

# Underwood Scholarship Established

Chowan College has received a \$25,000 gift from Mrs. Anne T. Underwood of Coats and formerly of Murfreesboro to establish a scholarship in memory of her late husband, George T. Underwood, who was a leading benefactor of the college.

The announcement was made by Chowan President Bruce E. Whitaker. He said the George T. Underwood Scholarship would aid needy and worthy students to study at Chowan.

Dr. Whitaker called the establishment of the scholarship in George Underwood's name "very appropriate." Noted Chowan's president, "George Underwood loved Chowan College and young people, as demonstrated over and over again when he assisted students at Chowan."

Underwood, a Hertford County native, was widely known in the civic, educational, religious and agricultural life of the area. He served as a Chowan trustee from 1941-1948 and member of the Endowment Committee from 1960-1979.

Elected to the county Board of Education in 1937, he served as chairman from 1937 until his retirement in 1955.

He was a charter member of the Murfreesboro Rotary Club and had been a member of American George Masonic Lodge No. 17 for over 60 years. He was also a Shriner.

In his early years, he served as a deacon at Meherrin Baptist Church and was a teacher of the



MRS. ANN UNDERWOOD

Men's Bible Class at Murfreesboro Baptist Church at his death on Jan. 29, 1979.

In addition to his farming activities, he was a founder of the Federal Land Bank of Ahoskie and president of the Board of Directors for 25 years. He was Director Emeritus of the land bank.

An organizer of the Virginia-Carolina Peanut Growers Association in 1953, Underwood was past president of the organization and served on the Board of Directors a number of years.

He was one of the leaders in founding the county Farm Bureau in 1938, was past president of that group and also served as a state director for several years.

He held the purple heart for injuries received during service in the Medical Corps in World War I

and served on the Ration Board in World War II. He had also served on the Draft Board.

The George T. Underwood Scholarship is described as follows:

"Given in memory of George T. Underwood, distinguished leader, friend and benefactor of Chowan College, by his wife, Anne T. Underwood. The scholarship award may be made to one or more deserving students determined by the Scholarship Committee."

Anne Underwood was a former public health nurse in Hertford County. She was previously married to Guy Hill of Como, who died in 1969. In 1973 she married George Underwood.

Noted Dr. Whitaker, "George and Anne Underwood resided in the beautiful house located on the corner near the college gate, a place George built after giving his past home to the college."

Continued Dr. Whitaker, "The college was a great love of both Anne and George's. They enjoyed the walks on the campus each afternoon, when weather permitted. They also enjoyed attending the concerts and other programs offered by the college. Prior to their marriage Anne had a course in the Old Testament under Mrs. Esther Whitaker."

Dr. Whitaker added, "We are grateful to Anne Underwood for her generous gift to establish the George T. Underwood Scholarship and for her faithful support, financially and otherwise, over the years."



GEORGE T. UNDERWOOD

## Handcrafts discussed at meeting

"Handcrafts of this Age" was the topic of the Faculty Forum/Lycem in early spring with designer/craftsman, Charles Counts, as the speaker. He is the author of a number of writings on handcrafts and pottery including a major text, "Pottery Workshop", published by the Macmillan Co. in 1973.

Counts was born in Lynch, Ky. and educated at Berea College, Southern Illinois University, and University of Southern California. He has operated pottery and handcraft/workshops in Knoxville, Tenn., and Lookout Mountain.

Economic survival as a hand worker has been a major theme of Courts' research and writing. He coordinated a national crafts study for the Smithsonian Institution. This work, published by the U.S. Government Printing Office, is entitled: "Encouraging American Craftsmen: What Role in Economic Development?"

Collections of Courts' pots and quilts and mosaics are on display at museums and colleges in five states.

Counts made two appearances on campus. In the morning session he lead informal discussion with faculty and art students in Green Hall. In the afternoon he lectured on "Human Values Inherent in the Craft of the Studio Potter," in Marks Hall Auditorium.

# Elwood Parker, Chowan benefactor, claimed by death

Elwood W. Parker, retired Murfreesboro businessman and philanthropist, died in Walker Memorial Hospital, Avon Park, Florida, on February 15, 1985. A victim of declining health over the last several years, he had been hospitalized since late December.

Born January 27, 1893, in the Village of George, Elwood Whittier Parker was the son of the late James Henderson and Garnett Devilla (Storey) Parker. He received his early formal education at the Olney Elementary School, Weldon High School, and Shenandoah (Virginia) Collegiate Institute. He also attended Guilford College for two years, serving during a portion of that time as tutor, or instructor, in the preparatory department of that institution.

Upon moving to Murfreesboro in 1926, Parker began a long and fruitful business association with late Edwin P. Brown, Sr. These two purchased an abandoned basket weaving factory and incorporated this new business venture as Riverside Manufacturing Company. With Brown serving as president of the corporation and Parker as secretary-treasurer, Riverside Manufacturing eventually reached a peak payroll of some 600 employees, engaged in the production and distribution of diversified wood products for business and industry. The corporation was later merged with Planter's Manufacturing Company, Portsmouth, Virginia, and Jersey

Package Company—a New Jersey-based firm—to form the American Package Corporation. The latter corporation was merged with Georgia-Pacific Corporation in 1965.

Parker—along with Brown—was also instrumental in the formation and management of such local firms as Northeastern Oil Company, Roanoke-Chowan Gas Sales, Roanoke Valley Oil Company, and Brown and Parker, Inc.—a firm which catered to the general merchandise and farming needs of the Roanoke-Chowan region of northeastern North Carolina.

A generous friend and benefactor to civic, cultural, and educational interests, he exhibited particular concern for the educational missions of Guilford College and of Chowan College. He dated his strong personal commitment to the future growth and development of Chowan College to the mid-1940s—a time when that institution had been forced to suspend operations due to the exigencies of World War II. A lifelong Quaker, he consented to serve on the Board of Trustees of the College, was chosen chairman of the Board's Executive Committee, and was among those local residents who spearheaded the renovation/development campaign which eventuated in the reopening of Chowan College in 1949. Not only did he make the first significant financial pledge to that campaign, he also travelled extensively throughout the

region, soliciting confidence in and financial support of that institution.

Parker was named to membership on the Chowan College Board of Advisors in 1972 and was a member of that body at the time of his death. In addition to that period of service on the Board of Advisors, and a brief, but crucial, tenure with the college's Board of Trustees, he also served on the Endowment Committee of Chowan College, 1959-1962. Administrative officials of the college estimate that his record of generous counsel, service, and benefaction towards all facets of the institution's life and work has not been surpassed by any other single individual supporter and friend. Parker Hall—a men's residence on the college campus—was named in his honor.

Parker was united in marriage on September 25, 1929, to the former Elizabeth Sewell of Murfreesboro, who survives him. Other survivors include a daughter, Mrs. Andrew J. Kerr, of Indian Lake Estates, Florida; and one grandson, Elwood Bennett Parker.

Memorial services were held February 21, at the Cedar Grove Friends Meeting House, Woodland. Interment, with full Masonic Rites, followed at Riverside Cemetery, Murfreesboro. At the request of the family memorial contributions may be made to Chowan College, or to the charity of one's choice.