

SUPERINTENDENTS
OF THE
BILOXI PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT
1922-2001

MR. A. L. MAY – 1922-1934

Mr. A.L. May became superintendent of the Biloxi Public Schools in 1922. For the next twelve years he led the schools through an extensive building program that included the construction of Gorenflo Elementary School, which continues to serve the school district in 2002 but which is scheduled to be razed later this year, the old Dukate Elementary School on West Howard Avenue, eventually abandoned by the school district and used by the city for several years before being razed, and the old Lopez Elementary School on East Howard Avenue, which was renovated and used for a number of years by the city as a Safety Center.

Mr. May was also responsible for initiating a number of programs that were visionary and exceptionally helpful to students in the schools, particularly health programs that included physical examinations and dental examinations and prevention of communicable diseases. He also was instrumental in the development of creative arts programs in the schools, including music instruction and activities that extended throughout the system.

He received his B.S. degree from Peabody in Nashville. He served as superintendent of the Biloxi City Schools from 1922 until 1934, when he was succeeded by Mr. George W. Ditto. After leaving Biloxi, he became president of the Perkinson Junior College. Superintendent A.L. May received his B.S. degree from Peabody.



MR. G. W. DITTO – 1934-1946

Mr. George W. Ditto served as Superintendent of the Biloxi Public Schools from 1934 to 1946. In a tenure not without controversy, he led the schools through the most trying periods of their history—the final years of the Great Depression and the entire period of World War II.

Mr. Ditto was born in Albany, Alabama, in 1898, and graduated with honors from the Albany schools; he held a B.S. Degree from the University of Alabama and an M.A. Degree from Columbia University, New York City. During World War I, he was in the Reserve Officers Training Corps and later served with the U.S. Navy in the fifth Naval District at Hampton Roads.

After his discharge from the Navy, he taught at Swiftown, Mississippi, and came to Biloxi as principal of the high school in 1927. Active in numerous civic and professional associations, he was superintendent during a period of historic growth for the city and the school system. Perhaps his most important accomplishment was his helping to guide the schools through the first years of community-school-military relationships following the development of Keesler Field and the resulting growth in the number of military-connected personnel whose children would be educated in the Biloxi schools. It was under Mr. Ditto's leadership that the school district in 1942 was able to construct Central Junior High School adjacent to Biloxi High School.

On October 29, 1946, Mr. Ditto resigned his position as superintendent. In his letter to Dr. D.L. Hollis, president of the Board, he noted that it had been a privilege for him to work with the splendid people of Biloxi. He praised Parent-Teacher associations and teachers for their cooperative spirit and their outstanding work with the children of Biloxi.

He also noted with special pride the outstanding records of military service that graduates of the Biloxi schools had made during the recent war, adding that some of them had made the supreme sacrifice that Democracy might live. He left with a reminder to the Board that the Biloxi schools had been given the highest rating by the Accrediting Association and that the schools "have been held throughout the Nation with the highest esteem."



SUPERINTENDENT GEORGE W. DITTO

MR. ARTHUR E. SCRUGGS – 1946 - 1957

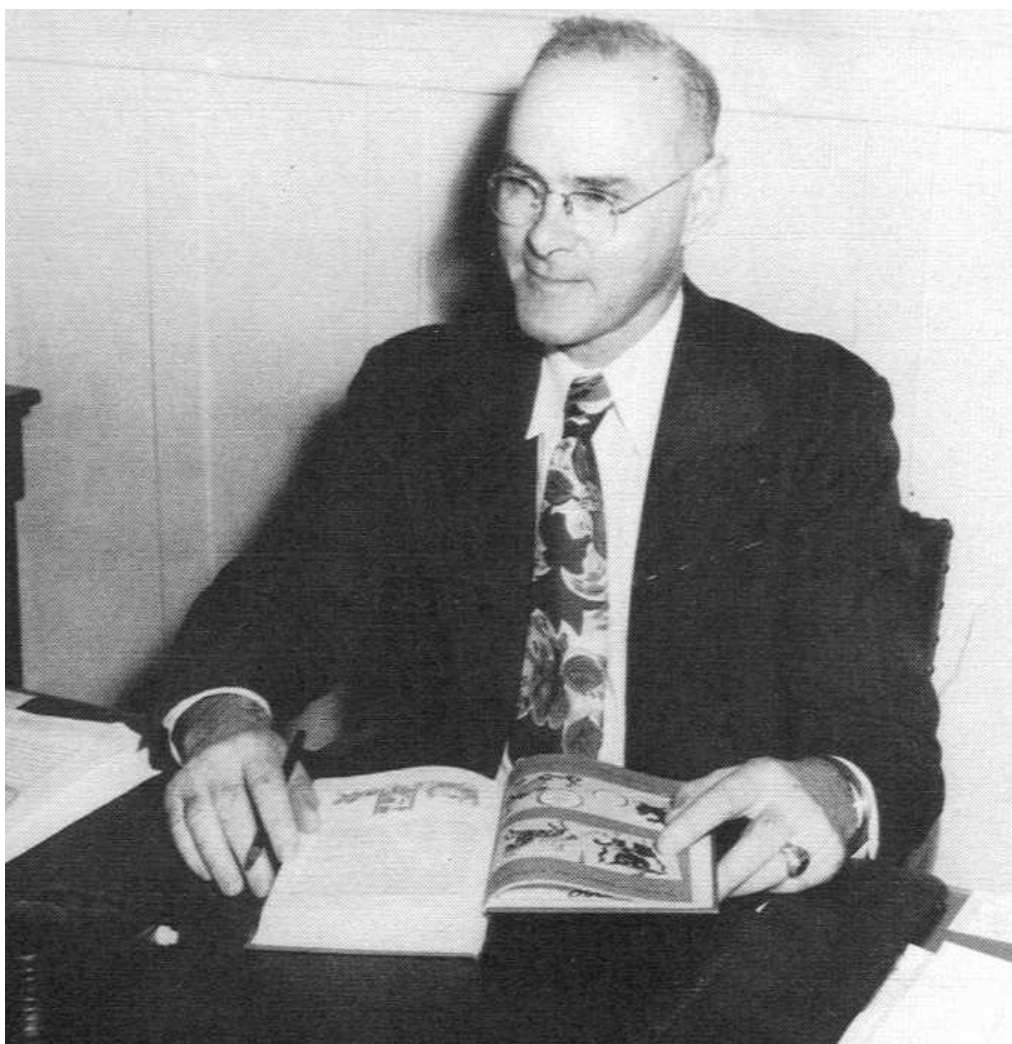
Mr. A.E. Scruggs was born in Independence, Tate County, Mississippi, in 1897. He graduated from Sherman High School and attended the University of Mississippi, where he received his B.S. and M.A. degrees. He also studied at Louisiana State University, working toward his Ph. D. degree. Beginning his school career in Amory, Mississippi, he served the Amory schools as both teacher and coach in the fall of 1923. In the fall of 1926, he became principal of New Albany High School. In 1928 he moved to Pearl River Junior College as head coach and head of the history department.

In August 1917, Mr. Scruggs enlisted in the 14th Cavalry for guard duty at Del Rio on the Texas border and in 1918 was transferred to Fort Sam Houston in the mobilization camp. After General Pershing's decision that no more cavalry forces would be needed for the war effort in Europe, the young soldier began training in the 15th Trench Mortar Battery, Camp Leon Springs, transferring in September 1918 to military officers' training camp at Camp Zachary Taylor, Louisville, Kentucky. He was stationed there until the end of the war.

In 1934 Mr. Scruggs began his work with the Biloxi schools as high school principal, a position he held until 1944, when he submitted his resignation to the School Board. In his letter he noted that he had served the youth of Biloxi for ten years, during that time giving his entire time and thought to the building of a good high school and working winter and summer for the children of Biloxi, five summers at no pay. Following the resignation of Mr. Ditto in 1947, Mr. Scruggs became superintendent of the Biloxi Public Schools, a position he held until his death in 1957.

Among his accomplishments were planning for and handling a great increase in student enrollment resulting from the growth of Keesler and overseeing and coordinating an enormous expansion of school facilities, including construction of Nichols School, Perkins Elementary School, Mary L. Michel Junior High School, and West End Elementary (now Lopez) School, in addition to renovations, repair, and expansion of existing plants. He also will be remembered for his work in conjunction with the city to build a new stadium and to expand the school district under the state's reorganization mandates. He was also very instrumental in strengthening the position of the superintendent in relation to the School Board.

Information from 1934 Souvenir Edition of The Daily Herald and selected Board Minutes



SUPERINTENDENT ARTHUR E. SCRUGGS

MR. LAWRENCE J. BUFORD – 1957-1958
Interim Superintendent

Following the untimely death of Superintendent A.E. Scruggs in October 1957, Biloxi High School principal Lawrence J. Buford was named acting superintendent. He would serve in this position for the remainder of the school year.

Mr. Buford was born in Morgan City, Louisiana, and attended Louisiana State University, where he received his B.S. degree in mathematics and science in 1949 and his master's degree in 1951.

He was employed as a teacher of science and math in the Biloxi schools in 1949, and following completion of his graduate work, he was named principal of Central Junior High School.

In 1953 he became principal of Biloxi High School; during his tenure as principal, Mrs. Catherine Clower was assistant principal of the high school. Mr. Buford was BHS principal until 1957, when the Board called on him to serve as acting superintendent. In June 1958 the administrative offices were moved from the high school, where the superintendent's office had been located for many years, to a building on Lameuse Street, near the old Biloxi Library. At the same time the business office was also relocated there.

At the time Mr. Buford was principal, his annual contract called for 10-1/2 months of employment by the schools. He was expected to be on the job 5-1/2 days per week, reporting from 8 a.m. until noon on Saturdays, directing janitors and sweepers, checking the building for cleanliness, safety, general order, and arrangement.

Mr. Buford worked closely with Mr. Gycelle Tynes, named by the Board to assume the superintendency in the summer of 1958. When Mr. Tynes became superintendent, Mr. Buford was elected assistant superintendent of secondary instruction.

In 1960 he resigned his position and moved to Austin, Texas, as an administrator in the Austin Public Schools.



INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT

LAWRENCE J. BUFORD

MR. GYCELLE TYNES – 1958 - 1960

Mr. Gycelle Tynes was superintendent of the Biloxi Public Schools from July 1958 until June 30, 1960.

A native of Gloster, Mississippi, Mr. Tynes attended Amite High School in Liberty, Mississippi, and graduated from Wilkinson High School, in Woodville, Mississippi, in 1929. He attended Southeast Junior College in Summit, Mississippi, and Pearl River Junior College in Poplarville, Mississippi, before completing work on his B.S. degree in liberal arts at Millsaps College in Jackson in 1933. In 1943 he received his M.A. degree in administration and supervision from the University of Alabama.

Mr. Tynes's experience in Mississippi education began in Taylorsville, Mississippi, where he was high school principal and athletic director from 1933 until 1935. Moving to Terry, Mississippi, in 1936, he served as high school principal for six years.

After accepting his first position as superintendent of schools in Brandon, Mississippi, in 1946—where he remained for four years, Mr. Tynes was elected superintendent of the West Tallahatchie District in 1950 and held that position until 1958, when he came to Biloxi.

He succeeded interim superintendent Lawrence Buford, who had served in that position for one year following the death of Superintendent A.E. Scruggs in October 1957.

During his short tenure as Biloxi superintendent, Mr. Tynes was instrumental in restructuring the administration, with Mr. Buford as assistant superintendent for secondary education and Mr. R.D. Brown as assistant superintendent for elementary education.

Business management of the schools was reorganized and purchasing and payroll procedures were handled through the new business office under the supervision of John McDermott, who began his work as business manager in April 1958.

The Perkins Elementary School addition was approved during Mr. Tynes's tenure.



SUPERINTENDENT GYCELLE TYNES

MR. R.D. BROWN – 1960-1975

In 1960 Mr. R.D. Brown succeeded Mr. Gycelle Tynes as superintendent of the Biloxi Public Schools. He was serving as assistant superintendent of elementary instruction at the time of his election to the superintendency.

Born in 1913, Mr. Brown finished high school at Simpson County Agricultural High School and attended Copiah-Lincoln Junior College. He received his B.S. degree from Mississippi Southern College in 1935, then attended the University of Chicago. He later received his M.A. from Southern.

Mr. Brown's first experiences in school work were in the Perry County School System from 1935-1936, where he was social studies teacher and coach. From 1936 to 1942 he was superintendent and math/science teacher at DeLisle Consolidated School. Following military service from 1942-1944, when he was stationed at Keesler Field in aircraft maintenance, he became superintendent of the Fernwood Rural Separate School District from 1944 to 1948.

His varied experiences included work with the Federal Security Agency in 1948-1949 as a seafood inspector. He was supervisor of cafeterias for the Biloxi schools in 1949. In 1953 he was named principal of West End and Lopez Schools in Biloxi, and served as West End principal from 1954 to 1958.

Mr. Brown's tenure as superintendent covered the period from 1961 to 1975, a time of profound changes in the nation and in the community, reflected in the Biloxi schools as the dual system of schools for separate races was abolished and integration of school faculties and students began in 1964.

As he neared retirement, Mr. Brown was honored by the School Board's giving his name to the new vocational center on the high school campus. The R.D. Brown Vocational-Technical Complex was dedicated on February 11, 1974.

Mr. Brown retired at the end of the school year in 1975. In a memorable ceremony marking the occasion of his formal retirement, the Biloxi school community, Biloxi businesses and civic clubs, and the city government honored him at a dinner where he was praised as a visionary leader who had directed the schools to new heights of academic excellence and student achievement and faculty growth.



SUPERINTENDENT ROBERT D. BROWN

DR. OLON RAY – 1975 -1987

In 1962 Dr. Olon E. Ray came to Biloxi High School as a social studies and government teacher. He was a native of Weir, Mississippi, and had attended Northwest Junior College in Senatobia, Mississippi, where he received his AA degree. In 1962 he was awarded his bachelor's degree by the University of Mississippi. In 1968 he completed work on his master's degree at the University of Southern Mississippi and began his distinguished career in Mississippi education.

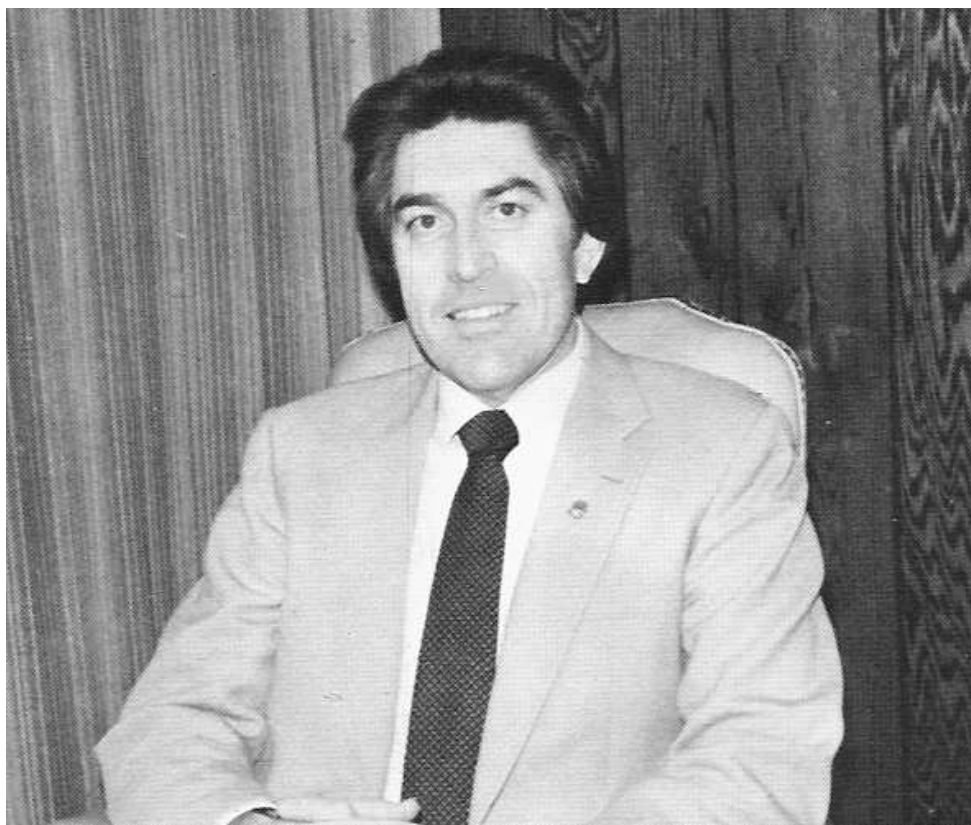
After a brief period as a member of the faculty of the Brandon schools, he returned to Biloxi as administrative assistant in the Biloxi Public School District and shortly thereafter began working toward his doctorate. In 1975 he received his Ed. D. degree in educational administration from Southern.

Upon the retirement of Mr. R.D. Brown in 1975, Dr. Ray became superintendent of the Biloxi Public Schools.

In his new position, Dr. Ray made significant administrative changes and shifts in instructional emphases that would affect the entire school district, among them the realignment of the schools to include a middle school structure for grades six, seven, and eight in Fernwood, Michel, and Nichols schools. The high school, having decreased in student enrollment during the past few years, then enrolled all students in grades nine through twelve. Among the most important progressive steps for the Biloxi schools during Dr. Ray's administration was the passage of a bond issue in 1984 that financed the air conditioning of all schools in the district. As a result of the Education Reform Act, with which Dr. Ray had been closely associated, the schools also in 1985-1986 added pilot kindergarten classes for the first time in the history of the district and fully implemented the kindergarten program in 1986-1987. Under his administration the mastery learning concept governing the instructional program was introduced.

A dynamic leader and visionary educator, Dr. Ray was very active in moves to improve not only the Biloxi schools but schools throughout the state. He helped to found the Mississippians for Quality Education group that was active in organized efforts to improve teachers' salaries and school financing and to redirect efforts so that education would be the first priority for legislative consideration in the future.

In 1987 Dr. Ray was named education assistant to Governor Ray Mabus. Later he was executive director of the Mississippi Community College and Junior College Association.



SUPERINTENDENT OLON E. RAY

MR. BRUCE STEWART – 1988 and 1992-1993
Acting Superintendent

In 1988 Mr. Bruce Stewart was appointed interim superintendent of the Biloxi schools after Dr. Olon Ray left to take a position in the governor's office. He served as superintendent until Dr. Tom Burnham was named to the post. And in 1992-1993 Mr. Stewart was again named acting superintendent, following Dr. Burnham's move to Jackson as State Superintendent of Education.

A graduate of Carr Central High School in 1951, Bruce Stewart served in the United States Army from February 1952 to November 1954. He is a veteran of the Korean War. Stewart attended Mississippi Southern College in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, where he received both his B.S. degree in 1954 and his M.Ed. degree in 1959.

His first teaching experience came in 1959-1964, when he was a member of Biloxi's Central Junior High School faculty. In 1964 he was named principal of Central Junior High School, a position he held until 1968, when he was named principal of Nichols High School. He served in this position until 1975. From 1975 until 1992 Mr. Stewart was assistant superintendent of the Biloxi Public School District.

In an extraordinary career of community service, Bruce Stewart made a mark on Biloxi and the Gulf Coast that has been recognized in numerous awards and honors. He was named winner of the Pat Santucci Spirit of the Coast Award in 1997. A charter member of the Boys and Girls Club in 1966, he has served the organization as president and has been a moving force in its development as an invaluable part of community life for hundreds of Biloxi children over the years. He served as chairman of the Biloxi Planning Commission, president of the Biloxi Kiwanis Club, and president of the Chamber of Commerce. He was a founding member and longtime president of Biloxi First, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting creative and innovative teaching in the Biloxi schools through grants to teachers for projects that would not otherwise be funded. He was also President of District IV of the Mississippi Association of Educators and active in his church and in charity groups like the Salvation Army.

In 1997-1999 he served as co-chair of the Tricentennial Commission celebrating the founding of Biloxi in 1699, capping a lifelong career of dedication and commitment to his community and its long history.

In an unparalleled career of both professional and volunteer service to Biloxi, Stewart has worked in countless ways to make the lives of Biloxi's young people better.



INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT

BRUCE STEWART

DR. TOM BURNHAM – 1988 - 1992

Named Superintendent of Education for the Biloxi Public School District in 1988, Dr. Tom Burnham served in this position until 1992.

A graduate of Puckett High School, he attended Hinds Junior College and received his A.A. degree in 1966. He then attended Mississippi College, where he completed his B.S. and his M.Ed. degrees. Burnham received his Ed.S. Degree in 1983 and his Ed.D. degree from Delta State University in 1985.

His first position as a teacher was in Pearl High School from 1969 to 1972. His varied school experiences included work as assistant principal/transportation supervisor for McLaurin Junior High school; education specialist for Mississippi Educational Television for four years; assistant dean of the Division of Continuing Education at Delta State University from 1981 to 1986; principal of Solomon Junior High School, Greenville, 1986-1987.

Dr. Burnham was in his twenty-third year of service to the schools of Mississippi when he became superintendent of the Biloxi Public School District. He had served as principal of Biloxi High School for the 1987-1988 school year.

As superintendent of the Biloxi schools, Burnham supervised a certified staff of 384, together with 290 classified personnel. Student enrollment was 6,564 at the time he ended his tenure in Biloxi. The school budget was \$22.8-million.

Among his most important accomplishments were directing the district through a period of financial uncertainty and reduced funding with no loss of instructional programs or services; providing leadership for curricular improvements, including the introduction of advanced placement classes in Biloxi High School; and making the transition from skill-based to concept-based instruction. He was also instrumental in leading the schools in the use of technology to augment effective instruction and in supporting the continuing development and substantial growth of Biloxi First, Inc.

On June 30, 1992, Dr. Burnham resigned as superintendent of the Biloxi schools to become State Superintendent of Education.



SUPERINTENDENT TOM BURNHAM

DR. VIRGIL STRICKLAND – 1993 – 1994

Dr. Virgil Strickland was elected superintendent of the Biloxi Public School District in 1993. He came to Biloxi from Cleveland, Mississippi, where he had been superintendent of the Cleveland Public Schools since 1989.

Dr. Strickland received his B.S. degree in English/education from Mississippi State University; his master's degree from Mississippi State; and his Ph.D. degree in educational administration from the University of Mississippi in 1987.

He served as a member of the adjunct faculty of Delta State University, Hinds Community College, and Alcorn State University.

Dr. Strickland began his school work as an English teacher in Warren Central High School in Vicksburg in 1965-1967.

His extensive administrative background prior to his coming to Biloxi included work in the Vicksburg Warren School District, where he had been principal of Halls Ferry Elementary School and of Vicksburg High School; director of instruction from 1987-1988; coordinator of instructional management from 1986-1987; and executive assistant to the superintendent before moving to Cleveland. He also held positions as elementary and middle school principal and counselor.

Dr. Strickland was a member of and active participant in a number of civic and professional organizations and was a member of Phi Delta Kappa and arts organizations. He served as a member and chairman of a large number of accrediting committees for other state school districts.

Dr. Strickland had a record of twenty-seven years of experience in the public schools of Mississippi when he was named superintendent of the Biloxi Public Schools in January 1993, Dr. Strickland did not assume full-time work in the district until the spring, following interim superintendent Bruce Stewart in the office. He resigned the following year.



SUPERINTENDENT VIRGIL STRICKLAND

DR. ROBERT BOWLES – 1994
Interim Superintendent

Dr. Robert Bowles completed his high school work at John Jefferson High School in Purvis Mississippi, and attended Alcorn State University, Lorman, Mississippi, where he received his B.S. degree in May 1966. He received his master's degree from North Carolina Central University and his doctorate in educational administration and supervision from Kansas State University in 1976. He is a member of Phi Kappa Phi and Phi Delta Kappa Honor Societies.

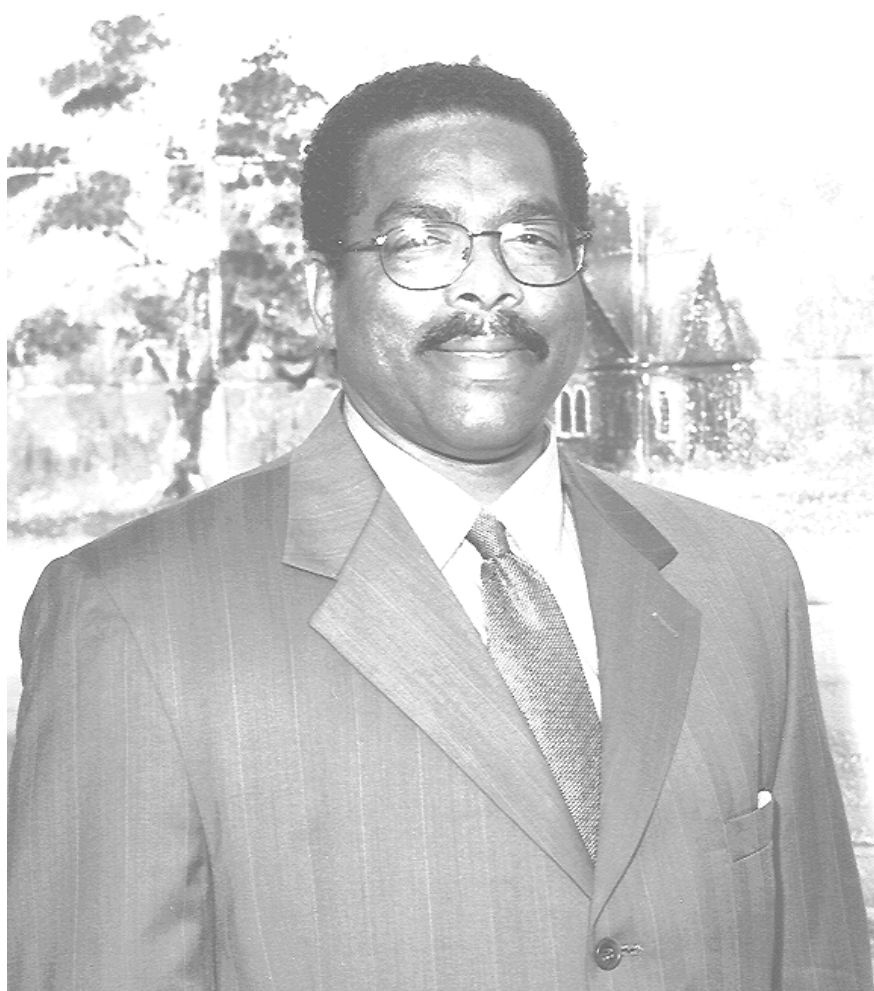
His school experiences prior to his coming to Biloxi included work as physical education instructor at North Carolina Central University from 1967 to 1970; university registrar at Alcorn State University, 1976-1980; and assistant professor of physical education at Alcorn State, 1980-1988.

Dr. Bowles was Alcorn State University's first Director of Alumni Affairs, and among the many honors he has received is that of being named Alcornite of the Year in 1993. He was also recognized for his leadership role in university affairs and for his achievements in his career field by being selected as a member of the Alcorn Hall of Honor. He has been active in civic and professional organizations and in his church. He is chairman of the Board of Deacons of Morning Star Baptist Church, Gulfport, Mississippi.

With other Coast community leaders, he was chosen to be among participants in the Leadership Gulf Coast program. He holds membership in the Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber, NEA, and NAACP. He and his wife, Dr. Shirley J. Bowles, came to Biloxi in 1988, when he was named Deputy Superintendent of the Biloxi Public School District.

In 1994, following the resignation of Dr. Virgil Strickland as superintendent, Dr. Bowles was named acting superintendent immediately preceding the tenure of Dr. Larry Drawdy. In the period of Dr. Bowles's tenure and at the beginning of Dr. Drawdy's superintendency, the exhaustive five-year plan update for the district was completed and submitted to the Board for review and adoption.

In his present position as deputy superintendent, among Dr. Bowles' responsibilities are personnel matters, student discipline referrals to the central office, accreditation, and staff administrative evaluation. He also serves as liaison with the Harrison County Youth Detention Center and handles employee/student harassment and other matters required under Section 504, Title IX, and the Americans With Disabilities Act.



INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT ROBERT BOWLES

DR. LARRY DRAWDY – 1994 - Present

Dr. Larry Drawdy was born in Miami, Florida. He attended Mississippi College, Clinton, Mississippi, where he received his B.A. and M. Ed. Degrees. In 1971 he was awarded a doctor's degree from Mississippi State University.

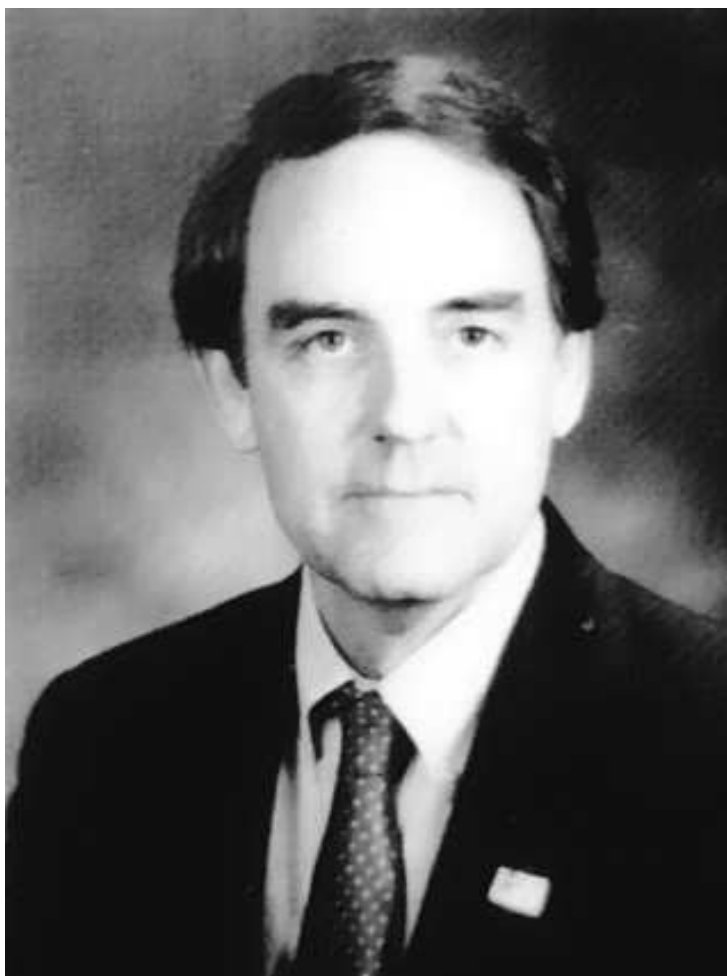
Dr. Drawdy's long and distinguished career in Mississippi schools began at Mississippi College, where he was assistant dean of men. After teaching in the Brevard, Florida, public schools, he returned to Mississippi and was principal of Brandon Junior High School.

Following a five-year stay in the Moss Point Schools as assistant superintendent of instruction and personnel, he came to Biloxi as assistant superintendent in 1975, leaving Biloxi in 1986 to become superintendent of the Picayune Public Schools. He was then superintendent of the Meridian Public School District for six years before returning to Biloxi as superintendent.

The Biloxi administrator has served on many state and regional accrediting and other professional organizations. He served as president of the Council of Public Schools and as chairman of the Commission on School Accreditation. A member of the Board of Directors of the Southern Education Consortium, he has served as president of the Gulf Coast Education Initiative Consortium and as consultant for numerous educational groups and schools, including desegregation institutes and workshops, drug education programs, education management workshops, and performance based accreditation.

Dr. Drawdy was named Mississippi's Superintendent of the Year in 1993, and he has received many other awards in recognition of his service to Mississippi schools and his own community. He has been active in United Way, church programs, civic organizations, charitable and arts organizations, and professional associations. He served on the Board of the Southern Education Consortium, the Gulf Coast Symphony, and other organizations. In 1998 he received the Mississippi College Service to Humanity Award.

During his tenure as superintendent, the Biloxi schools have made marked progress in curricular and instructional programs and received the state's highest accreditation rating. He has supervised the school system's development of a long-range strategic plan, expanded communications with staff and community, and directed an unprecedented building program for the school district, including three new elementary schools, a new junior high school complex, and a new high school for grades 10-12. In addition, all elementary schools have been renovated. The school system has achieved prominence and recognition through publications with nationwide circulation; the district was named a Blue Ribbon School District by a national business organization in 1998.



SUPERINTENDENT LARRY DRAWDY

In *The Growth of the Biloxi Public School System, Vol. I*, Mr. C.D. Lancaster is identified as the County Superintendent and Principal of the Biloxi Public School. Subsequent references to the earliest superintendents note that they served as Superintendent and Principal of the Biloxi Main School. It is believed that Mr. Lancaster served as superintendent from 1886 until 1896, followed by J.L. Ladd, J.M. Taylor, J.H. Owings, and J.M. Young. The list of superintendents and interim superintendents from 1922 through 2002 follows:

R.P. Linfield – Superintendent - 1911 – 1922

A.L. May – Superintendent – 1922 – 1934

George W. Ditto – Superintendent – 1934 – 1946

Arthur E. Scruggs – Superintendent – 1946 – 1957

Lawrence J. Buford – Acting Superintendent – 1957 – 1958

Gycelle Tynes – 1958 - 1960

Robert D. Brown – Superintendent – 1960 – 1975

Olon Ray – Superintendent – 1975 – 1987

Bruce Stewart – Interim Superintendent – 1988

Tom Burnham – Superintendent – 1988 – 1992

Bruce Stewart – Interim Superintendent – 1992 – 1993

Virgil Strickland – Superintendent – 1993 – 1994

Robert Bowles – Interim Superintendent – 1994

Larry Drawdy – Superintendent – 1994 - Present

SELECTED BIOGRAPHIES

MR. MARSHALL FRANKLIN NICHOLS, SR.

Professor Marshall Franklin Nichols, Sr., was born in Decatur, Mississippi. One of eight sons of his parents, he was reared on a farm and developed a lifelong interest in agricultural pursuits, accompanied by an abiding and determined interest in education. He attended a church school and graduated from high school in Collinsville, Mississippi. After beginning his teaching career in Baptist Seminary, a church school in Meridian, he completed correspondence courses and later received a master's degree from Atlanta University.

After teaching for a short period in Ocean Springs, he was asked to come to Biloxi as principal of the Biloxi Colored School on Nixon Street. The year was 1916, and at that time, the school offered classes only through the ninth grade. Professor Nichols began his lifelong efforts to improve education for the young people in his charge, with the first tenth grade students graduating in 1919 and the first twelfth grade students graduating in 1935. His attempts to upgrade both the inadequate and dilapidated facilities (years later, his wife, Mrs. Fannie Nichols, in an interview referred to it as "that old broken down building on Nixon Street") and the curriculum were recognized throughout the city and the state as he worked to develop opportunities for success for students in the Biloxi Colored School. It was under his leadership that vocational programs for the school were expanded and the school moved to a twelve-year curriculum, replacing the ten-year program that had been in effect for many years for students in the Biloxi Colored School.

In partnership with his wife, Fannie Birch Nichols, he labored tirelessly for the entire Biloxi community. Active in church, civic, and professional organizations, he was a deacon in the First Missionary Baptist Church and a 32nd Degree Mason. He died on January 26, 1945. His invaluable contributions to Biloxi were recognized when the school was named in honor of this pioneer educator. He was succeeded as principal by his wife, who served in the position from 1945 until her retirement in 1963, marking almost fifty years of the Nichols family's uninterrupted service to M.F. Nichols High School. Professor and Mrs. Nichols were the parents of three children: M.F. Nichols, Jr., Norwida Nichols Wood, and Gwendolyn Nichols de Marks. Continuing the tradition of service to Biloxi education, both daughters became Biloxi teachers, and the Nichols name continues to be honored in the Biloxi school system.

Information from *The Growth of the Biloxi School System*, 1979, Julia C. Guice, editor, Stephanie Richmond, and David Alfred Wheeler; and the oral History of Mrs. Fannie Nichols, interview and transcription by Murella Powell.



PROFESSOR MARSHALL FRANKLIN NICHOLS, SR.

MISS MARGARET SPEIR

On September 1, 1918, Miss Margaret Speir (born August 10, 1895) started her long career in the Biloxi schools as a teacher in Central High School, after having taught in the Harrison-Jackson Line Consolidated School in D'Iberville for three years. Her beginning salary as a Biloxi teacher was \$630 per year, a substantial increase over her \$400 per year beginning salary in D'Iberville. She had graduated from Biloxi High School on May 28, 1913.

In 1923 she was appointed elementary supervisor for the Biloxi schools, and joined the Dukate Elementary School faculty in 1924, where she was a classroom teacher and principal. She did not receive her degree until 1940, graduating from Tulane University with a B.A. from the Division for Teachers. She completed her college work after receipt from a letter from Superintendent George W. Ditto to Miss Speir and other principals in 1938, informing them that the School Board had gone on record requesting that all principals who did not have a degree be notified that "it is the policy of the Board for all principals who do not have a degree to secure a degree." Superintendent Ditto added, "I trust that it will be convenient for you to secure your degree at an early date."

Miss Speir received her M.A. degree in 1952 from Mississippi Southern College in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. She held a Supervisor's Certificate Class AA from the Mississippi State Department of Education. Like other members of the Biloxi schools staff during the 1930s, Miss Speir lived through "hard times" that affected the nation and inevitably the schools. A letter to Miss Speir during this period from Superintendent Ditto is indicative of the kind of problems Biloxi school personnel faced during those years. On July 8, 1939, he wrote to Miss Speir, "We have been working on the steps at your school so when we get through I think you will be safe going up and down the steps at your school for one more year."



In 1960 Miss Margaret Speir retired after thirty-six years in the Biloxi school system. Summing up her service to the schools, she wrote, "My thirty-six years of work with the children of the schools has been a rewarding experience and I am happy that my path of life lay along the paths of education for young people." Many Biloxians who attended Dukate Elementary School still remember her today with much affection and warm appreciation.

MISS ETHEL ARGUELLES

Miss Ethel Arguelles was principal of Howard I Elementary School from 1925 until her death in 1938. She was only thirty-nine years old when she died. She had served as a substitute teacher in the East End School in 1916 and from that time until 1922 she taught fourth grade there. Transferred to Howard I in 1925, she taught first grade and served as principal.

Miss Arguelles was a graduate of Biloxi High school. She was attending summer school courses at the State Teachers College in Hattiesburg shortly before her death. She had also studied during the summer at Tulane, Peabody, and Loyola.

During her tenure as principal of Howard I, the enrollment grew to approximately 350 students, with eight teachers. She was active in church and community organizations and was described as a "faithful worker in the annual Christmas distributions to the poor children of the city."

President E.A. DeMiller of the Biloxi School Board praised her accomplishments "at Howard I under the handicaps of an old school," adding that her death was a blow to the schools. Superintendent George Ditto said that she was one of the outstanding teachers and principals of the Biloxi school system, loved and respected by all.

Miss Arguelles was survived by her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Arguelles, and five sisters, Florence, Lillian, Bernadine, Cecile, and Louise, and four brothers, Warren, Albert, Frank, and Donald, all of Biloxi.

Information from *The Daily Herald*, July 28, 1938

MISS HELENA BRANDER

Miss Helena Brander, principal of Lopez School and a member of the faculty of the Biloxi Public Schools for twenty-nine years, died on November 1, 1943.

A native of Pascagoula and a resident of Biloxi almost all her life, she was a graduate of Biloxi High School and attended Mississippi Southern College, Hattiesburg; Tulane University, New Orleans; Peabody College, Nashville; and Rice University, Houston.

After teaching one year at Wiggins, she became a member of the West End School faculty and was principal of Lopez from the time of its construction in 1924 until her death.

For many years, Miss Brander was active in the Presbyterian Church, serving as superintendent of its primary department. She had directed plays and pageants for the church and Sunday School.

Devoted to her work at Lopez, she was a beloved figure among the faculty and students. Superintendent George Ditto said of her: "Her life has been devoted to the children of Biloxi. She has taught over thirty years. . . . Many of Biloxi's prominent citizens began their education in her classes. Their love and respect for her has continued throughout the years. She exemplified the fine character she sought to develop in her students. Miss Brander's ambition was for the Lopez school. She held Lopez first in all plans and the school has grown to a leading place in the community under her wise and sympathetic guidance. Her death is a great loss to the schools."

Miss Brander was survived by four sisters, Mrs. G.O. Anderson, New Orleans; Mrs. F.A. Taltavull, Mrs. G.B. Cousins, Sr., and Miss Marguerite Brander, all of Biloxi; and a brother, Francis Brander, Galveston, Texas.

Information from *The Daily Herald*, November 1, 1943

MISS EDNA HOLLEY

For thirty-six years, from 1889 to 1925, Miss Edna Holley was a member of the faculty of the Biloxi Public Schools.

In the 1924 yearbook, *The Beacon Glow*, she is listed as principal of Biloxi High School, making her on record the first woman principal of the high school—a position she held only until the following year, when she was named assistant principal prior to her retirement because of failing eyesight in the last year of her school work.

Miss Holley was born in Biloxi on June 5, 1872, daughter of Anson Holley and Adelia Logan Holley. Following her graduation from the Biloxi schools in 1889, she started teaching first grade in Biloxi, until 1912. At that time she became a high school librarian, and from that period until her being named principal she was librarian and history teacher.

During the summers, between teaching terms, she studied at Tulane, the University of Tennessee, Draughan's Business College in New Orleans, and Normal School. A member of the King's Daughters and the Episcopal Church, she had long been associated with the upkeep of the Biloxi lighthouse, assisting Miranda Youghans in her lighthouse work.

The Daily Herald noted in Miss Holley's obituary that she was the first and only Biloxi teacher to be retired on a pension.

She was sixty-eight years old when she died on July 5, 1940, having lived all her life in Biloxi and holding a unique place in the history of the Biloxi schools.



Information from *The Daily Herald*, July 5, 1940

MISS ALMA RITCH

Miss Alma Ritch was principal of Gorenflo Elementary School in Biloxi from 1916 until 1958. It is believed that her uninterrupted tenure of 42 years as an administrator in the Biloxi school system is unequaled and that her full service to the schools of 48 years is also unequaled.. She succeeded Miss Winnie Gorenflo as principal of the school, which was first known as the Back Bay School.

The original Gorenflo school was a two-room wooden building on Main street, later the site of St. John's Church. Pioneer school benefactors W.K.M. DuKate and William F. Gorenflo were instrumental in the development of the first school, then known as a ward school. The land was donated by Mr. Gorenflo, the building by Mr. DuKate. The present Gorenflo Elementary School was built in 1924, the result of a bond issue supported by visionary Biloxians, who also voted in favor of the construction of new schools in both east and west Biloxi (the old DuKate and Lopez buildings, neither of which exists today).

A native Biloxian, Miss Ritch was a graduate of Biloxi High School, together with her sister Miss Priscilla Ritch, who was also a longtime Gorenflo teacher. Though information about the life of Miss Ritch is limited, it is known that she was a graduate of Tulane University. She began teaching at the Back Bay School in September 1910, at a salary of \$40 per month; she taught first and second grade. For more than four decades she directed the educational lives of thousands of Biloxi students who lived in the Back Bay area. Often there were as many as forty students in a classroom, with limited supplies and equipment. With her demonstrable firmness and quiet leadership, Miss Ritch made the best use of time and resources to provide Biloxi children an environment that was safe and welcoming. She is remembered today by many Biloxians for the strength she brought to her life's work and the dedication and commitment she showed for forty-two years in the Biloxi schools.

On October 21, 1964, a memorial program was held in honor of Miss Ritch, with principal Horace Flake presiding and paying tribute to this remarkable woman. A portrait was unveiled in her honor; it was painted by noted Biloxi painter Joe Moran from a photograph of Miss Alma Ritch provided to the artist by her sister Miss Priscilla. The painting remains in the possession of the Biloxi Public School District as a reminder of a woman whose contributions to the school system were matched by the youthful beauty of the subject of the painting.

Information from "A Taste of History," *Gorenflo Gourmet; The Growth of the Biloxi Public School System*, by Stephanie Richmond and David Wheeler, Julia Guice, editor; *Daily Herald*, Sept. 9, 1910, p. 4.



MISS ALMA RITCH

(From a painting by Joe Moran)

MRS. DELPHINE HOLLOWAY RUSS

In 1919, Mrs. Delphine Holloway Russ began teaching in the Biloxi Public Schools. Forty-four years later, in 1963, she retired, after having served as teacher and principal of Howard II Elementary School. Generations of Biloxians remember with love and gratitude her service to the entire community and particularly to the residents of Point Cadet.

After graduating from high school, Mrs. Russ attended what was then known as Mississippi Normal School (the state institution for teacher training, now the University of Southern Mississippi). After her first summer of college work, she began teaching in the one-room school at Vancleave. The following year she was to begin what she later recalled—in an interview with a *Biloxi-North Biloxi Press* reporter—"the happiest years of her life" as she taught fifth grade at Howard II.

She completed her college education by taking courses three nights a week at Tulane University; and after her first year as a Howard II teacher she also assumed duties as principal.

Looking back over her long service in the Biloxi schools, Mrs. Russ recalled that Albert L. May was Superintendent of Schools when she began teaching. She also recalled a time when disciplinary measures at school were reinforced by firm discipline at home. "I was born to teach," Mrs. Russ said. The reward of teaching came not through salaries (Mrs. Russ remembered teaching for \$47 a month) but through the love and respect and cooperation of the many children and adults whose lives she touched and changed forever. And she emphasized the most important reward of all: helping a child to reach his fullest potential. The reporter who talked with Mrs. Russ wrote that "The secret to her longevity, happiness, and success in her career are closely entwined with her philosophy of life: 'Always do good to others but don't expect anything in return.'"

Cited by parents and her fellow teachers as a woman of great kindness and patience, Mrs. Russ contributed not only to Biloxi but also to the state, as she served in leadership roles in state education as a member of the State Textbook Commission and in professional organizations. She always had the support of her husband, Dr. Albert E. Russ, and of the people in the Point Cadet area whom she loved.

Information from a feature story by Mamie Humphrey in the *Biloxi-North Biloxi Press*



MRS. DELPHINE HOLLOWAY RUSS

MRS. FANNIE NICHOLS

The life of Mrs. Fannie L. Nichols is synonymous with education in Biloxi. She and her husband, Professor Marshall Franklin Nichols, Sr., were instrumental in the development of what was then called the Biloxi Colored School on Nixon Street.

Mrs. Nichols was the daughter of Thomas Pierson Birch and his wife Ella Campbell Birch. Thomas and Ella Birch married in 1892 and were the parents of two girls. Fannie Birch was born in 1894. She graduated from Rust College in Holly Springs, Mississippi, and received her master's degree from Tuskegee Institute in 1952, later doing additional graduate work at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, and at North Dakota University. She taught briefly in Ocean Springs prior to Professor Nichols' acceptance of a position as principal of the school in Biloxi, where she joined him as a teacher. She was the first Jeanes supervisor in Hancock, Harrison, and Stone Counties in the program established by philanthropist Anna T. Jeanes to support the Negro Rural School Fund, and in 1936 she became State Supervisor of Adult Education for Negroes W.P.A. and continued in the position until 1943.

Active in community, church, and civic work, she was a Sunday school teacher, president of the Woman's Baptist State Convention, member of Eastern Star and other groups, president of the Harrison Teachers Association, president of Sixth District Teachers, and vice president and then president of the Mississippi Teachers Association.

Following the death of her husband in 1945, Mrs. Nichols was elected principal of the school. In 1945 the city passed a bond issue to build a new school and named it in honor of Professor Nichols. Discussing the enormous changes that had taken place during her lifetime—not only in the nation but also in the local community, particularly in education, Mrs. Nichols looked back on her years with great satisfaction and pride. She could remember the exceptionally hard times at the beginning, but her sense of optimism and hope led her to emphasize the good things about the community and the people.

Mrs. Fannie Birch Nichols died in Biloxi on August 3, 1982, one of Biloxi's most highly respected and widely loved citizens. In a tribute to her, the 1997 reunion program for Nichols High School noted that in the life of the school, "She was a massive presence. She stood as tall as the pine trees in school and community." It was a tribute she had earned. Her pioneer work helped to mark the way for generations of young Biloxians to follow.



MRS. FANNIE NICHOLS

MRS. MARY LOUISE MICHEL

Born in 1887 in Biloxi, Mrs. Mary L. Michel was the daughter of Justin Meaut and Louise Seymour Meaut. Her family came to Biloxi in the early nineteenth century; her grandfather, Francis Meaut, was mayor of Biloxi during the Civil War. The Meauts owned extensive property in Biloxi and were prominent in community affairs throughout the history of the city.

After her graduation from high school, Mary Louise Meaut was employed by the Biloxi Public Schools as a teacher. She was only seventeen and had no college training, not an unusual situation for teachers during those years. During the summers she attended Tulane University. After her marriage to Marshall Louis Michel, Sr., in April 1912, she continued to study at Tulane. Later her two small children would accompany her to the university and play on the campus or in Audubon Park while she attended classes. In June 1938 she received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Tulane, having seen her daughter, Helen, receive her BA degree from Sophie Newcomb College in 1936 and her son, Marshall, Jr., receive his M.D. from Tulane in 1937. She also attended Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, taking courses leading to a master's degree.

Mrs. Michel taught almost without interruption in the Biloxi schools until her untimely death in 1952. Though she was primarily a mathematics teacher, she was qualified to teach other subjects. In August 1944 she was named principal of Biloxi High School, a position she held until her resignation for personal reasons in 1946. She returned to the classroom and also worked as assistant principal with Dr. Wayne T. Sandefur, who had succeeded Mrs. Michel as principal.

The longtime Biloxi educator was a beloved figure in the community and in the schools. One of Biloxi's principals, Miss Margaret Speir, said of Mrs. Michel that her "philosophy and practice in teaching were fully twenty years ahead of the time in which she taught." Her classes were described as "unique and different," free of the rigid discipline that had long dominated the nation's classrooms, filled with activity that was purposeful and enriching. The rare raucous student who disturbed the others was merely told to leave the classroom and return when he decided to behave. She strongly opposed any type of physical punishment and believed that there was no such thing as "a bad child." Her approach to teaching was based on a soft-firm philosophy that served her students well throughout her long Biloxi career. She was a woman of remarkable personal qualities and intellectual gifts, remembered with love and respect not only for her kindness but also for the wise and thoughtful counsel she gave to three generations of young Biloxians.

Mrs. Michel died on February 18, 1952. On February 16, 1953, the School Board voted to name Biloxi's new school the Mary L. Michel Junior High School.

Information from a booklet written in 1975 in honor of Mrs. Michel (written by her son and daughter), addendum by Margaret Speir, edited by Virginia Austin, Claire Turner, Zan Skelton, and John Mattox.



MRS. MARY L. MICHEL

MRS. CATHERINE CLOWER

In 1923 Mrs. Catherine Clower began a teaching and administrative career in the Biloxi schools that would continue until her retirement in 1964. A native of Columbia, Mississippi, she was married to Joseph C. Clower and had resided in Biloxi for more than sixty years at the time of her death on September 23, 1981. She was survived by a son, Joseph C. Clower, Jr., and six grandchildren.

Graduating from Shorter College in 1917, Mrs. Clower received a B.A. degree. She completed graduate work at Columbia University, Tulane University, and Mississippi Southern College.

She began teaching English and history in Biloxi High School, and from 1932 until 1954 she taught English and Latin. At one point during the early 1950s she was acting principal of the junior high school; in 1954 she was named assistant principal of Biloxi Senior High School, a position she held until her retirement.

Remembered with warmth and deep respect by hundreds of Biloxi students for her challenging Latin classes, conducted with grace and intelligence and wit, Mrs. Clower helped to provide a sound foundation for college level work and for study of other languages. At the same time she assisted in the administration of the entire high school program with firm discipline and skillful organization, coupled with a profound concern for the welfare of all the students whose lives she touched.

In 1981 Mayor Jerry O'Keefe proclaimed April 5 Catherine Clower Day and a reception was held in her honor at the Biloxi Library Cultural Center.

Mrs. Clower's direct influence in the language program of the high school continued long after her death, as one of her former students, Betty Jean Covich Hughes, taught Latin classes for many years to hundreds of young Biloxians.



MRS. CATHERINE CLOWER

MR. JOHN PETTUS

Prominent Biloxi and Gulf Coast civic leader John B. Pettus was appointed to the Biloxi School Board in 1974. He was the first black Biloxian to serve as a member of the governing body for the Biloxi Public Schools in the more than one-hundred year history of the school system.

The recipient of numerous awards for community service, Mr. Pettus described his activities as worthwhile if they "foster better relationships among people and promote better understanding and a deeper appreciation of conditions which exist and help find solutions to them."

Among the many honors he received were the 1975 10th Laurel Wreath Award given to an outstanding Coast resident each year and the 1972 Federal Civil Service Employee of the Year Award.

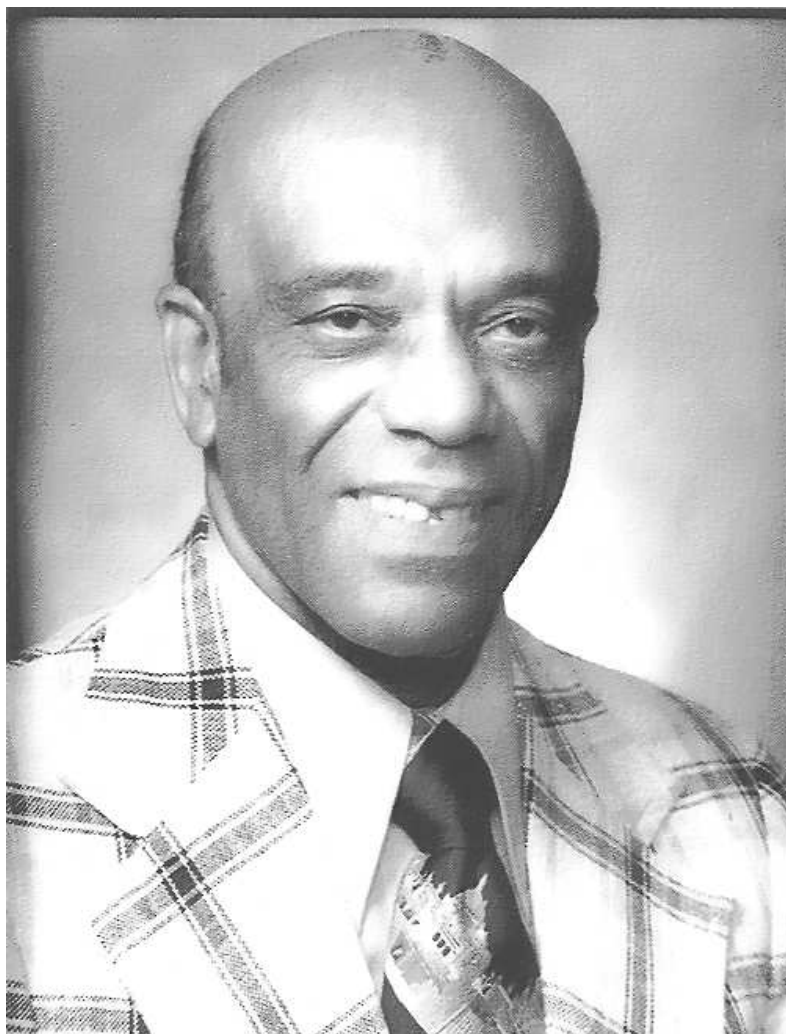
Born in Kemper County, Mississippi, he came to the Gulf Coast in 1947 to serve as electronics specialist at Keesler Air Force Base, a position he held until his retirement after thirty years of service.

He was a graduate of Morehouse College, Atlanta, Georgia, and did graduate work at Atlanta University.

Mr. Pettus was active in Scouting and held the 1958 Silver Beaver Award, the highest award given on the district level for services to youth. A member of Omega Phi Phi Fraternity, he was a trustee of the First Missionary Baptist Church and president and founder of the Chancelor Choir. He gave extensive service to the United Way Campaign for Harrison County and served as president of the Harrison County Board in 1977. Members of the Board and the administration described Mr. Pettus as a person who always focused on what was best for the children of Biloxi and who worked in a spirit of cooperation and unity, bringing special qualities of leadership and character to the position. He was an invaluable role model in a unique position in the history of the Biloxi schools.

Mr. Pettus died on December 22, 1977. He was survived by his wife, Mrs. Alma Lee Pettus.

Information from *The Daily Herald*, December 22, 1977



MR. JOHN PETTUS

MRS. ELMEAR B. HATCHER

Mrs. Elmeare Blanche Hatcher was a teacher in the Biloxi schools for forty-six years. Born in Biloxi on November 16, 1905, Elmeare Blanche Bradford began her teaching career in Pearlinton, where she taught fourth and fifth grade classes, followed by a year in Pascagoula Junior High.

She returned to her home town in 1925 as a teacher of ninth grade mathematics in what was then known as the Biloxi Colored School. For the next forty-six years, she would continue to serve as a faculty member of the Biloxi Public Schools in Nichols High School and in Nichols Junior High School.

Mrs. Hatcher was exceptionally active in teacher organizations and in representing her colleagues in meetings with the School Board and community leaders, always lending her support to causes that would improve the lives of teachers. Having begun her teaching in Biloxi at a salary of about \$300 a year, she knew at firsthand the difficulties imposed on teachers who were paid—in her words and those of the teachers who joined her in challenging the administration and Board—"less than a living wage."

Mrs. Hatcher was a graduate of New Orleans College, where she received her high school diploma in 1922. She completed college work at Campbell College in New Orleans, Dillard University, Rust College, Straight College in New Orleans, and Jackson State University, where she received her B.S. in mathematics and was certified to teach English and math.

On May 31, 1971, Mrs. Hatcher retired. She was recognized by the School Board and the administration for her long and dedicated service to the children of Biloxi and, in particular to the students of Nichols, and for her contributions to the entire school community.



MRS. ELMEAR B. HATCHER

PROFESSOR MARION B. CARPENTER

Known to the thousands of students whom he taught and countless Biloxi friends as "Prof," Marion Carpenter was born in Statesboro, Georgia; he graduated from Fort Lauderdale High School in Florida. While he was a high school student, he lettered in football, played ragtime music in a band ("Marion Carpenter and his Southern Serenaders"), wrote his first song, "My Dreams Are All of You", learned to play saxophone, and aspired to be a composer.

He received his B.S. degree from Georgia Southern at Statesboro and did further work at the University of Southern Mississippi, University of Middle Tennessee, and Louisiana State University.

In 1943 Prof began his work with the Biloxi schools. In those early years he also organized other school bands—Sacred Heart Kiltie Band, Notre Dame Band, D'Iberville Band, and Nichols High School Band. In all, Prof organized approximately thirty bands and played in more than fifty.

Always interested in composing, Prof Carpenter and Pee Wee Maddox once owned a publishing company and published one of Prof's songs, "Searching," sung by Kitty Wells. A later composition, "World of Make Believe," sung by Bill Anderson, won a BMI award as a number-one hit; Ferlin Huskey also recorded one of Prof's songs, "Wrong," and his Dixieland tune "Biloxi" was recorded.

The awards won by the Biloxi High band under Prof's leadership over the years included national recognition in a jazz band contest sponsored by *Look Magazine* and many other honors in band competitions. The band was featured on national television when it played for the Saints-Redskins game in 1963; the Senior Bowl; the Gator Bowl in 1967; and Disney World in 1968. In 1971 the Indians traveled to New Orleans to play in the Sugar Bowl Stadium for the Oilers-Saints game. A true highlight of band history occurred in 1973, when the Indians played in the inaugural parade for President Richard M. Nixon. In 1974 at the Gator Bowl and in 1975 at the Orange Bowl Parade, "The Pride of the Mississippi Gulf Coast" Band participated with honor. And in 1976, the band played for both President Gerald Ford and Presidential candidate Jimmy Carter when both men visited the Coast.

Prof Carpenter received many honors over the years, but his greatest satisfaction and pride came from the individual students with whom he had worked, many of whom went on to careers in music. His students found remarkable enjoyment in the band and in their work with the man who became a legendary figure on the Coast. Prof Carpenter retired at the end of the school year in 1978. (Information from the *Biloxi Hi-Tide*, May 1978)



PROFESSOR MARION CARPENTER

MRS. DELLA McCAUGHAN

It is likely that no other teacher in the history of the Biloxi Public Schools has been so highly honored throughout her teaching career as Della McCaughan, who retired in 1995 after having taught for forty-four years in the Biloxi Public Schools.

Born in Pass Christian, Mrs. McCaughan graduated from Pass Christian High School. She attended Perkinston Junior College and received her B.S. degree from Mississippi Southern College in 1951, her master's degree in 1959, and a specialist's degree, with AAA certification in 1979.

Mrs. McCaughan began teaching in the Biloxi Public School District in 1951; during her teaching career she taught elementary, junior high, and high school students, in addition to teaching university-level classes both on the Coast and at a number of colleges. She completed advanced studies at the University of Iowa, the University of Virginia, Louisiana State University, Baldwin-Wallace College, Cornell, Hamlin University, University of North Carolina, and Johns Hopkins. Her part-time summer and evening teaching was done at Johns Hopkins, the University of Southern Mississippi, the University of Alaska, the University of Mississippi, Louisiana State University, and the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory.

During her remarkable career she initiated the state's first high school course in the marine sciences, wrote extensively about environmental subjects and marine life, conducted workshops, coordinated and supervised field trips to the Barrier Islands for thousands of students and adults, co-authored a series of elementary marine discovery books under a grant by the Bureau of Marine Resources, and spent a year in Washington, D.C., as one of the nation's two Congressional Einstein Fellows in 1991-1992, working as educational advisor in the U.S. Senate in Senator Thad Cochran's office.

Inducted into the Mississippi Hall of Master Teachers in 1991 and the Gulf Coast Community College Hall of Fame, she was a Tandy Technology Scholars Award winner in 1991, was named Outstanding Educator in Mississippi, was the state's and the Southeastern region's Outstanding Biology Teacher Award winner in 1964, was Mississippi's Teacher of the Year in 1976, Biloxi's Career Woman of the Year in 1972, served nine times on review panels to evaluate proposals for the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education, and Sea Grant from 1979-1992, and received the Beverly Briscoe Award presented by the Biloxi Rotary Club in 1993.

Mrs. McCaughan and her husband Finley are the parents of two daughters, Leona and Diana. They have five grandchildren.



MRS DELLA McCAUGHAN

MRS. BETTY JEAN COVICH HUGHES

In 1960 Betty Jean Covich Hughes began her teaching in the Biloxi Public Schools. Her first teaching position was at Central Junior High School, where she taught English for four years. For a brief period in 1964 she taught physical education at Dukate Elementary School, returning to Central Junior High for the 1964-1965 school year as teacher of English and Latin.

Following realignment of the schools in 1971, when Central Junior High School was converted to an elementary school, Mrs. Hughes taught for thirteen years at Nichols Junior High School.

In August 1984, she came to Biloxi High School as an English and Latin teacher, succeeding Mrs. Frances Horner as Latin instructor. Under Mrs. Hughes's leadership the Latin program was expanded so that it eventually included six classes.

A graduate of Biloxi High School and a Latin student of Mrs. Catherine Clower, Mrs. Hughes attended Mississippi State College for Women in Columbus, Mississippi, where she received her B.A. degree in 1960.

She has won numerous awards for her teaching, among them the Beverly Briscoe Award in 1989, presented to Biloxi's outstanding educator, and in 1971 the Outstanding Young Educator's Award from the Biloxi Jaycees. For three terms she served as president of the Gulf Coast Chapter of the Credit Unions Association.

In 1965 members of the staff of the Biloxi Public Schools formed the Biloxi Teachers Federal Credit Union. Operating under the supervision of a Board of Directors, the Credit Union grew into a multi-million-dollar business. The success of the Credit Union can be attributed more to the tireless efforts and expertise and leadership of Mrs. Hughes than to any other single individual or group. From the very beginning, she was treasurer of the Credit Union, and she soon succeeded Harold Boykin as manager. Today she holds the position of treasurer/manager and works most closely with Mrs. Charlotte Breal in managing the assets and performing the services of this valuable organization. In addition, she continues to teach Latin and English in Biloxi High School, where her abilities have been recognized by her having been named STAR Teacher and through the many honors her students have won as a result of her dedicated teaching. She is completing her forty-first year as a member of the Biloxi faculty.



MRS. BETTY JEAN COVICH HUGHES

MR. FLOYD BULLOCK

One of the most valuable members of the Biloxi Public Schools staff is Floyd Bullock, manager of the graphics department and supervisor of the design/print shop.

Known for the prompt and efficient manner which defines every job he undertakes, he is also known for the meticulous care that is a basic principle governing his work and for his congenial and cooperative attitude with all staff members.

A native of Biloxi, Mr. Bullock graduated from Biloxi High School in 1961. He was a member of the last class to attend school in the old building on East Howard Avenue and the first class to enter the new school on Father Ryan Avenue (the school was opened in the middle of the school year). After holding other jobs and working for the Mississippi State Highway Department for about three years, Bullock returned to Biloxi, where he began his long career as a printer.

The Biloxi Public Schools graphics department has been in operation for approximately thirty-three years. Begun in 1968 under the leadership of administrative assistant Bob Cherry, the facility was at first supported by federal funds. The first printer was Tom Edwards, employed about one year, followed by David Desporte for about three months. Mr. Bullock was the third print manager/director in the history of the operation.

The first printing operation was in the east section of the administrative building, where it was located for twenty-nine years. At first the shop included only one press (now there are four). Over the years, expanding needs have dictated the purchase of a great many pieces of equipment and computers and technologically demanding items that require increasing knowledge and skill. Mr. R.D. Brown was superintendent when the shop was organized for its first work in setting up, printing, and organizing for distribution the many forms required in school operations. It is a mark of Mr. Bullock's careful attention to detail that several pieces of the original equipment remain in use.

In December 1997 the printing department was relocated in the new Annex Building, directly east of the present Biloxi High School. Bullock is assisted by Phil Vanderhagen in completing the hundreds of projects he works with every year. In the busiest time of the year for the print shop, the district employs some part-time personnel to help with the work load.



MR. FLOYD BULLOCK