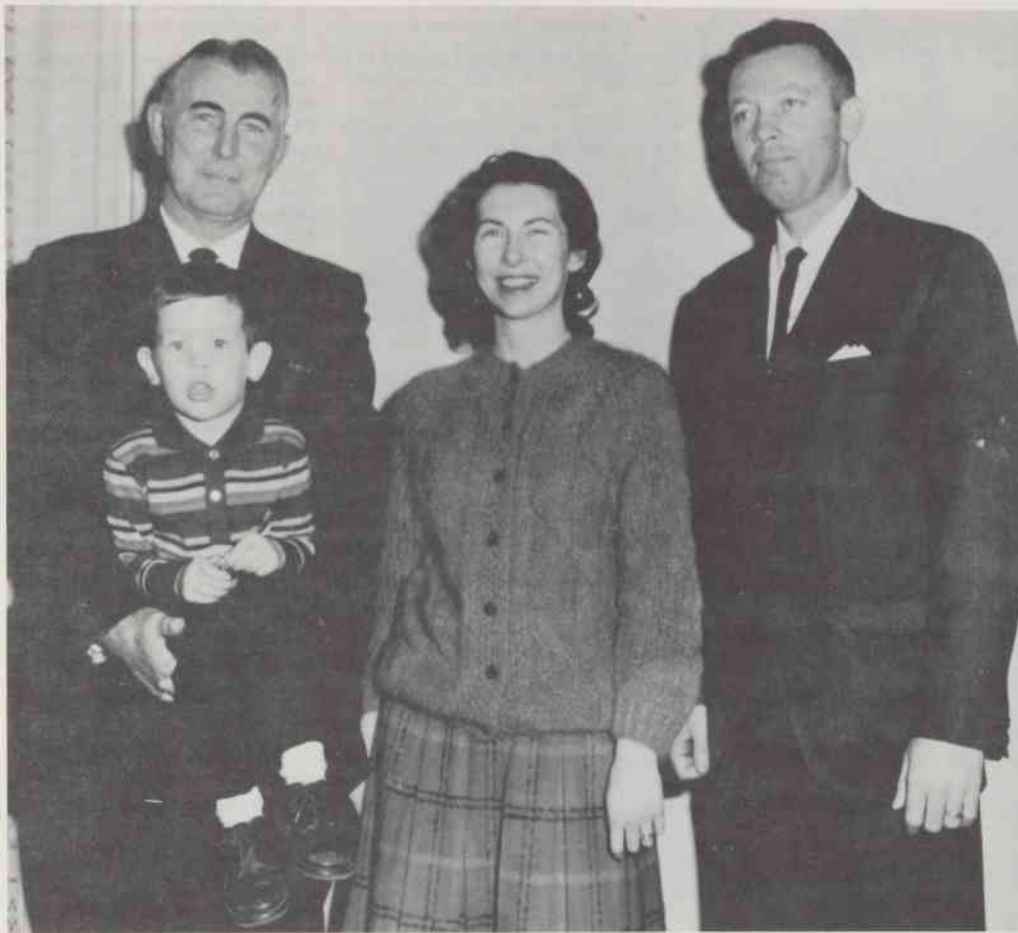
#### He Was a Man of Stature

Dr. Douglas Branch was a man with a rare combination of qualities.

As the highly respected leader of the large and diverse Baptist denomination in North Carolina, Dr. Branch was a master of the spoken word in the pulpit, an able administrator and a man of extreme fairness and wisdom.

He was tall in a physical sense, every inch a man, and ranked right up with the tallest theologically, educationally and culturally wherever a group of Southern Baptists leaders gathered.

Reared on a farm in Wake  
(See Newspapers, next page)



DR. BRANCH AT CHOWAN—This picture was taken by a CHOWANIAN photographer shortly after Dr. Douglas M. Branch had delivered the Convocation address. Dr. Branch (left) is holding his grandson, Steve. His daughter, Minnie, and her husband, Ben Sutton, business manager of Chowan College, are on his left.

#### Dr. Douglas M. Branch

" . . . Our Greatest Christian Statesman."

#### Dr. Branch Told Students Maturity Is Built Through Christian Education

(Excerpts from the Convocation address delivered to the student body of Chowan College by Dr. Douglas M. Branch, executive secretary-treasurer of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, the day of his fatal accident.)

Education at its best is the purposeful process of growing up. We believe sincerely that the real purpose of a school with Christian motivation is that the whole base upon which mature character is built is broadened by positively relating the whole of life to the Christian view of life. This identifies in a vital way your experiences on this campus with the purpose of God for your life.

It is the stated purpose of Christian faith that Christians become like Christ. This is true maturity. The accomplishment of this high objective requires diligent and prayerful effort. It will involve much and certainly the following: discipline, respect for persons, adherence to a worthy objective.

I.—Discipline: "Blessed are the meek . . ." These are the disciplined ones, and the future belongs to them.

A. Discipline and morality: Life requires a narrow gate and a straightened way. The Prodigals mistake was, and is, in mistakenly believing that license and liberty are identical. The swine pen is the unavoidable destiny of all who live like this.

B. Discipline and learning: The early followers of Jesus were called disciples. They were disciplined to learn of Jesus. His call was, and is, "Take my yoke upon you . . ."

Mind and memory are in many respects like muscle—they grow flabby from disuse.

The student needs four disciplines as a student.

- (1) Discipline of study—to learn from books.
- (2) Discipline of attention—to learn from teachers.
- (3) Discipline of good health habits to assure capability.
- (4) Discipline of spiritual exercises to preserve perspective.

II.—Respect for Persons: The college student courts the peril of tensions arising out of conflicts with others.

"Whoever says to his brother, Fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire."

Note: Jesus looked at people as persons. They were right when they said of Him that He did not "regard the person of men."

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### The Accident

AHOSKIE—Dr. Douglas McKinley Branch, 54, general secretary and treasurer of the Baptist State Convention, was killed Friday afternoon, Feb. 1, about half a mile north of here when his station wagon collided with a stalled truck on rain and snow swept U. S. 13.

Dr. Branch, who was dressed in hunting clothes at the time of the wreck, had delivered the second semester convocation address at Chowan College in Murfreesboro during the morning. The wreck occurred about 1:30 p.m.

### Many Attend

More than 1,200 persons filled every seat in Forest Hills Baptist Church Sunday afternoon, Feb. 3, for the funeral of Dr. Douglas M. Branch, general secretary of the Baptist State Convention who was killed in an auto accident.

In his tribute, the Rev. Nane Starnes of Ashville, president of the convention, called the Baptist leader a "world christian." The Rev. Charles B. Trammel of Burnsville praised him as a "Christian gentleman and statesman, but of all his attributes, he was greatest in his home."

Starnes said that Dr. Branch "had great respect for our Baptist democracy, never coercing or forcing. He provided leadership that North Carolina Baptist followed with great assurance and confidence. He walked with steadfastness, dignity and poise. I think he walked with God."

The convention president said the Baptist leader was at home in any situation, "whether it was a revival in a small church or in a conclave of educators—whether speaking in a little mission up the cove or in a great sanctuary on Main Street. He never lost his human touch. He knew his task was with people and his ear and heart were always open to the humblest."

Dr. Leo Green of Southeastern Seminary, Wake Forest, read scriptures. Music was provided by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Horton of Chapel Hill and James Slaughter of Rocky Mount, all of whom were formerly associated with Dr. Branch in churches he served.

### Biography

Born Nov. 8, 1908, Douglas McKinley Branch was reared on a farm in the Mt. Moriah Community of Wake County. He attended school at Mt. Auburn and Garner. On June 2, 1933, he married Jessie Averitte Walker, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jessie Walker of Windsor.

Entering Wake Forest College in the spring of 1934, he graduated cum laude in the summer school of 1937. He was ordained to the ministry in October, 1935, in the Mt. Moriah Church, Wake County. During his college days he served rural and village churches as pastor, mainly in Wake and Franklin counties. These churches included Youngsville, Bethlehem near Raleigh and Bethany. In 1938, he accepted a call to Cary, his first full-time pastorate.

#### Served at Cary

He served at Cary until 1941 when he became associated with the State Mission Board as a general missionary, the forerunner of the post as State Missions Secretary which Dr. E. L. Spivey holds at the present time; in fact, Dr. Spivey succeeded him in 1943 when he and his family sold their home in Cary and left for Sou-

(See Biography, next page)

By BRUCE E. WHITAKER  
President, Chowan College

I write these lines one week following the tragic and untimely death on February one of Dr. Douglas McKinley Branch. He died in an automobile accident in Hertford County but a few hours following the delivery of the Second Semester Convocation address at Chowan College.

Among North Carolina Baptists, Dr. Branch was our greatest Christian statesman. He "stood tall" among people of all religious communions, social and economic levels, and in the depth and quality of his thought about God and man. His death at the prime of his life is felt keenly by all North Carolinians, by Southern Baptists, and by North Carolina Baptists in particular.

It was not until after he was married and was twenty-five years of age that he began his higher educational experience. Thus he and his good wife knew hard times, patience and striving. Though many and heavy demands were made upon him in busy pastorates and as executive secretary-treasurer of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, he was a devoted family man.

Dr. Branch had a compassion for people. He had a capacity for friendship. He was a good man, and his life was ruled and guided by the lordship of Christ. He was a strong and effective preacher of the Gospel, and yet he was endowed with rare administrative ability and an ever unfolding capacity for leadership. He was an outdoor man and loved to hunt. He had civic interests and, oddly enough, was a great champion of seat belts; he had made talks for state-wide use for the North Carolina Traffic Safety Council.

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