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## MISS WESA WEDDINGTON

Miss Wesa Weddington carved an indelible imprint on the lives of hundreds of students she taught in the Bryan School System. Miss Wesa was with our school system for over 30 years. She served in the dual capacity of principal of Bryan High School and head of the foreign language department. She carried a full teaching load and administered the school system as principal. She served as acting superintendent several times and was offered the job of superintendent by the school board, but she refused, telling the school board she felt it was a position for a man.

I first knew Miss Wesa when I took a first year latin course from her in 1926 when I was a freshman in high school. Miss Wesa had a M.A. degree in foreign languages from Columbia University, New York City. She was blessed with a great deal of common sense and was at all times entirely fair with students and faculty alike. She had no favorites nor did she have a student or teacher whom she ever discriminated against. Miss Wesa was charitable and compassionate and always maintained her classes with the utmost decorum. She was an excellent disciplinarian but never raised her voice. All of us respected her and I think most of us loved her. When I graduated from high school in 1930, I was editor of the school annual and we dedicated the first volume of the "Broncho" to Miss Wesa as an expression of our class' unlimited appreciation of her interest in the student body and services rendered Bryan High School.

I had the privilege of being in the Weddington home a number of times. Miss Wesa lived with her mother, Mrs. R. L. Weddington. Mrs. Weddington was a daughter of Col. Harvey Mitchell, who was called "The Father of Brazos County". Miss Wesa was, of course, a granddaughter of Col. Harvey Mitchell. She adored her mother, brothers and sisters and nieces and nephews. Some 30 years after I finished high school and was elected to the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals in 1960, I received a wonderful letter of congratulations from Miss Wesa which I shall always cherish.

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This great lady established a place in our county, not only by her own activities, but also by inheritance. It is fitting and proper that a historical marker be placed on her grave on the Mitchell lot in Boonville Cemetery.

Sincerely,

W. T. McDonald

WTM/lh

## MISS WESA WEDDINGTON

Miss Wesa Weddington as viewed by Mr. George Samuel Parker "Sam" Crenshaw.

Mr. Crenshaw was with the Bryan Public School System for over 40 years. He served as Teacher, Principal of Travis Elementary School and Bryan High School and retired in August of 1972 as Director of Personnel for the Bryan Public School System. Mr. Crenshaw died August 7, 1982.

Walter Carl Jones, a former student of Miss Wesa Weddington, met with Mr. Sam Crenshaw on several occasions and discussed his relations with Miss Wesa over the years he spent in close association with her. He had nothing but praise~ for Miss Wesa. She was a lady of high morals which were reflected in the standards she established for herself, her teachers and students. Miss Wesa commanded respect from all who came in contact with her, including the parents of students who required severe discipline for acts that could not be tolerated.

The Bryan School Board was not exempt from her quiet efficiency which was made evident in 1937 when they offered her the position of Superintendent of the Bryan Public School System. She declined with the explanation that she had rather be Principal and continue teaching. When her Teachers and the Principals of the other Bryan Schools met with her in private to encourage her to accept the position, she informed them she did not think she would or could command the necessary cooperation to continue the high standards of education she felt the Bryan School System deserved. In other words, she did not feel that a woman could furnish the leadership nor receive the cooperation from the male Principals that she felt was necessary for the outstanding school system that she desired. Remember, this was in 1937 when it was unusual for a woman to even be Principal of a major high school. Mr. Crenshaw felt that the Bryan Public School System was the loser when Miss Wesa refused to accept the position. Miss Wesa did serve as acting Superintendent during the interim period while the School Board searched for a new Superintendent. Mr. Crenshaw was present when Miss Wesa made the above statement.

Miss Wesa taught Sunday School at the First Presbyterian Church in Bryan for many years. Mrs. Nettie Crenshaw, wife of Sam Crenshaw, attended Miss Wesa's Sunday School class for several years. Mrs. Crenshaw stated that Miss Wesa was the best Sunday School Teacher she ever had. Mrs. Crenshaw agreed Miss Wesa's examples of leadership, dedication and service as well as her

achievements most certainly inspired and motivated the young women, who came under her influence, to greater action and achievements.

We are all familiar with the story of "The Hand That Guides Us From The Grave". This is so true where Hiss Wesa is concerned. Her influences live after her and to this day, her teachings truly are guiding many of her former students' actions. They will be reflected in our children's children.

Walter Carl Jones  
Class of 1942

## Miss Wesa Weddington

Having acquired three legitimate college degrees, I have had in the course of my academic career many teachers; some poor, some mediocre, and only a few excellent ones. I have long considered the profession of teaching to 'be the most important one; the one which can have the most influence on the lives of others to the end of producing worthwhile human beings.

Of the many teachers I have had I consider Wesa Weddington to be the greatest. I am not alone in this opinion. Many of the members of my high school graduating class considered her the single greatest influence in their lives.

She taught Latin and Spanish; but I am sure there were many subjects she could have taught.

She came of pioneer stock, being the granddaughter of Harvey Mitchell, long considered the Father of Brazos County.

He came to Brazos County from Tennessee and founded a community at old Boonville, where he did everything; run an inn, a blacksmith shop, taught school and acted as justice of the peace.

Miss Wesa made learning a pleasure. Her pupils found that they were learning the rudiments of Latin and Spanish painlessly.

When I went to the University of Texas at Austin, I had two years of Spanish from her. My Spanish teacher there asked me who had been my Spanish teacher in high school. When I told her "Miss Wesa", she said, "Her pupils always do well here".

A lot is being said these days about discipline and the lack of it, of teachers being unable to cope with adolescents in the classroom.

Miss Wesa never had any trouble. At the time of dismissal every day, she would come through the swinging doors into a noisy, riotous study hall where students were standing on desks, throwing erasers and spit balls, talking and laughing. The minute Miss Wesa, (our principal) walked down the aisle with her firm tread to the front of the room, to

make last minute announcements, silence reigned. It was as if she expected good behavior and would accept nothing else.

She also expected academic excellence. She told me when our class graduated that we were the most unpromising class ever to go forth from Bryan High School.

However, she was a generous and tolerant spirit. So that when one of my classmates many years later, became a circuit court judge, she not only wrote him a note of congratulations, but called him.

In her personal life she was a woman of the strictest personal integrity. She never allowed personal tragedies to affect her teaching.

More important than her teaching Latin and Spanish to her pupils, was her teaching; them a philosophy of life: her own.

We once read a story in which there was the statement—"He who boasts of his ancestry but admits degeneracy."

Miss Wesa went around the room calling on each one of us to tell what we thought the statement meant. We had a lot of fun discussing each person's interpretation.

Miss Wesa spent her last days in a Bryan nursing home. Among her colleagues in the nursing home was a University English professor. The two of them had many discussions about English poetry which they both loved. They often fell into argument.

When she would call me, I was at that time Director of The Bryan Public Library. Everytime she called me I prayed I would be able to answer her question. Because I knew that was what was expected of me. She had done the ground work in my education. Now she expected me to pay her in kind.

Hazel Richardson