



Dr. Edwin Gibson Speir Jr.

October 16, 1934 - December 30, 2014

Dr. Edwin G. Speir, Jr., most recently from Banner Elk, NC, died in Milledgeville, Georgia on Tuesday, December 30, 2014. He was eighty years old, born on October 16, 1934 in Charlotte, NC. His mother, Martha Galloway Speir and father, Edwin G. Speir and family migrated to the New York and Connecticut area for his elementary and high school years. A move to Morganton, NC in 1951 led to his entering Davidson College. He completed a B.S. in Economics and later served two years with the U.S. Army in France. He returned to attend Harvard Business School and worked for Speir Textiles, Inc. for three years.

In 1961, he and his wife, Sue Purvis Speir of Cornelia, Georgia moved to Denver. He received his doctoral degree from the University of Denver Graduate School of International Studies in 1965. The same year he became a Foreign Service Officer and was assigned as a Programming Officer with the Peace Corps in Brazil. Following his return to the U.S. he served in academic administration as well as faculty appointments at UNC-Asheville, Coker College in SC, UW-Whitewater as Vice-Chancellor, and in 1981 was appointed President of Georgia College and State University in Milledgeville. Dr. Speir worked with the Chancellor and Regents as well as faculty and staff to accept the new mission of being designated the Public Liberal Arts University of Georgia. He retired in 1997.

Dr. Speir was preceded in death by his parents and a brother, Rawley Galloway Speir, formerly of Loudon, TN. He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Sue Purvis Speir of Milledgeville and three daughters; Sarah Speir of Americus, Jennifer Speir-Hearn of Atlanta, and Lynn Speir of Atlanta; three grandsons and one granddaughter; and a sister, Anne Speir Bruce of Greenville, SC.

A memorial service is scheduled for Saturday, January 24, 2015 at 2:00pm in the Magnolia Ballroom of Georgia College and State University, 231 West Hancock St., Milledgeville, GA 31061.

In lieu of flowers, as a way to celebrate his lasting legacy in expanding the international presence on the Georgia College & State University campus, the family has designated the International Education Center as the recipient of memorial gifts. Donations may be mailed to: Georgia College & State University Foundation, Campus Box 96, Milledgeville, GA 31061. Please note "In memory of President Speir" in the memo line. Donations may also be made on-line by visiting www.gcsu.edu/donate.

Previous Events

Service

JAN **24**. 2:00 PM (ET)

Magnolia Ballroom
231 West Hancock Street
Milledgeville, GA 31061

Tribute Wall

ML

“ Remember Dr. Speir from our UNC Asheville days-me, a student and Dr. Speir, my tennis buddy. I played on the varsity and he always obliged me when I approached him to go out and hit on the University courts. He was always the competitor and I so enjoyed his company as the impressionable young kid that I was for him to recognize me as a somebody. I got drafted into the Army and lost touch-my loss. I'm sure he's serving up them "aces" wherever he is. Godspeed Dr. Speir.
Mark Lawson, alumni UNC Asheville, class of 1971.

Mark Lawson - August 14, 2020 at 11:59 AM

JC

“ I have such wonderful memories of being hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Speir as an impressionable 19-year-old on my first ever visit to Georgia. Oh, how I wished I were the fourth Speir sister of Milledgeville! But I suppose one daughter named Jennifer is enough.

I'm trusting that your fond and funny memories of a long life together bring you comfort now and always.

*God bless,
Jen Mennella Cain*

Jen Mennella Cain - January 12, 2015 at 09:59 PM

CC

“ As a college student in the 80's, I admired and respected Ed Speir as an administrator and mentor. I read several quotes from his professional peers, but I will never forget how he treated students with respect. He made us feel as though we were truly important in GCSU's planning, not just as tuition providers. God bless Sue and the girls.

Chuck Claxton

Chuck Claxton - January 03, 2015 at 06:35 AM

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Chuck Claxton

Chuck Claxton - January 03, 2015 at 06:35 AM

JR

“ Sincerest condolences to all of you, Mrs Sue, Jennifer, Sarah and especially Lynn. I have many fond memories of both you and my years at GC during Dr. Speir's time there. I was always pleasantly surprised that he remembered me when we chanced to meet. I am truly saddened to learn of his passing.

Jeffrey Root

Jeffrey Root - January 02, 2015 at 08:32 PM

DM

“ Condolences are expressed to Sue, Sarah, Jennifer and Lynne regarding the loss of Dr. Speir. May your faith, family and friends be of special support to you now and always. The Muellers feel a special connection to each of the Speirs along with much respect for Dr. Speir in his progressive vision he had for Georgia College. His International experiences led to the broad-based programs for International students and faculty exchanges throughout the world. We appreciated his support of the public schools and the preservation of north Georgia's wilderness.

Dick, Arlene & Phil Mueller and Andrea Mueller Newton

Dick & Arlene Mueller - January 02, 2015 at 07:28 PM

SA

“ Sue, please accept our sincere sympathy in the loss of Dr. Speir. We will always remember our many years with him at Georgia College. One thing we remember is that he always called everyone by name and was very supportive of the athletic department at GC.

Stan and Wanda Aldridge - January 02, 2015 at 11:38 AM

BM

“ Ed was the best President of GC (&SU) in my tenure of 33 years there. Early on he did all he could to help me build the brain and behavior research labs which in turn facilitated the educational advancements of literally hundreds of students. He was the brains behind the "Public Liberal Arts University" mission that in my opinion saved the university from obscurity. He was a model in all ways... including his power-walks through the streets of M'ville and regularly fitting into his busy schedule a swim at the college pool. You are in my thoughts Sue.

bill mcdaniel - January 01, 2015 at 07:21 PM

DH

“ I got to know Dr. Speir and his wonderful wife and daughters in the early 80's in Milledgeville. Dr. Speir was such a giving person and always had such a great disposition. I remember being invited to a gathering of international students at the Speir residence which, at the time, was in the top level of The Governor's Mansion. (I had spent some time there as a preschooler, visiting Dr. Lee, college president at the time.) Not only did I learn how gløgg is made, much more importantly I learned how important it is to experience other cultures and to celebrate the world's diversity. I was always very impressed by The Speirs and glad to have known Dr. Speir.

Dean Headley
Orlando, FL

Dean Headley - January 01, 2015 at 07:03 PM

LA

“ I have wonderful memories of your dad hosting us in Athens during UGA games. So sorry for your loss. Love, Lynn Archer. (Aka Lynn2)

lynn archer - January 01, 2015 at 03:17 PM

LM

“ One of my first memories of Dr. Speir was seeing him carry a chair, over his head, from the Governor's Mansion to a building across the street. I asked him about it later, and he told me there was no need for him to ask someone else to do it when he could take care of it himself. That "get the job done" approach made quite an impression on me.

My thoughts and prayers are with Mrs. Speir and the Speir family.

Lloyd McDonald
Warner Robins, GA

Lloyd McDonald - January 01, 2015 at 03:06 PM

BS

That was to be the desk chair I used for the rest of my tenure at the college. I was working in public relations in the Bone House, across the street from the Old Governor's Mansion, where his office was located. I was in his office one day and he mentioned that he was getting a new desk chair and I remarked that I liked the one he already had. He told me to try it out and, if I liked it, I could have it when he got the new one. I did like it -- it was a fine chair. A couple of days later, I looked out the window of my office and saw him bringing the chair across the street. Yes, that was the Dr. Speir I knew. He made my job, connecting the media with the college, easy because I had direct access to his office, which I did not have after he left. My condolences to Sue and the Speir family.

*Binky Strickland
Former Public Relations Specialist, Georgia College
Retired*

Binky Strickland - January 01, 2015 at 09:36 PM

HK

“*We received such a wonderful welcome from Ed and Sue Speir back in 1989 - we couldn't have asked for better guides as we learned of both the charm of Milledgeville and the history of Georgia College. One of the best memories is that of Ed telling both faculty and students (in regard to the ongoing parking problem!) that he could walk anywhere on the main campus, from his home on N. Columbia, in 10 minutes - thus it was not necessary to park right in front of the door to a classroom!! We will certainly keep all of the Speir family in our prayers as we revisit memories of a very special time in the life of Georgia College.*

Harry and Judith Keim

Harry and Judith Keim - January 01, 2015 at 12:19 PM

KK

“ So sorry Sarah for your your loss. Prayers of comfort to you and your family during this time.

Kim and Ettien Koffi - January 01, 2015 at 12:09 PM

SI

“ Oh, the memories of Dr. Speir, I have! Working at the college and just knowing him were special times...God bless you all during this difficult time and just know we are holding you close in thoughts and prayers.

Steve and Judy Ivey - January 01, 2015 at 06:07 AM