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Graham remembered for service



Charles C. Graham

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DOBSON — For 26 years, Charles C. Graham served in the Surry County School System. After that, he went on to serve on the board of education.

Upon hearing of his passing Monday afternoon due to a recent illness, those who served under him took time to remember how he influenced their lives.

In September 1959, Graham began as a teacher at Dobson Elementary School. While there, he taught Surry County Commissioner Bill Hamlin math and coached the

baseball team which Hamlin also played on.

"I was in his math class at Dobson. I was on his baseball team. I rode in his green truck," he said. "I knew him well and loved him every day."

From Dobson Elementary, he went to teach at Lowgap in 1961. He then became principal there before moving to be Copeland Elementary's principal in 1965.

Brenda Whitaker, Surry County Schools federal programs director, served as a teacher when Graham was principal.

"I remember he was a big man. He was very concerned

about the students and wanted you to do what was best for them," she said. "He was a good man, a very good principal. He was very visible."

Graham served as an assistant superintendent beginning in 1969 and was named superintendent in 1976. He was the superintendent until he retired March 31, 1985.

Earlie Coe, Surry County Schools Board of Education chair, taught under Graham when he was superintendent.

"He provided some really good leadership. He started Surry County on the road to raising the bar to where we're at now as far as achievement levels," he said.

After retiring, Graham went on to serve on the board of education as the chairman. Assistant Superintendent Dr. Terri Mosley began serving in the school system during that time.

"There will never be another one like him. He had a very fine sense of humor and a compassion for students," she said. "He had a really long and interesting career. He was a great influence on the people he employed."

"He never forgot a face. He was always ready and quick to speak to you."

Mosley also remembered that one of his most notable phrases was "If you're going to work, you've got to eat."

His son, Charles C. "Chuck" Graham II, followed in his footsteps and now serves as an assistant superintendent for Surry County Schools.

"My father always said, 'They weren't in this business for parents and teachers, they were in it to do what's right for kids. If they did what's right for kids, they can always lay down at night and get a good night's sleep,'" Chuck said.

Funeral arrangements for Graham have not yet been announced.

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