

# Gentleman and scholar

## Winthrop literature professor was descendant of S.C. Hamptons

Dr. Hampton Jarrell taught English at Winthrop College for 37 years — from 1932 until his retirement in December 1969. His classes, which ranged from freshman English to graduate level courses in Shakespeare and, a favorite, romantic poetry, were always popular with students.

Jarrell was born in Savannah, Ga., in 1904. The family moved to Athens, Ga., when he was 10. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Georgia, where he edited the college magazine and proved himself quite an athlete.

He was on the horseback jumping team and rated an expert in use of sabre on horseback. He was a member of both the pistol and rifle teams. (When he retired, he was nearly deaf — a problem he traced back to his shooting.) Jarrell, who weighed only 125 pounds, was also a boxer. While a graduate student at Duke, he was the ROTC featherweight boxing champion.

Jarrell got a master's degree from Harvard and a PhD from Duke University, where he was Phi Beta Kappa and won the Angier Duke fellowship awarded annually to the best student. His dissertation was on William Gilmore Simms, a South Carolina novelist. Later he wrote articles on Simms and his writings and hoped to publish a book on Simms. His Winthrop responsibilities, especially as department chairman when he replaced Paul Wheeler in 1954, gave him too little time to do the needed research.

Between college and graduate school, Jarrell taught at a girls school in Thomasville, Ga., and liked to tell a story about those years. He was only 19 and looked 15. In his first week, he came to class to see a baby's bottle filled with milk on his desk. He turned to face a giggling group of girls, and said, "Whoever left her lunch on my desk, please get it after class." He said it was the only time in his life that he said the right thing at the right moment — not five minutes too late.



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While Jarrell taught English, most of his writings were in the area of history. He was a member of the Society of American Historians and the S.C. Historical Society. His book, "Wade Hampton and the Negro," was well-received in 1949. In great detail, he put forward his thesis that Hampton was a moderate on the race question and that it was Ben Tillman who was a racist who arrayed class against class.

He "sold" this idea well. The New York Times reviewer said, "Fully to understand Wade Hampton is to understand much of Southern life and politics — a feat that has long baffled carpetbaggers, Republicans and foreigners generally."

Jarrell was a descendant of Anthony Hampton, the first Hampton in South Carolina, from whom Wade Hampton was also descended. Wade Hampton was immensely wealthy and owned many plantations, including some in the Mississippi Delta, and had many slaves. Jarrell joked that he descended from the side that had no money.

The Jarrells had one child, Penelope "Nell" Hampton Jarrell. She later became a Duke scholar in her own right, but as a youngster rather resented the time he spent writing on a lapboard with piles of books around him. When he fin-

ished the book on Wade Hampton, he dedicated it this way: "For my wife, who listened patiently and for my daughter, who did not."

Jarrell enjoyed writing poetry, as well as reading and lecturing on romantic and Victorian poetry. He also wrote lyrics for compositions of Dr. Ernest Kanitz, a Winthrop music professor. A half-dozen of their Austrian ballads were published by a New York music company.

Before Winthrop's high-rise dormitories were built in the 1960s, Jarrell, like most department heads, had a house on campus. He enjoyed walking on the campus, often accompanied by a cocker spaniel.

Jarrell, with his pipe and his dog, was a familiar sight, but his increasing deafness made it difficult for him to communicate with students other than by lecture. However, the words of one of his Duke professors written to recommend him to Winthrop in 1932 still fit: "He dresses well, carries himself well, creates an impression of brisk and at the same time, modest self-confidence."

Hampton Jarrell died in Rock Hill in 1980 at age 75.

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