

Floyd S. Pike Wore Many Hats

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Floyd Swanson Pike was one of the area's biggest post-World War II success stories.

Floyd S. Pike Electrical Contractor Inc. — he and his wife, the former Opal Forrest, founded the firm shortly after the war's end and he headed it until his untimely death — became a household word in this area and its multimillion-dollar operations were spread through 19 or so other states.

Before the Patrick County, Va., native died June 11, 1975 at 57, the result of an accidental fall, he had worn many hats as a leader in his community and this section of the state.

Pike is well-known for his work with the Northwest North Carolina Development Association, the 11-county organization that began with largely rural roots. Tall of stature and commanding in presence, Pike is still remembered by officials of the NWNCDAs as one of their best presidents.

The Granite Citian was tapped to head the area group in 1968. His son, Joe "Buddy" Pike, continued the family tradition of service with the organization by becoming a director in the 1970s.

Pike was the 15th president of the Northwest North Carolina Development Association. The president's message Pike delivered a quarter-century ago at the end of his term reflects his commitment to the organization and this area. It was made available by Della Stephens, NWNCDAs secretary, who recalls Pike's wholehearted efforts of behalf of the organization:

"As we pause at another year's end, we look back briefly to see where we have been," Pike said, "to measure the progress we have made as an area development association. However, the Northwest North Carolina Development Association is not a look-back organization."

Continuing, Pike said, "This is a mountaintop moment, a time to look



Floyd S. Pike holds the gavel of office of the Northwest North Carolina Development Association. He is with (left to right) Eugene Seats, Doris Potter and Neil Bolton.

out and see anew our opportunities and to rededicate ourselves to the tasks before us.

"There never has been a need and there isn't a need for the word contentment. Our agriculture and our industry haven't anyways nearly reached the leveling off or stopping place. In fact, we actually are just beginning to grow.

"Travel and recreation for our own people and for those who come to visit us is hardly more than just started," the leader declared. "Community effort cannot be replaced by any substitutes. Improvement or betterment for our people is our own job. We should press forward to get every community in the area to work.

"I ask that you join me in a rededication of interest and pledge with me to work harder for this, our wonderful Northwest North Carolina."

The 1968 board of directors for the area development organization included many familiar names. From Surry County were Howard P. Mills of Mount Airy, George Marion Jr. of Dobson and Dave G. Smith of Elkin. Harold Boles of Pinnacle was a director from Stokes County and Forsyth County's directors included Wallace Carroll, Winston-Salem newspaperman.

Associates recall Pike presiding over a luncheon meeting of the development association at Reeves YMCA. The session, which drew some 160 members, was followed by a meeting of the board of directors and a tour, which Pike led, of North Carolina Granite Corp.

Pike also was the chairman of the board of directors of the Surry Community College Foundation, which seeks contributions to provide scholarship funds to needy students. It was appropriate that The Northwestern Bank established a scholarship fund at Surry Community College in his memory.

At the time of his death, Pike was a member of the Executive Committee and board of directors of The Northwestern Bank, which was headquartered in North Wilkesboro.

Prominent in the affairs of the Mount Airy Chamber of Commerce, Pike was selected the chamber's "Citizen of the Year" for 1965.

Pike, in addition to being president of Floyd S. Pike Electrical Contractor Inc., was also the president of Mount Airy Hosiery Mills.

At the "Citizen of the Year" presentation, he was cited for his work with the Chamber of Commerce during its months-long efforts to obtain a new executive vice president. He headed a committee that picked the present executive vice president, James Grimes, for the job.

Pike also was cited for his efforts in obtaining federal approval for funds



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for the then-planned Mount Airy-Surry County Airport Authority, located some five miles south of Mount Airy in the Holly Springs community. Pike chaired the authority.

Jack Wilson, who was treasurer of the Chamber of Commerce, made the announcement that Pike was the winner of the annual "Citizen of the Year" honor.

In making the presentation, Wilson said, "It is a pleasant duty to present the 'Citizen of the Year' award to one of Mount Airy's most-distinguished citizens. He is a well-known industrialist, successful in several business endeavors, and has been vitally interested in the Chamber of Commerce since its inception and has been its supporter, both financially and with his talents.

"He is most deserving of this honor."

Pike was also a member of the board of directors of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

In addition, he was a former president of the Mount Airy Youth Foundation, a director of Reeves YMCA and the Mount Airy Country Club, a member of Granite Masonic Lodge and the Surry Shrine Club and a member of the Mount Airy Lions Club and Mount Airy Elks Lodge.

Pike was an active member of First Baptist Church of Mount Airy, heading a committee to construct the new sanctuary. He was always interested in the affairs of the church, friends and associates say.

Floyd S. Pike began his company operations from the back of a single truck. His operations started as a company Dec. 3, 1945, which was incorporated July 1, 1953.

The company, located at 351 Riverside Drive, Mount Airy, specializes in power line construction, both transmission and distribution lines. It also has a sizable commercial and industrial wiring business, plus air-conditioning operations.