

# Called to Teach and Serve

## GROWING AND LEARNING

Jackie Gene Partain was born to the late Charles Forris and Una Jean Partain on May 17, 1933, in Erath County, Texas. He graduated from Carrollton High School, Texas (1950), and from Baylor University, Waco, Texas (BA in religion and history, 1954). He earned a divinity degree from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina (B.Div.,

1959). During these years, he also served as pastor of Weir Baptist Church, Weir, Texas; Brookside Baptist Chapel, Goldsboro, North Carolina; and Shiloh Baptist Church, Carson, Virginia.

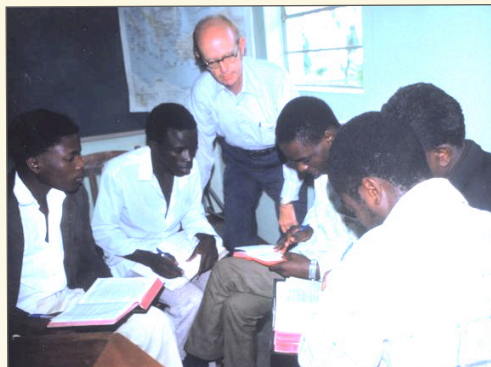


During a year of graduate school at the University of Texas, Austin (before seminary), Jack fell in love with Ruth Lloyd, a local pastor's daughter, and they married on August 6, 1955, in Austin.

## CALLED TO EAST AFRICA

In 1962, Jack and Ruth became Southern Baptist missionaries. Most of his service was as an early faculty member of the Baptist Theological Seminary of East Africa in Arusha, Tanzania (1965 – 1978), teaching and preparing a generation of pastors for Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda. They also served in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, Kitale, Kenya, and Nairobi, Kenya, prior to joining the seminary faculty.

Jack's influence in Africa was broad. He was active in the Association of East African Theological Colleges, serving on the organization's Swahili Textbook



Committee. (He taught seminary courses in Swahili.) He also worked ecumenically with leaders across Africa (including Desmond Tutu) to develop culturally appropriate theology textbooks for the continent. Throughout his time, he insisted on good pedagogy and rigorous scholarship, leading numerous teacher-training workshops.

He wrote several articles and chapters on biblical studies and missions, and (with Richard Deutsch) a biblical commentary, *A Guide to Isaiah 1 – 59* (SPCK, London).

Africa was a stimulating environment for an avid gardener and photographer. In addition to large beds of tropical flowers, he maintained a huge garden and orchard, with apples, raspberries, mulberries, and dozens of other fruits and vegetables. He also raised rabbits, harkening back to his 4-H days in North Texas.

## RETURN TO THE STATES

Their lives took an unexpected turn in an early morning car accident on Good Friday, 1978. Though Jack's injuries were minor by comparison, Ruth was seriously injured, and the family returned permanently to the

United States, initially settling in Texas. While finishing his doctorate Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Ft. Worth, Texas (Th.D., 1983), he taught there, then joined the faculty at William Jewell College, Liberty, Missouri, in 1980.

## GARDNER-WEBB UNIVERSITY

In 1983, Dr. Partain became professor of religious studies at Gardner-Webb University in Boiling Springs. Here he both inspired and challenged students, expecting them to match their religious commitments with intellectual rigor and curiosity. He served as vice chair of the faculty from 1986-88, and as chair of the administrative advisory committee in 1990 to 1992. In 1996, he was awarded the Fleming-White Award for Excellence in Teaching. That same year, Dr. Partain was honored with a national Templeton Foundation Award for his work in the academic course "Issues in Science and Religion."



## FAMILY

Dr. Partain is survived by:

- \* **His wife of 55 years**, Ruth Lloyd Partain;
- \* **Three sons:** William Daniel Partain (Grace Semple) of Glasgow, Scotland, Eugene Charles Roehlkepartain (Jolene) of St. Louis Park, Minnesota, and David Lloyd Partain of Linköping, Sweden;
- \* **Five grandchildren:** Micah and Linnea (Ned) Roehlkepartain, and Beatrice, Jonathan, and Samuel Partain;
- \* **His brother**, Morris Partain (Sue) of Texas, and **sister**, Wynon Samuelson of Maine;
- \* **Brothers-in-law** Ralph Lloyd Jr. of Arkansas and Edwin Lloyd (Candy) of Mississippi; and
- \* **Three nephews, one niece, and many caring friends and colleagues around the world.**



He retired in 1998, then was elected faculty emeritus in 1999. He continued to be active on campus in retirement, including serving as curator of the university's rose garden, the site for many wedding, graduation, and prom pictures.

## CHURCH LIFE

Dr. Partain was an active member of Boiling Springs Baptist Church, where he was a deacon, member of several committees, and renowned Sunday school teacher. (He taught his last class just weeks before his death.)

Beyond the local church, Dr. Partain was active in North Carolina Baptist life, serving two terms on the convention's Council of Christian Life and

## DETAILS

**Memorials (in lieu of flowers):** To the Jack and Ruth Partain Scholarship at Gardner-Webb University (Box 997, Boiling Springs, NC 28017; <http://supportgwu.com/>) or Africa Exchange ([www.africaexchange.org](http://www.africaexchange.org)).

**Visitation:** 6 to 8 p.m., Friday, August 6, Boiling Springs Baptist Church, Boiling Springs, NC

**Memorial Service:** 2 p.m., Saturday, August 7, Boiling Springs Baptist Church

**Officiating:** Dr. Carroll H. Page

**Interment:** Boiling Springs Baptist Church Cemetery Boiling Springs, NC

**Funeral home:** Cecil M. Burton Funeral Home, Shelby, NC

**Online condolences:**  
[www.caringbridge.org/visit/jgpartain](http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/jgpartain)

Public Affairs, and serving as an interim pastor and guest preacher.

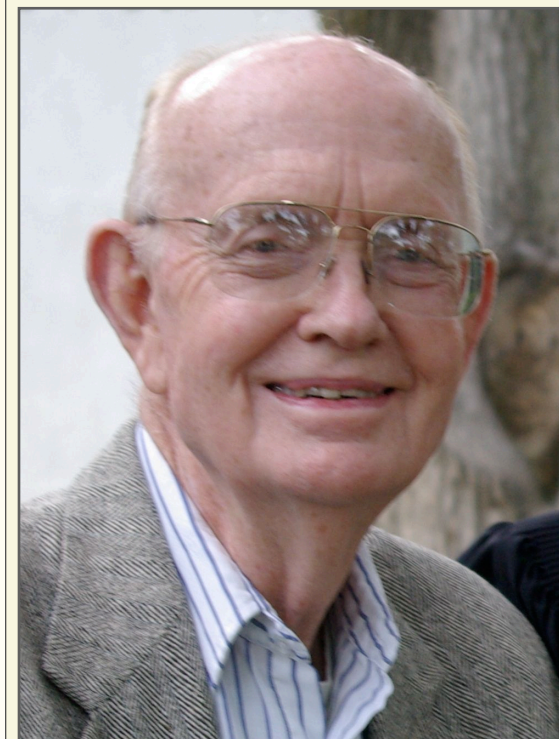
## COMMUNITY LIFE

Civic life of Boiling Springs and Cleveland County benefited from his involvement. (An early sign of his civic commitment was his role in forming a volunteer fire department in Carson, Virginia, during his first full-time pastorate.)

He was a longtime member of the Boiling Springs Rotary Club (for which he served as president from 1986-87 and was a Paul Harris Fellow). He served as the chairman of the Boiling Springs Precinct of the Cleveland County Democratic Party (1995 - 2007). In addition, Dr. Partain was instrumental on the town's appearance commission, helping to spearhead the hanging of flower baskets along Main Street and the efforts to beautify the town's namesake spring. He faithfully attended town council meetings as an interested citizen.

# DR. JACK PARTAIN

MAY 17, 1933 ~ AUGUST 3, 2010



DEVOTED, ENGAGED

Dr. Jack Partain (Jackie Gene Partain), 204 Gordon Avenue, Boiling Springs, North Carolina, died of lung and bone cancer on Tuesday morning, August 3, 2010, at Wendover Hospice of Cleveland County in Shelby. He was 77.

