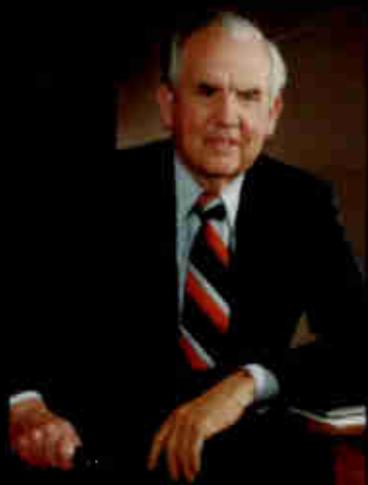




# O. Wayne Rollins

An Authorized Biography





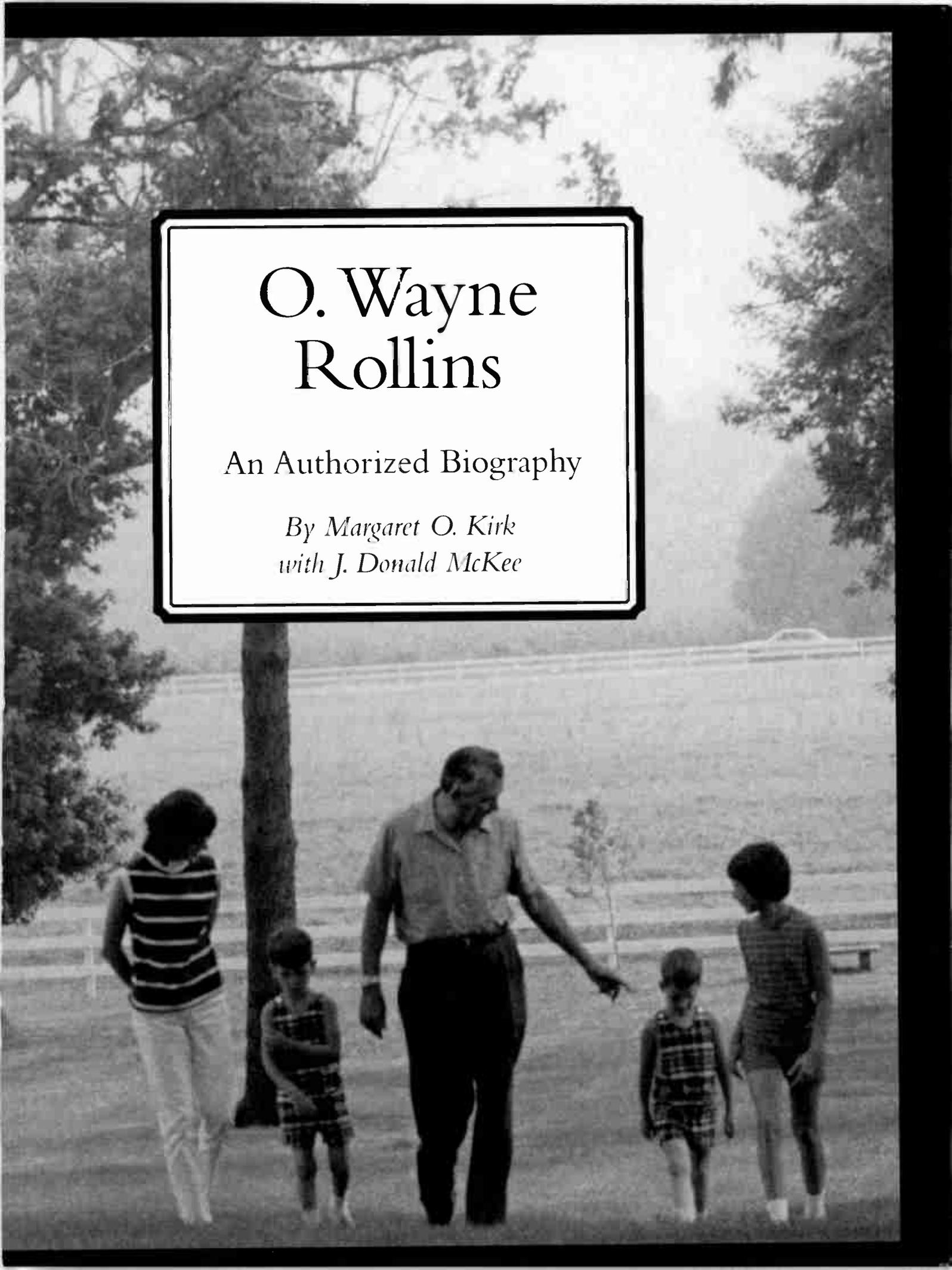
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O. Wayne Rollins

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# O. Wayne Rollins

An Authorized Biography

*By Margaret O. Kirk  
with J. Donald McKee*

Project Director, Elizabeth Payne-Wyzykowski  
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## Acknowledgments

Many people made valuable contributions to this book. Interviews for the book were conducted from 1985 to 1994 by Ora Graham, J. Donald McKee, and Margaret O. Kirk. Research and writing was done by McKee and Kirk, with final editing by Kirk. Paulette Chitwood coordinated the early stages of the project, providing editorial guidance, suggestions, and historical documentation. Elizabeth Payne-Wyzykowski provided project management and ushered the book to print. But most important are the people who told the stories — O. Wayne Rollins, along with his family members, employees, business associates, and friends. More than anything or anyone, their words made this book possible.

# PROLOGUE

*I'll tell you one thing. I've enjoyed life.*

— *O. Wayne Rollins*

Who was O. Wayne Rollins?

A poor young farmer who couldn't buy a three-dollar pig on two weeks' credit, or the successful businessman who later borrowed millions on the strength of his signature alone?

A self-conscious high school student afraid to walk into a classroom because his overalls rode high above his ankles, or the self-confident, distinguished gentleman who favored English wools and Italian silks and was named one of the best-dressed men in America?

A fierce family patriarch determined always to do business his way, or the emotional, tender-hearted grandfather who could be moved to tears by the heartache and joy of those around him?

Was O. Wayne Rollins the young man who never became the lawyer he dreamed of being, or was he the successful entrepreneur who created a family business empire worth millions?

In truth, O. Wayne Rollins was one man who fit all of these descriptions, the same man who not only enjoyed life but was bigger than life to many who knew him.

He was, after all, the big man from Georgia — a man who stood six-foot-two but nonetheless seemed even taller when he stepped from behind his old

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## PROLOGUE

mahogany English desk in his office at Rollins, Inc. For O. Wayne Rollins was not merely strong in stature. His very character — at once grounded in family, integrity, determination, and commitment — filled a room much more than his physical presence would seem to allow. From the moment anyone met him, from the instant they looked into his intensely blue eyes or felt the welcome in his handshake, it was clear that this man was driven with purpose. For throughout his entire life, O. Wayne Rollins prided himself on taking the ordinary and making it extraordinary. And he applied this principle to everything he touched, from radio stations to oil fields, from TNT production to mineral water distribution, from pest control to farmland pastures.

“I spent my life competing against the average in whatever it was, not being satisfied, constantly wanting to be better than the average,” Wayne Rollins once said. “My grandmother told me, and I believed her, that if you are average, and the other person is average, and he works eight hours and you work twelve, you are 50 percent better than he is. And there’s not any way anyone can take this away from you.”

This, then, is the story of O. Wayne Rollins. It is an honest-to-goodness, made-only-in-America kind of drama. It is a story that combines failure and success, poverty and wealth, unfulfilled dreams and dreams that came true. And it is, above all, the story of a family that believed they could make a difference in this world and then determined to settle for nothing less.

Within this story, we listen as O. Wayne Rollins and those who knew him best describe the people and events that shaped his life and his character. Here we see Rollins as a young father and husband, lying on a plywood board in Catoosa Springs, enduring back pain and reading a newspaper article that would ultimately determine his fate. Decades later, we see Rollins demonstrate his business genius and prowess, sitting in a room filled with anxious lawyers and financial experts, as he artfully negotiates what would be considered the first leveraged buyout in corporate history. And within this story of O. Wayne Rollins, we hear people talk not only about his business career, but also about his life as a boy, a devoted family man, and a philanthropist. And at the end, it becomes clear why the person once called one of the most powerful businessmen in America simply wanted to be remembered as “a good man.”

From as early as he could remember, Wayne Rollins looked at the world around him and believed that experiences contained lessons to be learned and applied to life.

It was Claudia Nance Rollins who first impressed upon her two sons the idea that they could achieve anything they set out to do. From their home in Smith Chapel, Georgia, Wayne and John Rollins were taught never to quit before a job was finished, and that success came by working harder than anyone else.

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## PROLOGUE

From his Grandmother Nance, Wayne Rollins learned the virtues of saving money. "We had no other choice," Wayne Rollins said, remembering the woman who cleverly kept his hard-earned money rolled in a cloth and pinned inside her petticoat. And from his grandmother, he also learned the business principles of organization, planning, and preparation, all from watching a woman who managed to keep her eight buckets filled with water.

From his father, Wayne Rollins learned the virtues of stubborn determination and great personal pride. It was said of Henry Rollins that his horses never showed a rib, so meticulous was Wayne's father in how he cared for his animals. Too, Wayne Rollins learned from his father that money should never be wasted, a lesson Wayne witnessed when Henry Rollins once angrily realized that a salesman had charged him a dollar for glue and stain remover that simply didn't work.

From his own experiences as a youth, Wayne Rollins learned that nothing of value is ever free, an object lesson taken from the story of a knife that had been used to skin a skunk. Even as an adult, he used the story to illustrate one of his favorite maxims: "Always look behind good news."

And one day at his Mountain Cove farm, Wayne Rollins put into words one of the most cherished lessons of his life. "How could anybody look at this land and not believe in God?"

Throughout his adult life, O. Wayne Rollins had the support of his family — not only his parents and grandparents and cousins but a wife named Grace and two sons named Randall and Gary. He shared everything with his brother John, including the belief that only the single-minded pursuit of what they wanted brought success. They believed that your word was your bond, no matter what was written on a piece of paper. And together, Wayne and John Rollins fostered in their children the belief that nothing was more important than family. "It's your family and your blood," they said. "That's the most important thing in the world. If another one needs help, no matter what that is, you respond."

And so the story of O. Wayne Rollins begins with family, with two new parents named Henry and Claudia Rollins who cannot decide on the name of their firstborn son. Finally, they leave his name to the luck of the draw, and out of a hat pick two slips of paper with a different name printed on each: "Orville" and "Wayne."

Never again, however, would the strong-willed, beloved Claudia Nance Rollins let anyone associate the notion of "luck" with either of her two sons. Nothing irritated her more than for someone to say, "Well, you know your boys have been lucky."

Bristling, she would reply. "If you put a 'P' in front of the 'L,' you're probably close to it."

---

# As of 1991

**Moses Waters Rollins**  
 b July 1830 North  
 Carolina, m 28 April  
 1850, Hall County  
 GA, d June 1906,  
 McLennan Co TX

*Nancy Emily Waters*  
 b 25 Sept 1831, Georgia,  
 d 15 Jan 1893, Georgia

**Theodore E.**, b 16 Jan 1853 GA,  
 m 1 Nov 1876 GA, d 28 Apr 1905 Dekalb,  
 Bowie Co TX, bur Dekalb Cemetery  
 Hwy 82  
*Mary A.L. Grogan*, bur Dekalb  
 Cemetery, Bowie Co TX

**Mary Jane**, b 20 Feb 1859 GA, m,  
 d 4 Jan 1944, Whitfield Co GA,  
 bur Smith Chapel Cemetery  
*Charlie Crowe*

**Charles D.**, b 1856 GA, did not marry,  
 d after 1870

**John Franklin, Sr.**

b 11 Jan 1862 Gilmer Co  
 GA, m 8 July 1888 Whitfield  
 Co GA, d 10 Oct 1937,  
 Catoosa Co Ga, bur Smith  
 Chapel Cemetery  
*Roxie Elaine Tatum*, b 30 Apr 1873  
 Whitfield Co GA, d 15 July 1942,  
 Walker Co GA, bur Smith Chapel  
 Cemetery

**Emily Oneida**, b 11 Jan 1866  
 Whitfield Co GA, m 25 Nov 1883  
 Whitfield Co GA, d 10 Sept 1950 TEX  
*Charles Robert Jasper Farmer*, b 27 Feb  
 1856 Cartersville GA

**Richard Henry**, b 10 Nov 1868  
 Georgia, m 22 Sept 1890 Whitfield Co  
 GA, d 28 Jan 1948, Silverdale TN  
*Lillie Ella Burns*, b 1 Dec 1872  
 Whitfield Co GA, d 4 Jan 1945  
 Silverdale TN

**Averilla**, b 21 Feb 1871 Georgia,  
 m 14 Apr 1886 Whitfield Co GA  
*John Henry Duckett*, b 20 Sept 1866 GA

**William Henry**

*Claudia Ann Nance*

**Bessie Rowena**

*William Madison Nance*

**Walter Fredrick**

*Mary Lou Nance*

**Nellie Emily**

*George Alvin Sloan*

**John Frank, Jr.**

*Wilma Louise Mullinax*

**Edd Waters**

*Fanny Luduska McKeegan*

**Wallace W.**, died at birth

**Oscar Charles**

*Ruby Bell Silvey*

**Theodore Roosevelt**

*Mary Alice Silvey*

**Herschel Eugene, Sr.**

*Clara Ruth Hunsucker*

**Orville Wayne, Sr.**  
*Amy Grace Crum*

**John William, Sr.**  
*Katharine Eleanor Jacob*  
*Linda Sue Kuechler*  
*Michele Metrisko*

**Richard Randall, Sr.**  
*Margaret Hastings*

**Gary Wayne**  
*Ruth Ellen Magness*

**Rita Anne**

**Richard Randall, Jr.**  
*Eleanor Carlile Martin*

**Pamela Renee**  
*John August Oliva*

**Robert Wayne**  
*Annette Constance Marron*

**Timothy Curtis**  
*Andrea Lynne Sass*

**Amy Claudine**

**Glen William**

**Ruth Ellen**

**Nancy Louise**

**Orville Wayne II**

**Richard Randall III**  
**Christopher Carlile**  
**Claude Wilson**  
**John Henry**

**S. Michael Oliva**  
**Margaret Anne Oliva**

**Jackson Phillip**

**Timothy Curtis, Jr.**

# CHAPTER I

*I don't know if I could write  
the specifications on a brother.  
But if I could,  
I wouldn't change Wayne  
in any way.*

— *John W. Rollins, Sr.*

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# THE GEORGIA FARMBOY

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*From left to right: John Asbury Nance, Mary Emma (Scott) Nance (standing), Robert Nance, seated with Bertha Statirah (Nance) Trotter on his lap, Claudia Ann (Nance) Rollins, William Madison "Mack" Nance (standing behind chair), Statirah Elizabeth (Weatherly) Nance, seated, Lillie Dale (Nance) Cooper, William Osborn "Will" Nance, seated, and Mary Lou (Nance) Rollins, on his lap (about 1896)*

O

RVILLE WAYNE ROLLINS was born just before dawn on May 5, 1912.

It was a Sunday morning. Rain fell softly over the hills and valleys of Smith Chapel, a rural community of families and farms not far from the northwest Georgia town of Ringgold, in Catoosa County. And here, in a frame house with wooden shingles, situated on a knoll that faced Smith Chapel schoolhouse, Henry and Claudia Rollins welcomed their firstborn son.

Three grandparents were present for the birth: Henry's parents, John Franklin and Roxie Rollins; Claudia's mother, Emma Scott Nance, widow of Robert Nance. John Rollins kept his son company while the two older women brought fresh linens and hot water to assist the doctor. Within minutes after the doctor proclaimed, "It's a boy!" Claudia Rollins held her newborn son in her arms while a circle of family stood close around her, their faces perfect mirrors to the joy of the moment. This baby, after all, was Henry and Claudia's first child and the first grandson for John and Roxie; Emma, the mother of nine, already had two grandchildren, but this little fellow would grow to worship her. And after a while, when it seemed the baby cried more than newborns usually do, Grandma Rollins took charge in her no-nonsense way. She wrapped a blanket tightly around the baby and fed him strained sweet potatoes and buttermilk. The baby stopped crying, and he loved the taste of buttermilk for the rest of his life.

It wasn't so easy, though, to pick a name for the child. For several weeks the family remained deadlocked over what to call the baby boy. Claudia suggested Robert, for her father; Henry favored John or Frank or Richard after his side of the family. These two loving, though equally strong-willed, parents finally agreed to write different names on separate slips of paper and draw two from a hat: "Orville" and "Wayne" it would be, and his parents agreed to call him Wayne.

The house where Wayne Rollins grew up was situated on a crest of land that once belonged to his Grandfather Rollins, adjacent to where his

## THE GEORGIA FARMBOY

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grandparents still lived. It was built of board and batten, with a pine tongue-and-groove floor. There were two bedrooms with a fireplace in each, and the large kitchen in the back was actually an old store that had been hitched to teams of horses and rolled over the yard on logs to fit against the house. The kitchen had no interior ceiling, really, just rafters with a few random planks lying across them that created a sense of openness that Wayne liked. A metal Coca-Cola sign, the first that Wayne ever saw, covered the hole in the roof where the flue for a potbellied stove had been when the family's kitchen had once been a general store.

Wayne's playground was the house, the front porch, and the dirt yard outside, a yard swept clean with brooms and kept cool by the shade of eight tall cedars that stood out front; a whippoorwill lived in those trees, and sometimes, when it called out at night, Henry Rollins thought it might be a sign of death or disease. In the backyard, Wayne played around the Arkansas Black apple tree and the woodpile, with the well and smokehouse close by. And his childhood world was filled with constant reminders of the loving care of his mother, a woman all the cousins called "Aunt Claude."

"If I was an artist, I could really draw you a picture of Aunt Claude," said Oscar Rollins. "At her back door, there was a garden fence all around, and just inside that garden fence was a row of flowers all the way around. And off to the side of that garden was all these peach trees, and under each peach tree was a chicken coop. She made the chicken coops out of pieces of wood so that the little chickens could come and go through, but the mama had to stay in there. Then in her smokehouse, she had hams and pork, hanging up after they had been salt-cured or sugar-cured. She always wore an apron, and she always wore a bonnet to the field, and most of the time she would try to have something over her arms so they would be white when she went to church on Sunday. She didn't want them sunburned at all. She was tall and straight and very, very attractive."

A trail marked the short distance from Wayne's house to the barn, and beyond the yard lay the red-clay Georgia fields — lush with green corn and cotton in spring and summer, full of promise and hard work and many a heartache. The gentle roll of the Smith Chapel landscape would unfold before Wayne as he peered into the distance in front of the house. And when he walked out the back door, his gaze rose to meet the grove of trees that studded the ridge line above the farmland that surrounded the Rollins home.



*The Homeplace of Henry and Claudia Rollins in the little community of Smith Chapel, Georgia. Sons Wayne and John were born here. (photo taken 1985)*

## THE GEORGIA FARMBOY

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The sights and sounds of life in this Georgia countryside impressed Wayne as a boy and sustained him as an adult. Growing up, he often listened to the sound of the wind as it rushed through the valley along Dalton-Ooltewah Road, stirring and lifting the leaves of every tree along the ridge until the sound of mere leaves blowing was all but deafening, mysteriously like the sound of a thousand whispering voices. He remembered the mournful sound of the cowhorn, blown by Grandma Emma Nance to summon everyone in from the fields at mealtime. At church on Sunday, Wayne listened from the "Amen Corner" while Grandpa Rollins led the singing and Claudia played the pump organ for two of Wayne's favorite hymns, "I Am Thine, O Lord" and "Shall We Gather at the River." At summer's twilight, the sound of katydids and crickets and bullfrogs often lulled him to sleep. And after a tornado tore old wooden shingles from the house, Wayne loved to hear the sound of rain falling on the tin roof, a sound so comforting and soothing that when he grew up he would one day try to recreate that very sound.

Too, Wayne remembered watching his father build the early morning fire in his bedroom, the glow quickly warming him as he lay in his straw bed, listening to his mother fry ham and make breakfast biscuits. Already, Wayne was aware that the Rollins family took pride in how they dressed, for even in these early morning moments his mother's hair was always perfectly combed and braided, her apron starched till crisp and tied around her waist. If it was a Sunday morning, Henry Rollins always made sure that his shoes were shined just so, his hat and clothes carefully and thoroughly brushed clean. Even Wayne enjoyed dressing up for church in his black patent shoes with white socks, blue serge short pants, and a white shirt.

These, then, were the sights and sounds of home for Orville Wayne Rollins, a little boy born unto two proud and poor families who built their community's schools and churches; fought anyone who offended their sense of honor and tenacious pride; and struggled to make a living as farmers in the fields of Smith Chapel. The men from the Rollins and Nance families tended to be hardworking, daring, and outgoing, with a sense of fun that often resulted in spontaneous teasing and mischievous pranks.

The Rollins and Nance women were remarkably organized, full of purpose and possessing a force of personality that kept their families together in good times and bad. The two families had nothing of exceptional material value — some land and farm animals, simple homes and clothing, a buggy or two and a wagon. Even the Nance family, once prosperous land and slave holders in Clarke County, lost everything in the Civil War, their wealth reduced to trunks filled with worthless Confederate money that became mere toys of entertainment for their grandchildren.

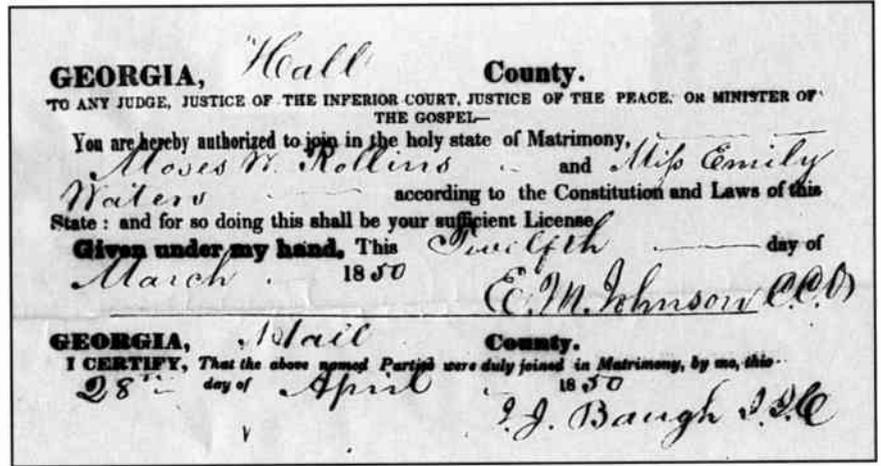
They had so little, Wayne Rollins would later admit, and they worked so hard for what they did have, that those living in Smith Chapel barely felt the

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economic ills of the depression years that devastated wealthier communities during the late 1920s and 1930s. Too, Wayne Rollins grew up in such a small, isolated corner of the world that he frequently said they simply didn't know that anyone else had it any better.

And each and every member of the Rollins and Nance families was brought up to believe that he or she had everything that really mattered — something that money couldn't buy, something that when all else failed offered each a sense of security, purpose, and great personal pride.

That something was family.



Moses and Emily Waters Rollins were married in 1850. Pictured above is their wedding certificate from Hall County, Georgia.

Wayne Rollins' forefathers found their way to Georgia three generations before him. And like many important milestones in the Rollins family history, this one begins with a favorite family tale, told over and over until it has become a Rollins legend. It involves a man called Moses, the paternal great-grandfather of Wayne Rollins.

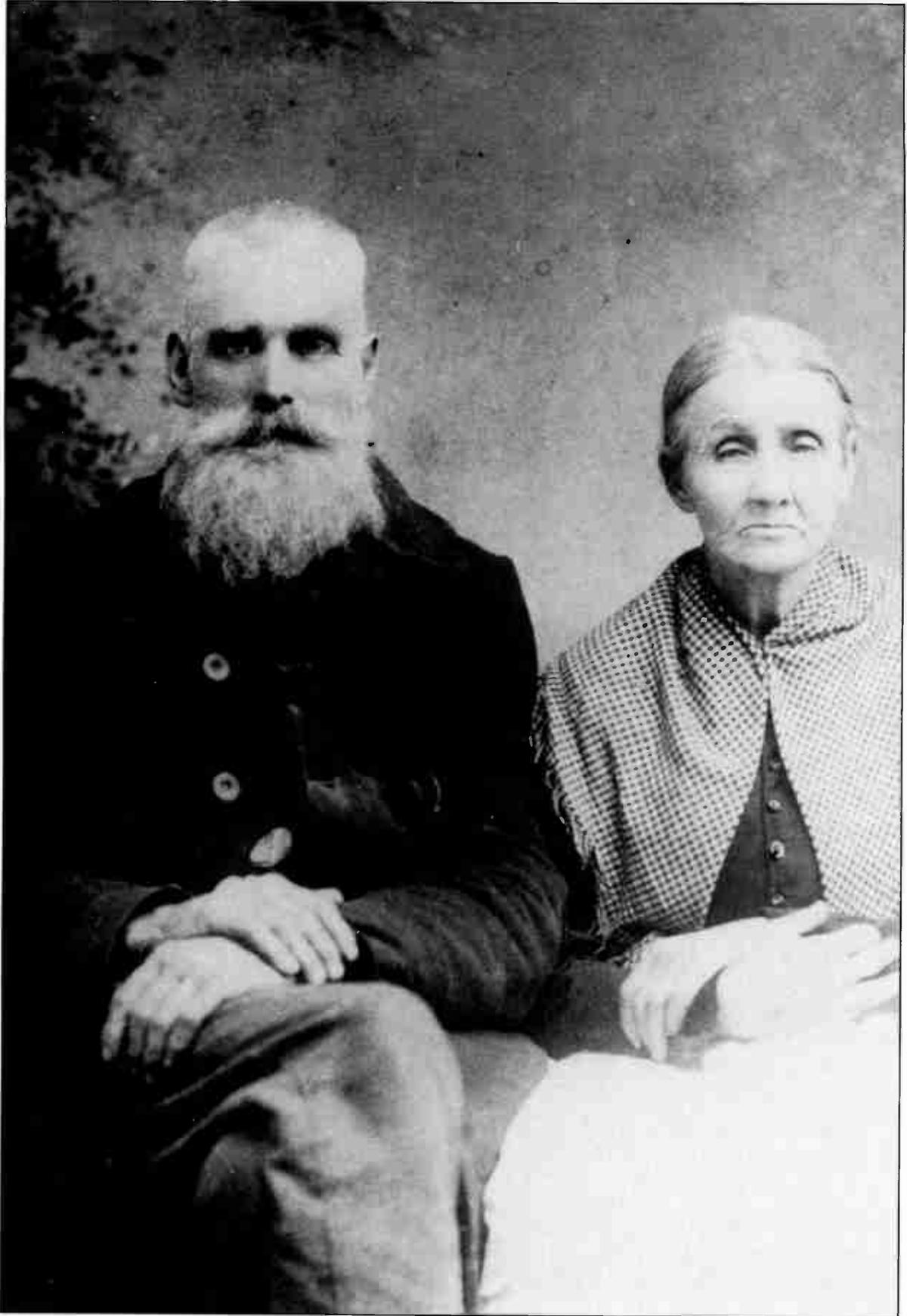
In the mid-1840s, begins the story, young Moses Waters Rollins began to follow a wagon loaded with apples near his home in Rutherford County, North Carolina. As young boys in his community liked to do, Moses followed the wagon, planning to snatch a few apples when the driver stopped to coat the wagon axles with tar, a step that helped prevent unwanted friction inside the wheel. What Moses Rollins did not know was that this particular wagon was equipped with the latest invention: a metal hub that dispensed axle grease automatically. The wagon never stopped, and Moses just kept following the wagon. And when the driver finally reached his destination, both Moses and the wagon were in Georgia.

Whatever the circumstances of his migration, Moses Rollins was a part of the swelling tide of settlers moving into Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi during the mid-1800s. Thousands of Indians still lived in the region, but the Cherokees, the Creeks, and the Choctaws were continually losing more of the land of their ancestors and being forced westward.

Historical records indicate that Moses traveled to Georgia after the death of his parents in North Carolina. On April 28, 1850, in Hall County, Georgia, he married Nancy Emily Waters; he was nineteen, she was eighteen. And in 1851, Moses' nine-year-old brother, John Franklin Rollins, Elder, arrived in Georgia, too.

On January 11, 1862, after moving to nearby Whitfield County, Moses and Emily Rollins had their fourth child, a son named John Franklin for his uncle.

THE GEORGIA FARMBOY



*Moses and Nancy Emily Waters Rollins (before 1893)*

## THE GEORGIA FARMBOY

And when this baby was four months old, his father and shortly afterwards his namesake-uncle enlisted in the Confederate Army — a move that no doubt reflected an order by President Jefferson Davis drafting all white males ages eighteen to thirty-five for three years of military service.

The Battle of Chickamauga brought the Civil War to Catoosa County in September of 1863. During the battle, a church burned down, soldiers fought in trenches in the community, and 34,000 Union and Confederate soldiers were killed or wounded after two days of fighting in the battle just a few miles south of the town. The battle was an ironic reflection of the Cherokee word *Chickamauga*, a word used by the Indians to describe the three most prominent creeks in the area and said to mean “river of death.”

Apparently spared injury during the war, Moses Rollins was discharged on April 14, 1865, and he returned to Whitfield County. Here, he and Emily raised a family of seven children and more than forty grandchildren; after she died in 1893, Moses moved to Texas to join his brother, John Franklin. Moses died in 1906, and John Franklin, Elder, died twenty-two years later.

John Franklin Rollins, Moses' Civil War child, was hired as a farmhand in Whitfield County in 1888, and he soon fell in love with his employer's daughter, Roxie Elaine Tatum. They married on July 8, 1888, when he was twenty-six and she was two months past her fifteenth birthday. The first of their ten children, a son named William Henry Rollins, was born a year later in Catoosa County. John Franklin Rollins managed a cotton gin at Hedrick's Mill, and the large house beside the mill provided a comfortable home for his expanding family.

By November 15, 1907, John Franklin Rollins had saved enough money to buy forty acres of land south of Hedrick's Mill in the Smith Chapel area, and on this land he built a house for his family, not far from the little schoolhouse

*John and Roxie Tatum Rollins applied for their marriage license on July 7, 1888, and wed the following day. They were married for almost fifty years.*

<b>STATE OF GEORGIA, WHITFIELD COUNTY.</b>	
TO ANY JUDGE, JUSTICE OF THE PEACE OR MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL:	
You are hereby authorized to join in the <b>HOLY STATE OF MATRIMONY,</b>	
<i>John F. Rollins jr</i>	and <i>Roxie E. Tatum</i>
according to law; and for so doing this shall be your sufficient License.	
Given under my official signature, this	<i>7<sup>th</sup></i> day of <i>July</i> 188 <i>8</i>
<i>J. J. Freeman</i> Ordinary.	
CERTIFICATE TO BE RETURNED TO THE ORDINARY	
I hereby Certify: That on the	<i>8<sup>th</sup></i> day of <i>July</i> 188 <i>8</i>
<i>John F. Rollins jr</i>	and <i>Roxie E. Tatum</i>
were by me duly joined together in Matrimony.	
<i>W. L. Clark M. J.</i>	

that also served as a church. By now, his oldest son, Henry, was a strapping seventeen-year-old, over six feet tall, toughened from the long days of farm work. He was full of fun, but already he had an adoring eye cast toward a Smith Chapel girl named Claudia Nance.

Long before Moses Rollins came to Georgia, two of Claudia Nance's ancestors had journeyed from Virginia to find a homestead in Georgia. Their names were John and Christina Ryan Nance, and by 1803, they were living in Clarke County. Within the next half-century, John Nance became a wealthy man, with large land holdings and nearly a dozen slaves.

William Madison Nance, one of John and Christina's nine children, was born on December 18, 1809. Twenty-five years later, he married Statirah Elizabeth Weatherly. Together with their four sons and four daughters, they lived in a spacious two-story house near Smith Chapel, right on Dalton-Ooltewah Road. Madison Nance died on April 11, 1863, but his widow lived thirty-four more years. Two of their sons, Robert and James, traveled to Texas prior to 1880, where Robert met Mary Emma Scott, the young daughter of Shalom Elkin Scott. They married in 1881, when Robert was twenty-four and Emma only sixteen. Within a year their first child was born, about the same time that Robert's widowed mother wrote from Georgia asking him to return and help run the family farm. The baby died during the journey, and Emma never returned to Texas; only once did she ever see her father again.

"Aunt Emma was setting up on the porch, sewing, putting buttons on and making buttonholes and she heard someone walking," said Ida Carpenter. "And she looked up and she saw her daddy coming. And they said Aunt Emma spilled buttons all the way down that hill. She was so glad to see her daddy, and when she saw him coming, she just jumped up and ran to meet him. And that little trail, all the way down the hill till she met her daddy, was scattered with buttons."

Robert and Emma lived in the Madison Nance House north of Hedrick's Mill with their nine children; Claudia Ann was their second daughter, born on September 28, 1886. Six weeks before his fiftieth birthday, Robert Nance died of what was believed to be tuberculosis. And Emma, forty, was a widow with five boys and four girls.

Claudia Ann Nance never knew life without Henry Rollins in the picture. After all, they attended the one-room Smith Chapel school together, went to the same church with their families, and lived on the same road that joined their two family homes.

They were, in many respects, complete opposites. Like most of the Rollins men, Henry had a quick temper, never walked away from a fight, teased hard, and played to win. Claudia had been a bit of a tomboy as a child — she often went squirrel hunting with her father — but as a young woman she was gentle and kind, a talented musician and seamstress. Claudia completed all seven grades of grammar school at Smith Chapel, qualifying her under state law as a teacher in the little community where she grew up.

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THE GEORGIA FARMBOY

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*Mary Emma Scott Nance, Wayne Rollins' maternal grandmother, was an important influence in his life.*



*The Nance family in 1905. Claudia Nance, seated fourth from left, married William Henry Rollins five years later.*

Emma Nance made sure her daughters wasted no time on “undesirable” suitors, and she was sometimes less than favorably impressed by Henry Rollins. But her brown-haired, blue-eyed daughter was as attracted to the tall young man as he was to her. They courted in the Nance parlor, took walks along Tiger Creek near the mill, drove a buggy to nearby Catoosa Springs and enjoyed picnic lunches near the mineral springs. When there was a box supper social at the church, Henry would be waiting to outbid all the other young men for Claudia’s box. Only once did Henry fail to buy Claudia’s box, perhaps just to see what would happen. He never did so again.

They were married in the fall, when the crisp autumn air had transformed the Catoosa County hillsides into brilliant colors. They exchanged wedding vows on October 9, 1910, inside the home of local justice of the peace Joe Pierce. Henry, twenty-one, wore a blue serge suit with a black bow tie; Claudia, twenty-four, wore a beautiful white wedding dress that she made herself with the traditional stiff, high collar. Together, they moved into the big house at Hedrick’s Mill, which had become vacant when John Frank and Roxie Rollins moved to their new house at Smith Chapel. The newlyweds loved the comfortable old house that sat amid huge oak trees, and the pleasant sounds of the creek and the water-wheel. Henry farmed with his father during the day and operated the old mill at night. It was a happy time for the young couple.

Claudia would miss the spacious house and the sounds of the old mill when they moved from Hedrick’s Mill to a new house at Smith Chapel in the winter of 1911. But she had plenty else to think about. She was expecting their first child in the spring.



*Henry and Claudia Rollins' wedding photo was taken on October 9, 1910.*

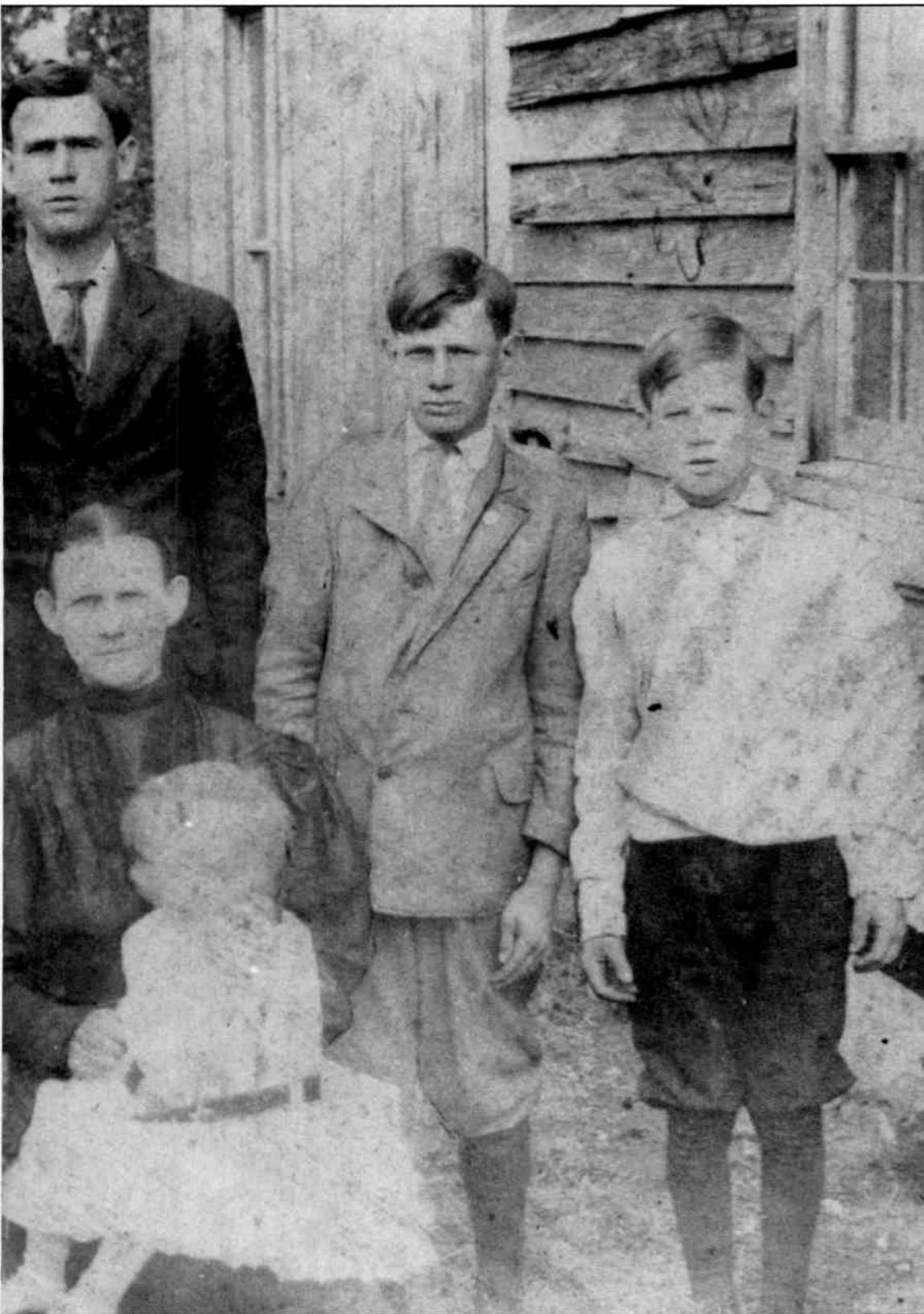


Oh, what a family! By the time Wayne Rollins was born, the Smith Chapel community was so filled with Nances and Rollinses that it sometimes seemed they all ended up marrying each other. Between Wayne’s own mother and father, for instance, there were three Rollins and Nance family unions: Henry



Rollins had married Claudia Nance; Henry had a brother, Fred, who married Claudia's sister Mary; Henry had a sister, Bessie, who married Mack Nance, Mary and Claudia's brother.

"So three of the Rollins married into the Widow Nance family," said Ida



*John and Roxie Rollins with seven of their nine children about 1911. From left to right, bottom row: Theodore Roosevelt Rollins, John Franklin Rollins, Sr., Oscar Charles Rollins, Roxie Elaine Tatum (Rollins), Herschel Eugene Rollins. Top Row: William Henry Rollins, Claudia Ann Nance (Rollins), Walter Fredrick Rollins, John Frank Rollins, Jr., Edd Waters Rollins*

Carpenter. "My mother was a first cousin to those, and my daddy's mother and Wayne's grandmother were sisters. So that made me related to the Rollins and the Nances. We're double cousins and some of us are triple cousins. And anyone had to be raised in the community to get it all unraveled."

## THE GEORGIA FARMBOY

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And because they were so close, many of these cousins, aunts, and uncles grew up together. Herschel Rollins, for instance, was the youngest of John and Roxie Rollins' ten children, which made him Wayne's uncle, even though he was only two years older than Wayne. And from the day they were christened together at Smith Chapel schoolhouse, there was a lifelong bond between Wayne and Herschel, who would grow to be as close as brothers.

At the christening ceremony in September 1912, sitting side by side, Roxie held Herschel and Claudia held four-month-old Wayne. Among those watching intently was Ida, only seven years old at the time, who couldn't help but think how pretty Claudia looked, sitting on the church pew with the baby in her arms, a gold locket around her slender neck. "So beautiful!" thought little Ida.

The baby looked angelic in the delicate white, handmade christening dress, so long it reached nearly to the floor. Wayne never fussed when the pastor sprinkled water on his head. But Herschel, dressed in his Sunday-best short blue pants buttoned to a white shirt, warned the preacher, "You're not gonna put water on my head!" The minister calmly went ahead with the ceremony and Herschel said no more.

Life for young Wayne Rollins was filled with the security and warmth of his large extended family and the close-knit relationships within the little community of Smith Chapel. His grandparents lived just up Dalton-Ooltewah Road, along with numerous doting aunts and uncles, particularly Aunt Bertha, the sixth of Emma Nance's children, who was always bringing Wayne special toys.

Wayne and Herschel, it was said, "always ran together" — playing in the creek, staging rodeos with some of the farm's young calves, and orchestrating corncob battles.

"We had corncob battles on rainy days," remembered Oscar Rollins. "There were always a lot of corncobs, after you had shelled the corn to feed the chickens or the hogs. Then we'd divide up teams. Part of us would get up in the barn loft and part of us would be on the ground, and we'd try to capture the others, throwing those old corncobs."



*Herschel Rollins (about 1912)*

THE GEORGIA FARMBOY



*John and Roxie Rollins saved enough money to buy forty acres of land in the Smith Chapel community in 1907. Generations of Rollins families have lived on that same land.*



*Willie Ruth Nance Greeson,  
Wayne's oldest cousin (about 1915)*



*Wayne with his  
Aunt Bertha Nance Trotter  
(about 1917)*

## THE GEORGIA FARMBOY

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The Rollins men were known for “teasing hard,” noted Willie Ruth Nance Greeson, the oldest of all the cousins by virtue of being born six months ahead of Wayne, but it was always Grandma Nance who was in charge.

“To me,” said Willie Ruth, “she was a very efficient person in the managing of the household, the managing of the family, the running of the farm or anything. It seemed like everything went as it should. But she had a healthy attitude about life. She didn’t complain because she was left with a big family. Now, she wasn’t a person who oohed and aahed and pitied and babied, but by the deeds she did, she showed she cared. Not just for family or friends but for neighbors. I’ve heard her relate stories of going and staying for as much as two weeks away from home with people who were ill, and always sharing what she had with others.

“She did not tolerate foul language. She just thought that was the worst thing in the world. And I wasn’t allowed to whistle. She said, ‘Sister, don’t be whistling out there. A whistling girl and a crowing hen always come to some bad end.’”

There was plenty of work and chores for Wayne to do, particularly in a family where sleeping till 4 A.M. was considered “sleeping in.” Fastidious in all aspects of his life, Henry Rollins believed that the appearance of a carefully cut pasture fence line was just as important as a carefully brushed Sunday suit. There were cows to milk and animals to feed and care for, barns to clean out and yards to sweep, fields to plow, cotton and corn to plant, gardens to tend, hogs to butcher, eggs to gather, butter to churn, and wood to chop. Though the life of any farm family varied tremendously due to the unpredictable element called weather, the very predictable essence of the seasons gave the Smith Chapel farm community a stability, a rhythm of sorts that Wayne Rollins relished and took to heart.

And on Sundays, there was church. Religion was a part of the very fabric of life for the Rollins family. John and Roxie and their daughter-in-law Claudia were among the founding members of Smith Chapel Methodist Church in 1900 when they began meeting in the schoolhouse. John Rollins served as steward of the church, collecting produce, livestock, or other goods to support the church. By 1911, the Smith Chapel church had a minister named W. L. Hampton, who embarked on a building campaign that would enable the church to move from the one-room schoolhouse. The pastor swapped his formal long coat and top hat — completely out of place in the hill country anyway — for the lumber for the new church building. Grandpa Rollins gave the land for the church grounds, just across from the schoolhouse, and the building was finished in 1916, when Wayne was four years old.

Even as a young boy, Orville Wayne Rollins began to absorb and remember the lessons that his family, his community, his church and, indeed, the land had to teach him. He watched and he listened, able to appreciate the



*John Frank Rollins, Jr. (about 1927)*

## THE GEORGIA FARMBOY

southerner's innate ability to tell a good story coupled with his own uncanny power to remember every word. But while Wayne Rollins did not yet understand all that he saw and heard, he was learning. It would be said of him later in life that he was constantly learning, always growing. Everything, it seemed to young Wayne, had to do with common sense and commitment. With loyalty and integrity. With working harder than most anyone else and always wanting to be better than the average.

"I had it passed down to me in all ways," said Wayne. "My mother wanted to be the best seamstress. She wanted to be the best cook. In all the things she participated in, she wanted to be the best."

Late one summer evening, when he was five years old, Wayne welcomed a new member to his family, someone who would prove to be one of the best and most loyal friends he ever had. He had spent the night with his Grandmother Nance, and he returned home to find his mother sitting in her room, holding a newborn baby in her arms. Wayne Rollins had a brother, John William Rollins, born August 24, 1917. "You look like Grandpa," Wayne said to the baby, whose shock of white hair fascinated his older brother.

There was no way to know, of course, that one day these two Rollins brothers would have a remarkable professional relationship, one that would lead to financial prosperity that was in stark contrast to their decidedly humble beginnings in Smith Chapel.

But the personal respect and devotion that each brother had for the other as adults was apparent from the start.

Wayne knew immediately that the baby belonged. He was clearly pleased with his new brother and soon became his baby-sitter, rocking the baby everyone called J. W. in a big cradle, blowing in his eyes to make him sleep. When J. W. outgrew the cradle, Wayne shifted to a rocking chair to rock his brother to sleep. And later, when the baby slept with Wayne in his bed, little J. W. insisted on rubbing Wayne's ear while he drifted off. Claudia insisted that her older son accept the role of security blanket — at least until she left the room.

The brothers would grow up to be equally hard-driving and tireless in business, but they developed entirely different personalities. Where Wayne was often introspective and reserved, John was gregarious and full of life. It was often said that Wayne served as a check on John's zeal, which was more than fine with John William Rollins.



*Wayne, nearly three years old,  
about 1915*

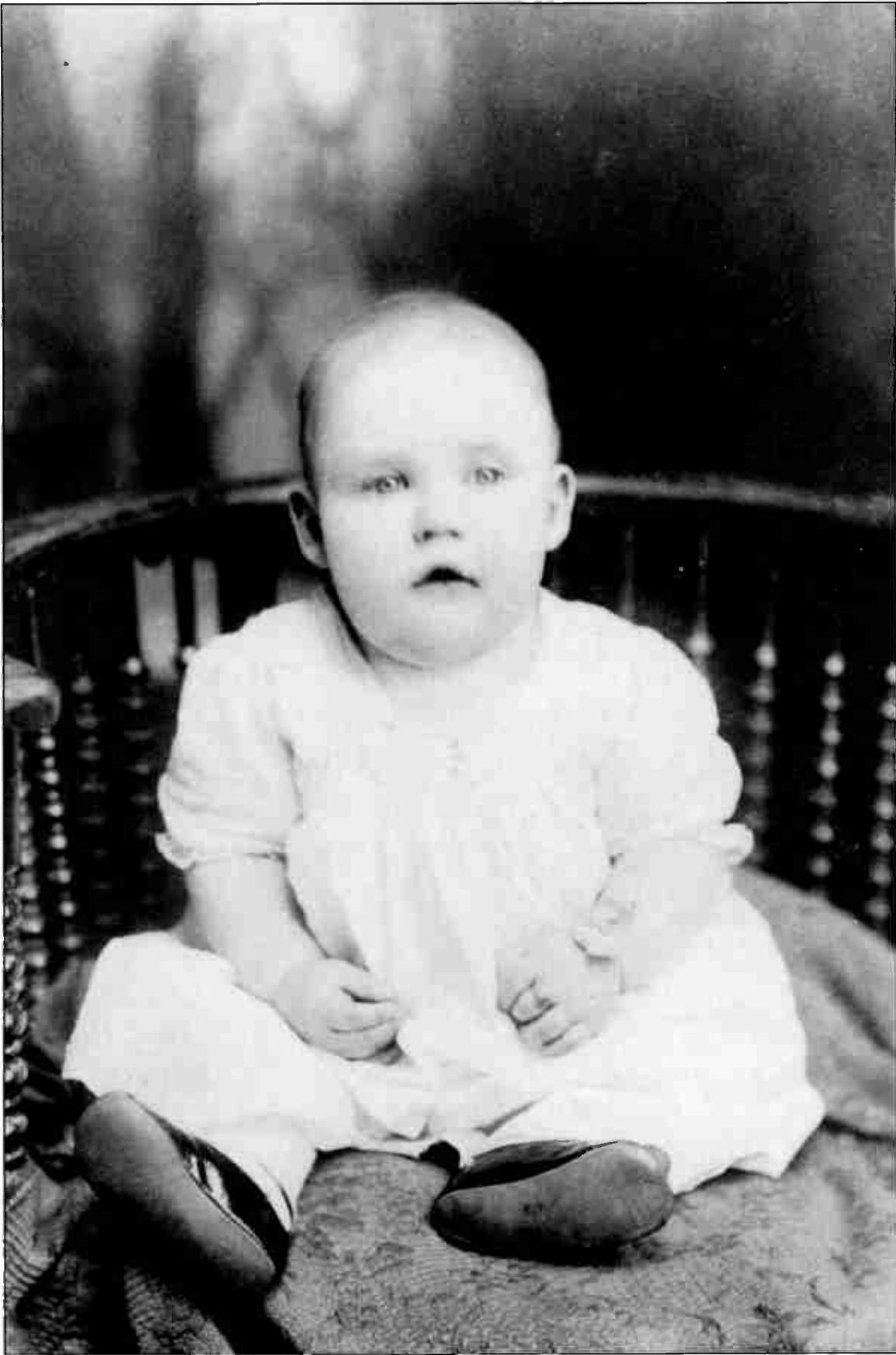
“I don’t know if I could write the specifications on a brother,” John Rollins once said. “But if I could, I wouldn’t change Wayne in any way.”

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*I spent my life competing  
against the average in whatever  
it was, not being satisfied,  
constantly wanting to be  
better than the average.*

— *O. Wayne Rollins*

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*John William Rollins, Wayne's brother, was born on August 24, 1917.*



# CHAPTER II

*Our success will be according  
to how much effort  
we are willing to put into it.*

— *O. Wayne Rollins,  
high school graduation speech*



SCHOOL  
DAYS

Ringgold  
High School



This Certifies That

Wayne Rollins

*has satisfactorily completed the Course of Study prescribed by the  
Board of Education for the High School and is therefore entitled to this*

**Diploma**

*Given under our hands at Ringgold, Georgia, this 16th day of May, 1930.*

*H. L. Brotherton*  
SUPERINTENDENT  
*W. E. Bryan*  
COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Wayne Rollins graduated from  
Ringgold High School in 1930.  
He was class valedictorian.

# C

laudia Rollins dressed her six-year-old son in his new Lee overalls and a pin-striped shirt she had made especially for this important day, packed his lunch of ham and biscuits in a syrup bucket, and no doubt gave him a big hug.

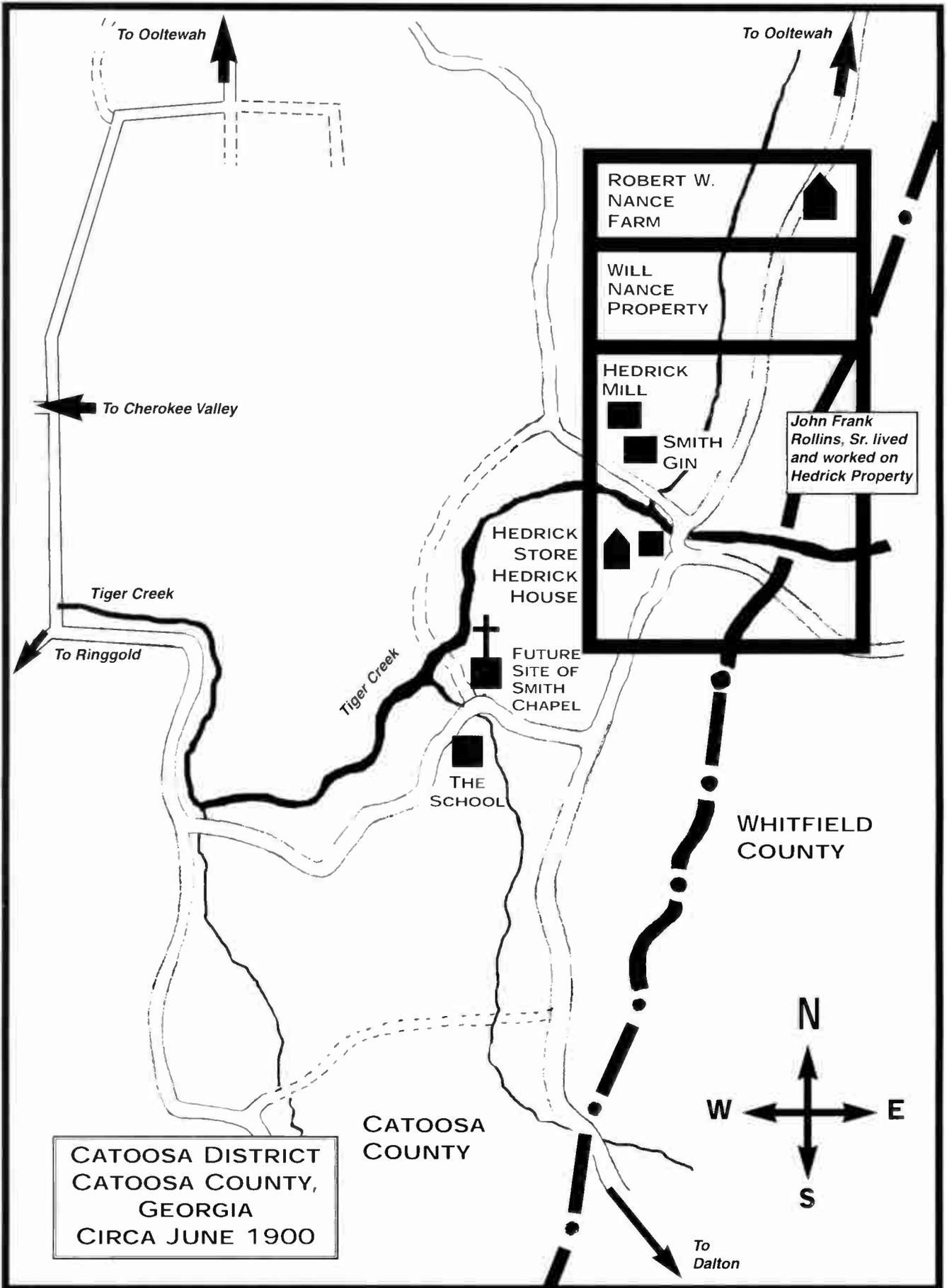
It was the first day of school for Wayne Rollins, and he wasn't apprehensive in the least. After all, he could see the one-room school across the field from his house — the unpainted building with three windows on each side and a wide front door. And his teacher, Miss Rio Bandy, was more friend than instructor. She boarded with Wayne's family, living in the north room while Henry, Claudia, Wayne, and the baby all lived in the same room on the south side. All of which makes what happened to Wayne Rollins on this summer day in July 1918 all the more surprising. Wayne would always remember his first day of school as the day he got three whippings.

First, Wayne got into a fight with a fellow student named Elliott during a game at recess. Hard at play, Wayne was pretending that another boy was a horse and that a big piece of string made the reins. Wayne was driving, but his "horse" pulled loose and ran off. Wayne yelled at Elliott for help. "Catch him! Catch my horse!"

Elliott, who was bigger than Wayne, paid no attention. This angered Wayne, and he tackled the boy with the idea of giving him a "whipping." But Elliott gave back more than he got. Wayne took an unexpected licking from the bigger boy and ran to tell Miss Bandy, whom he mistakenly assumed would be sympathetic. As punishment for fighting, she gave both boys a second whipping. And when he got home and told his mother about the day's events, she promptly marched him out behind the house and administered yet a third whipping.

After his dismal school debut, Wayne drew three lessons: "I learned not to jump on that boy and try to whip him when he's bigger than I am. I learned the lesson that you did not go tell the teacher. And then you don't go home and tell it."

*Opposite page: Growing up, Wayne lived near his extended family in Smith Chapel.*



## SCHOOL DAYS

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Wayne's cousins, however, had already noticed a certain trait in Wayne that would be observed in him throughout his life. "Wayne always wanted to be the best and he wanted to win," said Willie Ruth Nance Greeson. "He doesn't like to lose."

After his eventful first day, Wayne tried to concentrate on the more important lessons to be learned from school, and eagerly applied himself to his books. Before the fall harvest break, when the students went back to work in the fields and help their parents harvest the crops, Wayne's high marks reflected his progress and his ability to be an exceptional student.

It was during the fall harvest break, on November 11, 1918, when a strange symphony of whistles and bells floated out over the fields where Wayne and his parents stood picking late cotton in the field across the road from their house. First came the sound of the big steam whistle at a textile mill near Chattanooga, joined in succession by one whistle after another from area plants and the sound of a train whistle from the rail line over at Varnell. The three members of the Rollins family weren't at all sure what was happening. Then Henry Rollins laughed, relief in his voice. "I'll bet the war's over!" he said.

His big smile was answered by Claudia's as she removed her bonnet to wipe perspiration from her brow and enjoy a slight breeze. Wayne felt good, too, seeing his parents so happy, and for some time the little family stood in the cotton field, quietly celebrating the end of World War I.

The Rollins family kept up with current events by reading the *Toledo Blade*, a newspaper that came by mail three times a week. No one could ever explain why Henry Rollins had a subscription to a paper from Ohio, but it was his major source of news in 1918, bringing up-to-date reports on America's first airmail service, on increasing support for giving women the right to vote, and, until this wonderful day in November, on America's involvement in the war in Europe.

With the war over, Christmas seemed especially joyful that year. Wayne slipped out of bed early on Christmas morning to see what was in the long stocking he had hung by the fireplace on Christmas Eve. First came an apple, an orange, then another apple and another orange. Down in the stocking toe were nuts and hard candy.

As soon as Claudia had cleared away the breakfast dishes and washed them, Henry went to hitch up the buggy. It was a yearly ritual for Emma Nance's children and grandchildren to come to her house for Christmas dinner, and this year sixteen-month-old J. W. was old enough to enjoy the holiday. Wayne and Herschel were allowed to walk the short distance to Grandma Nance's, and on the way they set off small firecrackers Henry had bought in Ringgold.

Strictly forbidden to hold the fireworks in their hands, the boys would poke the firecrackers into holes in the embankment along the road, touch a match to the fuse, and sprint away while listening for the loud popping.

## SCHOOL DAYS

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When they were a little older, the boys learned to make their own firecrackers. They stood a heavy piece of firewood on end, placed a hot coal from the fire on top of the wood, added a little water, then hit the coal with the flat top of an axe. The resulting sound was very similar to a firecracker going off. When neighbors across the valley answered with firecrackers, the boys would laugh. "We're getting them to shoot up their firecrackers and we're just using this coal on a stick of wood," Herschel said, grinning.

Christmas dinner at Grandma Nance's was a lavish feast of baked hen with dressing and gravy, ham, big bowls of vegetables, and several kinds of cakes and pies. After the Christmas meal, the grown-ups would settle down to talk while the children went outside to play.

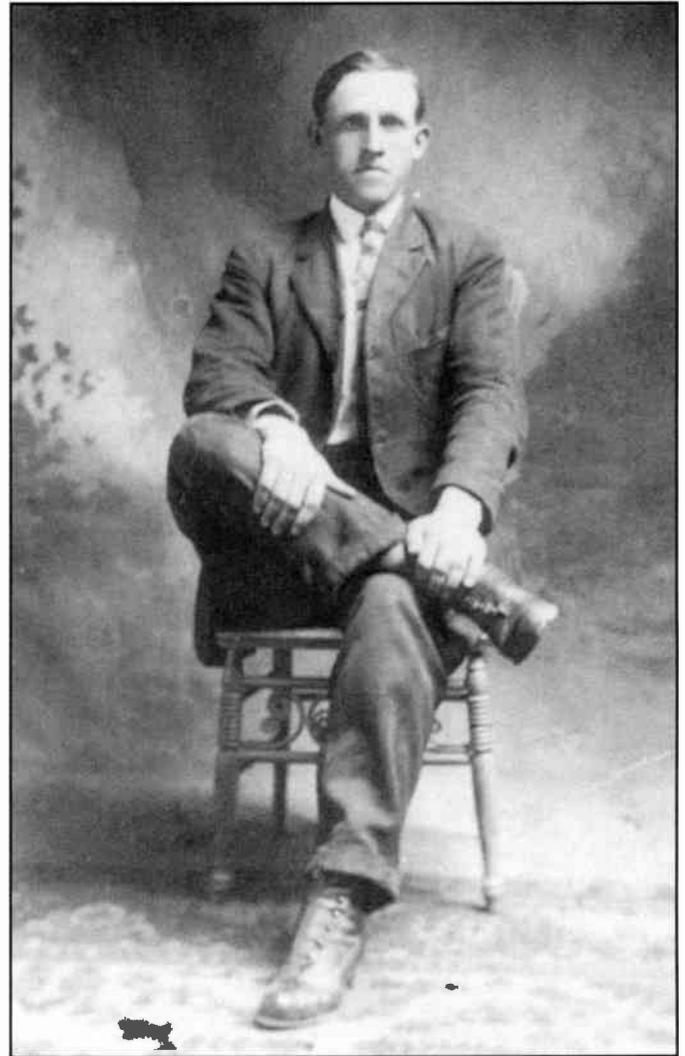
Another Christmas ritual for Wayne was quail hunting with his Uncle Marvin Nance. As they followed the bird dog across the fields, the boy clung to the hammer hold, a loop on the side of his uncle's overalls. "You tug every once in a while on that, so I'll know you're holding it," his uncle instructed. "When the birds go up, I'll know where you are." When the dog pointed, Wayne would give two jerks on the loop, and when the birds flushed, Uncle Marvin would fire his shotgun without worrying about where his young nephew stood.

On this particular Christmas Day, Wayne hurried to keep up with his uncle on the way back to Grandma Nance's. Back at the house, the joy of the holiday would vanish.

Little J. W. had become violently ill with convulsions and chills. Wayne watched anxiously as spasms racked his little brother's body. The fear grew when his grandmother opened the baby's mouth, and Wayne saw it was broken out with an angry red rash. Dr. Hughes was summoned. After the doctor had finished his examination, he turned to the family, his face drawn into a grim expression. "Diphtheria," he said.

The word fell like a death sentence. Not many people survived the disease. The only hope was a serum, and it had to be administered quickly. The nearest source was Chattanooga, and the trip there and back by buggy would take most of a day.

Waiting only long enough for directions from the doctor, Henry Rollins raced to his buggy and within minutes was gone. He had no idea whether the



*Marvin Nance,  
Wayne's uncle and the  
first of the family to  
attend high school*

## SCHOOL DAYS

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baby would be alive when he returned, and he pushed the horse in both directions, faster, faster. Hours later, when Henry Rollins stepped down from the buggy, the look on his wife's face told him all he needed to know: John William was still alive.

The doctor took from his bag a huge hypodermic needle, inserted it into a vial to draw out the precious serum, and plunged the needle into the baby's quivering leg. For weeks, the sick child and his mother stayed at his grandmother's house, with the father visiting every day. The serum began to work, and the baby, in time, recovered.

In fact, it wasn't long before Wayne found it difficult to keep up with his bubbly baby brother, a problem Wayne periodically resolved by tying one end of a rope around J.W. and the other around the front porch post while Wayne went off with his buddy Herschel. When Claudia discovered this practice, it stopped at once.

Henry and Claudia Rollins were loving parents, but they tolerated no misbehavior or disobedience. Both boys were taught by word and example to do their work to the very best of their abilities, without complaint. Their parents'

*From their home, where the view was of Smith Chapel, Henry and Claudia Rollins taught their sons the importance of family and faith.*



## SCHOOL DAYS

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philosophy on punishment was downright biblical: "Spare the rod and spoil the child." Wayne got quite a few whippings with switches made from whatever tree or bush was handy when the offense occurred, and his mother never waited for his father to administer the discipline. She took care of it, when and where it was necessary.

Like the Sunday evening when Claudia overheard her son complain out loud about shucking not only his share of corn but his father's too, while his father was out visiting a sick relative. "He coulda' been back if he wanted to," Wayne griped. "There's no reason why he couldn't have been back."

Suddenly his mother appeared, lips tight and eyes furious. Without a word she stripped a slender, five-foot-long branch from a blue plum bush, and before Wayne knew what was happening, she was flailing him. "I don't want to hear another word!" she snapped. And from that day on, she never again heard her son complain, and she never took a switch to him again.

Inside the Rollins home, loud talk and arguments were not allowed. When the family sat down for a meal, there was no horseplay, no correcting, no discussion of unpleasant topics or events that had occurred that day. Claudia demanded that her sons adhere to strict moral and ethical principles, and even something that seemed innocent to Wayne could turn into an ordeal if those principles were broken.

Like the time Wayne picked up little pieces of coal from the back of the local blacksmith's buggy, just before he jumped off after a short ride. When he came inside the house, Claudia's eyes went straight to the lumps of coal in his hand. "That's stealing," she said to her startled son. "And so you're going to have to take that coal back."

Claudia Rollins took the two little pieces of coal and placed them on a cross brace behind the bench at the dining table, right behind where Wayne sat at mealtime. She didn't say anything more, didn't tell her son when he had to return the coal to its owner; she just let those two pieces of coal sit there, staring at Wayne in the back and waiting for him to act. Weeks passed, but Wayne finally returned the coal and learned a lesson he would never forget.

The family's strict sense of right and wrong was accepted by both sons for the simple reason that they had no other choice. Over and over in their young lives, Wayne and John saw this attitude played out by other family members, particularly by their grandfather, John Frank Rollins. Consider the case of Grandpa and the bootleggers.

In the north Georgia hills, bootleg whiskey operations were a flourishing business after Prohibition outlawed the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages. When John Rollins learned that a neighbor was selling bootleg whiskey to his sons, he went to the bootlegger and told him to stop or he would turn him in. When the bootlegger ignored him, John Rollins reported the bootlegger to the sheriff. When repeated raids on the house failed to turn up any

## SCHOOL DAYS

evidence (the man's mother, wearing a full skirt, would always be sitting in a chair over the trapdoor that led to the cache of illegal whiskey), John Rollins and another neighbor hid behind a tree, watched the bootlegger sell whiskey, and testified before the grand jury. An indictment was returned. The bootlegger was convicted and sent to prison.

While the man was in prison, young Wayne wondered what would happen when the offender was freed from a Georgia chain gang. Would he try to get even with Grandpa Rollins?

The answer to that question came unexpectedly about a year later. Wayne was picking cotton alongside his grandfather near the road north of the house, when they saw a wagon with a load of corn coming along the road, heading to Hedrick's Mill. As the wagon neared, Wayne saw that the man driving was the former bootlegger and neighbor Grandpa Rollins had sent to prison. When the wagon was almost even to where Grandpa Rollins and Wayne stood, Wayne held his breath.

Then the man spoke. "Hello there, John," he said, his voice friendly. "How're you?"

John Rollins said, "I'm glad to see you home." And then to make sure the man understood his point, John went on to say, "Hope you don't have to go back."

The wagon creaked on by. Nothing else was said, and at least outwardly, the entire incident was forgotten, testimony to the stature of John Rollins in the community. To Wayne the lesson was clear: His grandfather would take a stand for what was right, regardless of the consequences. The boy was also deeply impressed with his grandfather's ability to escape animosity or ill will for what he did.

"He was always for what was right," Wayne would tell people, a statement that would in the future be said about him, too. "And it didn't make any difference who it hurt. You couldn't influence him at any price. He felt that strongly about when it was right and wrong. He wouldn't have changed."

By the time he was eight years old, it was clear to Wayne Rollins just how important school and learning could be. Education, he began to realize, could be his key to a better life. To emphasize this at home, both Henry and Claudia Rollins supported a new school rule that would eliminate the harvest hiatus and make the school operate full-time during the fall. School, to them, was more important than farm work, and Wayne's own attitude toward school was deeply affected by what his parents believed.

For the first time that year, Wayne had his mother as a teacher, and he discovered that she was more demanding than the other teachers. Indeed, Claudia Rollins believed so strongly in education that almost nightly she read to her sons. Together, they gathered around the fire after dinner, listening to stories from the Bible or reading books by Horatio Alger.

"There was no radio," remembered John W. Rollins. "Mother used to read to us each night. *American* magazine used to be a great one. There were

## SCHOOL DAYS

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*Wayne and John's father,  
William Henry Rollins  
(about 1930)*

wonderful stories in the *American*, and we used to get those unsold magazines from the newsstand after the backs were torn off of them. We couldn't afford to buy them, and we would get the Westerns. Mother would read us one of the stories, and then she would read a passage out of the Bible, and she read Horatio Alger books."

One of these stories stayed with Wayne and J. W. all their lives. It was the story of a tremendous cathedral, being built in some faraway land before the time of Christ.

"In the rock quarry, three men worked, laboring with the stones," Claudia Rollins told her sons as Henry listened nearby. "Each man was asked what he was doing. The first one said, 'I'm working to earn enough money to buy food for my wife and children. I'll be glad when the day is done.' The second one said, 'I'm just trying to survive, and this is all I know how to do.' And the third worker replied, 'I'm building the most magnificent cathedral in the world.'"

John Rollins always remembered what happened next. Claudia Rollins looked at her younger son, who was listening attentively. "My boys are like the last one," she said. "They're not just pecking on a stone. They're always building something."

Through their fireside stories and her expressions of unwavering faith in their abilities, Claudia Rollins impressed on her sons the idea that they could achieve anything they set out to do. And they believed her. Always.

“She was just fun, a lot of fun,” said John. “She believed in us. She believed in education. She believed in your doing what you wanted to do, and she was always an inspiration. She taught me to dream, that you can always aspire.”



There was a brief time, however, when Wayne wasn't so sure that he needed to study and earn good grades. He was in the sixth grade, eleven years old. He coughed constantly, his usually healthy complexion looked sickly, and his chest was sore and aching. He tired quickly, even at play.

His mother knew the signs, and she feared the worst. The family set out for Cleveland, Tennessee, to see one of the best doctors in the area. Once in the doctor's office, preliminary tests led the doctor to suspect that Wayne had tuberculosis. And when Wayne returned in a month for a second exam, the diagnosis was confirmed.

Henry, Claudia, and Wayne were naturally scared. Claudia's father was believed to have died of tuberculosis. Her brother, Mack, had the disease but survived. The doctor said Wayne would have to stay out of school and get a lot of rest, fresh air, and sunshine. All Wayne heard was that he had to quit school. For how long, he didn't know. When they saw their son's devastated look, Claudia and Henry stopped at a drugstore in Cleveland to buy something for Wayne. Of all the things in the store, Wayne wanted a tube of toothpaste, the first toothpaste he had ever had.

Back home, Claudia was determined to beat the disease that was making her son waste away, so she devised a plan for building up Wayne's body as much as possible while enforcing his rest. She prepared a drink of whole milk, cream, and raw eggs with sugar and vanilla or other flavoring. She mixed a tall glass of the rich mixture for Wayne three times a day — in addition to his regular meals. Wayne, skinny and frail-looking, had to rest all day, sitting in a chair in the sun on the south side of the house when the weather permitted, soaking up the vitamin D and fresh air.

Months went by. Gradually, the boy began to show improvement, and he was taken once more to the doctor in Cleveland. The disease, the doctor said smiling, “has been arrested.”

Wayne went back to school, but now he was a grade behind his former classmates, except for those who had not passed. For a while, Wayne fell in with several friends who had little interest in studying or earning good grades, and he began to follow their example. Not until he entered high school, in the eighth grade, did Wayne break out of this uncharacteristic rut. But from this earlier experience, Wayne learned a valuable lesson: He resolved to always take his studies seriously, and to distance himself from people who lacked ambition or incentive or who in some other way were a bad influence. “Why not associate

## SCHOOL DAYS

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with people who are successful?" Wayne Rollins always argued. "If you can't find any fellow that's better than yourself, then just stay by yourself."

The closest to a boyhood idol for Wayne was his uncle, John Frank Rollins, Jr. Uncle Frank was fourteen years older than Wayne, had one of the first cars in the county, was a good mechanic, and never let his interest in girls interfere with his ability to do whatever he wanted — characteristics that so impressed a young boy like Wayne that he often said, "I want to grow up and be just like Uncle Frank."

Wayne's admiration was tested during a trip to Varnell with Uncle Frank, who was hauling a wagonload of lumber. Wayne's mother had given him a nickel for an ice cream cone, a cold and delicious treat after the hot and dusty ride, a ride so boring that Wayne began jumping off and on the wagon, much to Uncle Frank's irritation. "I don't want you jumping off," Uncle Frank said. "You might fall under the wagon. If you jump off one more time, I'm gonna send you back home."

Wayne thought about that, and said to himself, "Uncle Frank won't send me back home because we're so close." And he jumped off the wagon again.

Uncle Frank stopped the wagon and turned to Wayne. "Just get off and go home. Go on." Trudging down the road, Wayne broke into tears. He couldn't believe his beloved uncle would do this. When he got back home, he told his mother what had happened. "Well, he did exactly what he ought to do," Claudia Rollins said. "He told you if you jumped off anymore, what he'd do. So he did just exactly what he said."

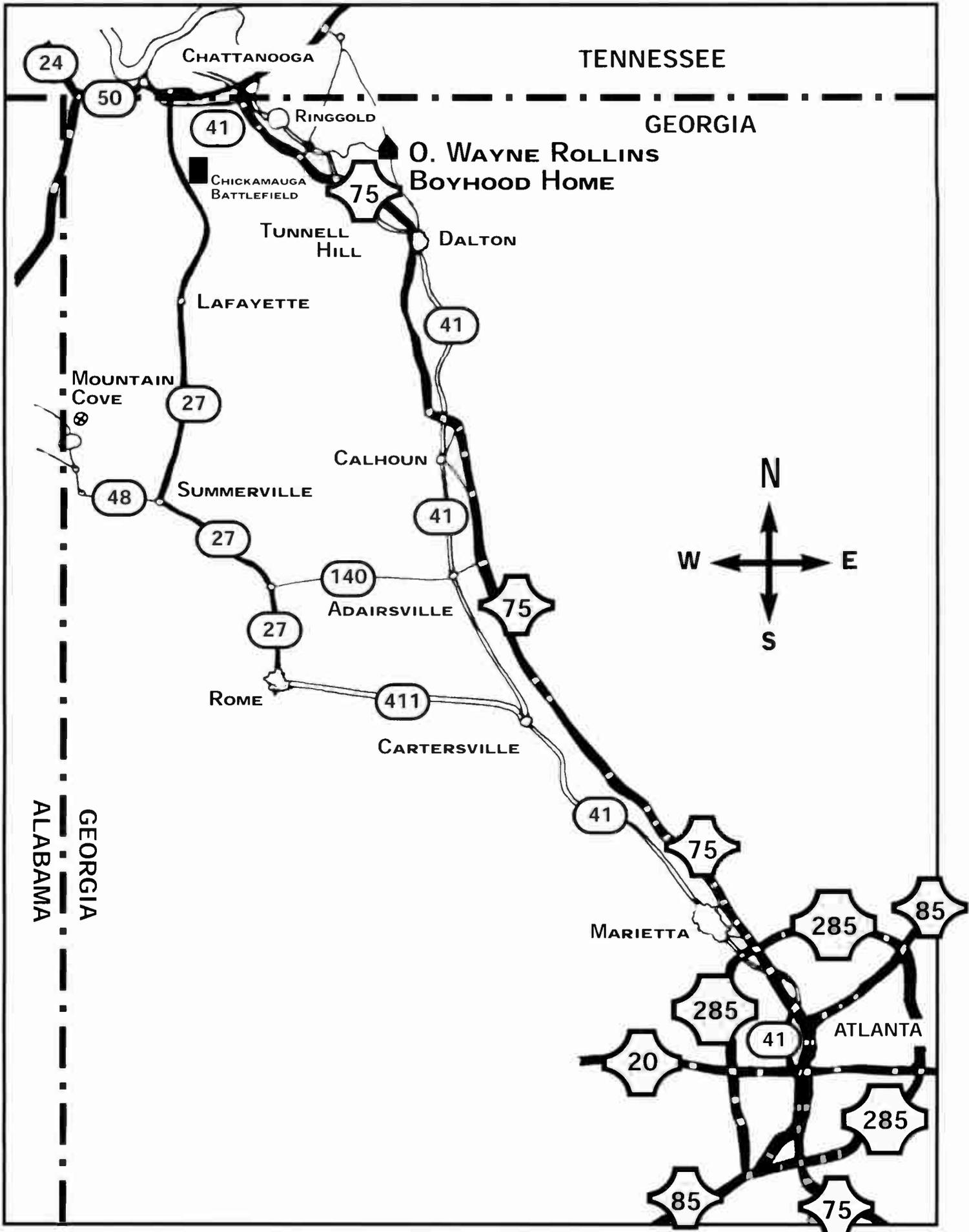
As Wayne learned that day on a dusty road to Varnell, a person's word was nonnegotiable in the Rollins family. Your word, Wayne Rollins learned from his family, was your bond. And by the time he entered high school, Wayne was not only committed to learning from books but to understanding and putting into place the very principles and work ethic behind so many of the Rollins family experiences.

Grandma Nance, for instance, believed strongly that hard work brought success. Said Emma Nance: "If the average person works eight hours and you work twelve, you'll be fifty percent better than they are. And no one can take that away from you. That's guaranteed."

Wayne began to apply his grandmother's proverb — whether he was working in the fields, picking cotton, or running a cultivator. If he was plowing off rows in the field, Wayne began to compete with no one but himself, challenging himself to do the next row just a little bit faster, a little bit straighter. It was a basic principle that Orville Wayne Rollins remained committed to throughout his professional career.

"Being on the farm," he remembered, "you had an example of productivity every day. If you worked longer in the afternoon, you got more corn plowed."

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## SCHOOL DAYS

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And if you worked a little faster, you accomplished a little more. I knew if I plowed harder and a little longer, I got that field done quicker. If I plowed straight on out to the end of the furrow, when I got ready to hoe, I didn't have to dig up as many weeds. So you had a yardstick that a person who never worked on a farm doesn't have.

"Whatever it is, if I undertake it, I'm not going to be an average person. I'm going to be better than average. I spent my life competing against the average in whatever it was, not being satisfied, constantly wanting to be better than the average."

By watching his Grandma Nance prepare for her day, Wayne learned a lot about planning and managing time. It seemed that she had a plan in all she did, and there was no lost motion. At breakfast, she gave each of her sons a schedule for the day — one would plow the field while another would go to Hedrick's Mill with a load of corn to grind, and so on.

But to Wayne, her greatest lesson in time management and preparation also ensured that this remarkable woman never lacked for water. Grandma Nance had eight water buckets that lined a long shelf outside the kitchen. She taught all her children and grandchildren to look around for one of these buckets before anyone went down the hill toward the spring. "Don't forget the buckets," Wayne would hear her say. Everyone was expected to take a bucket and leave it by the spring on the way down, and bring it back — full of water. Every time Grandma Nance heard the screen door opening, she would say, "Did you bring the water?" Without exception, Grandma Nance always had water, and no one ever had to make a special trip to get it.

The lessons of the water buckets eventually became apparent to Wayne. His grandmother, he later said, was planning and using her time carefully, following through, and never assuming anything. She also never depended on anyone else's memory, because she always reminded people about the buckets before they went to the spring and again when they returned.

Like his grandmother, Wayne hated wasting time and resources, a fact he was reminded of nearly every time a horse needed to be shod at the blacksmith shop at Catoosa Springs. Taking care of the horses and mules was an important task that Wayne had to learn early, and he grew to loathe the local blacksmith. Anyone coming into the blacksmith shop, especially a customer, would invariably be asked to pump the bellows to fan the fire for heating the steel to be turned and hammered into horseshoes. The blacksmith would talk loudly, complaining about some injustice as he picked up the glowing metal with his long tongs, holding the steel by the tongs and not bothering to hammer the metal until it had cooled. He would then have to put it back in the fire, the bellows would have to be pumped, and the process unnecessarily repeated.

The smithy often had to heat the metal two or three times before he got around to hammering it into shape — a waste of time that really irritated Wayne.

*Opposite page: Wayne and John Rollins grew up in the small community of Smith Chapel, near the Tennessee border.*

## SCHOOL DAYS

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Not all of Wayne's life lessons were the result of serious work. His grandmother taught him how to save money, for instance, by simply taking it out of circulation: Grandma Nance would place the money that Wayne earned while working for her inside a handkerchief, and pin it to her petticoat. "And if you wanted anything," said Willena Nance Lewis, Wayne's cousin, "Grandma [would] say, 'Well, you know I can't get to it, if there was somebody around. So that's the way she saved your money.'"

Said Wayne of this forced savings: "We had no other choice."

And Wayne never forgot the day he learned to "always look behind good news" and be careful about accepting something for nothing. He had accepted a two-bladed pocketknife from older friends, a knife that Wayne soon learned had been used to skin a skunk. The fiber on its handle had soaked up the skunk odor, and this "free" knife couldn't be used. "It was awful," said Wayne of the knife. "I finally had to throw it away."

The Rollins boys were not always angels by any means, and Wayne, John, and Herschel were always looking for adventure. Nothing probably seemed more thrilling than the thought of seeing their first moving picture, and one day Grandpa Rollins agreed to take Wayne and Herschel to the Dalton theater. He hitched his mule team to the wagon, took the boys to town, and waited in the wagon while they saw the film. Then he took them home.

The next time they went, Wayne and Herschel sat through the feature twice, a common practice in their day. When they got outside, Grandpa Rollins was fuming. They had kept him waiting so long that he had to hurry the mule team but still got home late.

"These boys just stayed on in there and stayed on in there," Grandpa told Henry.

"Well," Henry smiled. "I don't feel sorry for you. You were the one that started them, the one that took them to the first one."

"If I was the one that started them," Grandpa declared, "I'll be the one that breaks them from going anymore." And that was the last time he took the boys to the picture show.

As it turned out, Wayne had less and less time for entertainment as he began to handle more responsibilities and chores around the farm. The Rollins family grew most of their food — drying or canning vegetables and fruit, killing hogs in the winter, and curing the ham, bacon, and sausage in a small smokehouse near the house. For staples, Claudia traded molded butter (churned by the boys) and eggs at Anderson's store and later at a grocery store in Chattanooga. The family relied on the Watkins Products traveling salesman for black pepper, cinnamon, lemon extract, and other spices, as well as the good Watkins liniment and salve for all manner of aches, pains, and sores.

There were many aches and pains in the Rollins household as the boys began to take over the hard labor on the farm. By the time he was eleven, Wayne

## SCHOOL DAYS

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had started plowing with a two-horse cultivator, a riding cultivator with a seat toward the back. Henry Rollins could no longer plow; he was so heavy that his weight would throw the cultivator tongue up in the air between the horses and unbalance the machine.

There was another reason Henry Rollins had difficulty with plowing the fields. He was suffering from heart disease. Slowly, it had begun to take its toll.

“Dad was such an active man, it was so hard on him not being able to do anything,” remembered John Rollins. “And my mother always worked hard. She worked hard before he got sick. I don’t know if she worked any harder after that because she worked as hard as she could before.”



When Wayne was twelve, he saw his mother weep for the first time.

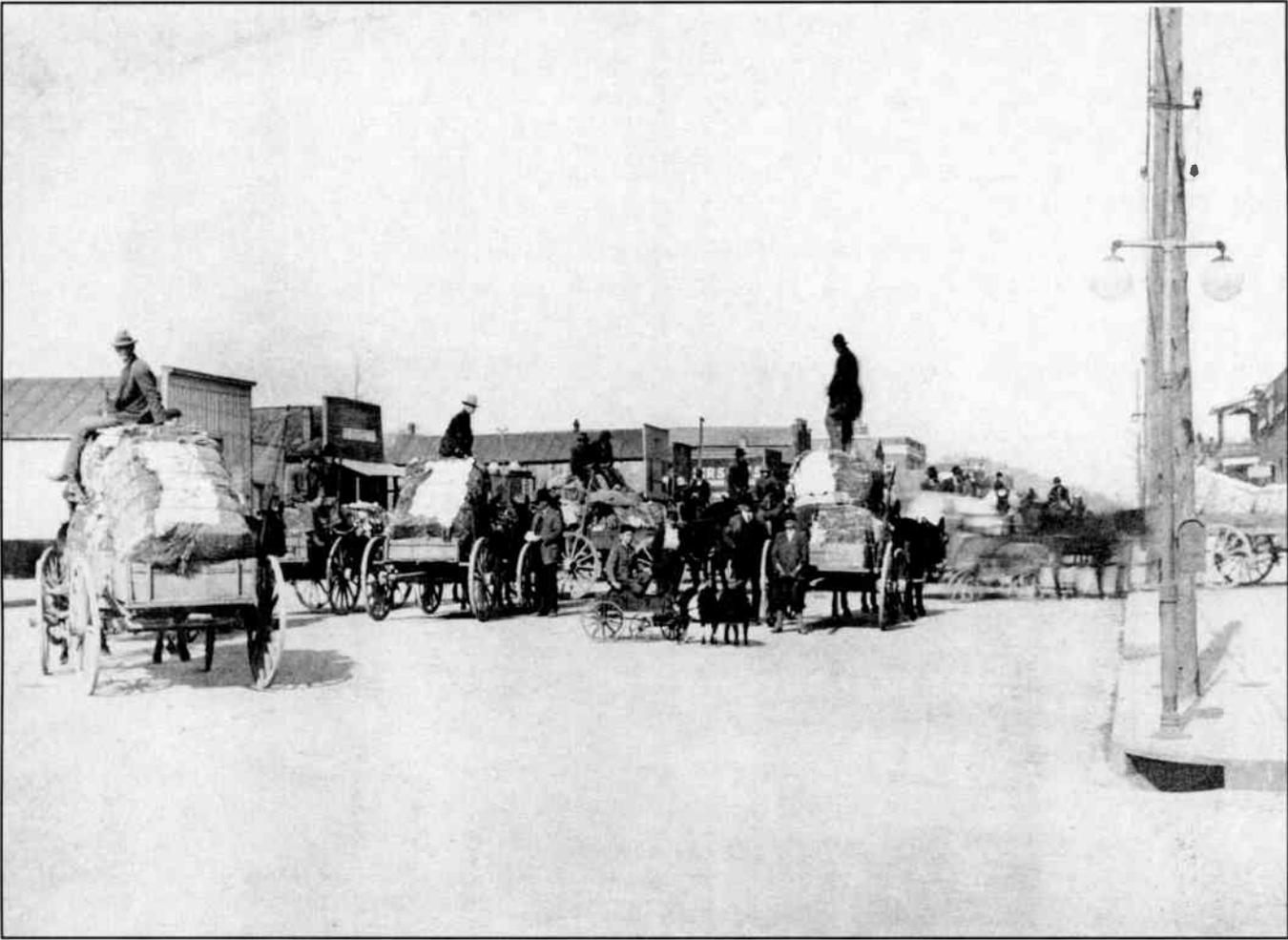
It was an overcast day, gray and gloomy, and she was standing in the kitchen and looking out the window at three tall stacks of lumber. Cut from timber on the farm more than two years earlier, the lumber had been neatly stacked so that it would slope just right and drain off any rainwater. The lumber was now well seasoned and in excellent condition. And there was enough lumber to build a house — Claudia’s dream house, one with plenty of rooms and a real kitchen, not just an old store attached to the side of the house.

Something in his mother’s face, Wayne always remembered, stopped him at the kitchen door. Then he heard the sound of heavy motors. Two large trucks pulled alongside the stacks of lumber and several men got out. The men began to load the lumber onto the trucks as Claudia Rollins watched. Her son saw the pain in her face. He sensed that she could not bear to see what was happening, yet could not tear her eyes away.

After all, his parents had talked for years about the house plans, where the windows would be placed, how many nails and shingles they needed to buy before they could start to build. But that week, Henry told his wife that they had to sell the lumber. Times were hard, and they needed money to live on during the Great Depression. Claudia, numb inside, could only tell him to do what he thought best. There was nothing else to do. She knew the lumber was her last chance for the house she had built over and over in her imagination. And as she watched the men load the lumber and take away her dreams, the tears flowed silently down her face. She did not sob aloud, she did not cry out. And that made her grief all the more unbearable to Wayne, who felt the tears spill from his eyes, too.

The Henry Rollins family certainly had its share of bad luck. Henry Rollins suffered a heart attack and could not seem to get his strength back. And now he lay sick in the double bed in the south room. Beside the barn sat a wagon loaded with 1,200 pounds of cotton. The cotton had to go to gin, and Henry Rollins’ bank note had to be renewed at the bank in Dalton.

## SCHOOL DAYS



*Farmers from miles around would travel to the cotton buyer's warehouse in Dalton, Georgia. (about 1924)*

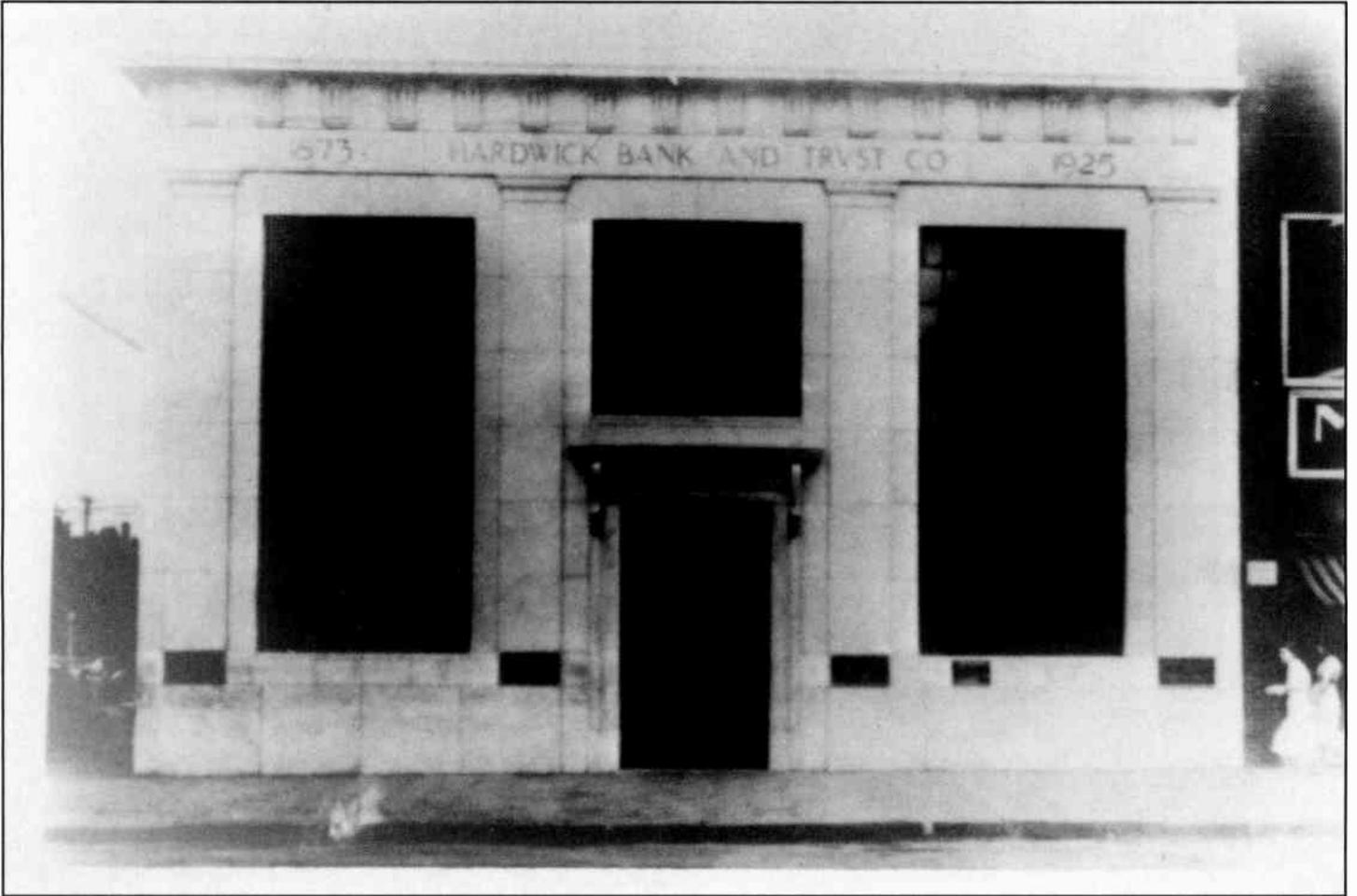
For the rest of his life, Wayne Rollins would remember the words his mother spoke to him: "You'll have to do this." And so, at age twelve, he did.

Wayne Rollins would later recall specific details from this remarkable day. Like the sturdy leather Star Brand shoes he pulled on his feet at three o'clock in the morning, the time he had to awaken in order to prepare for the long, hard trip to Dalton over gravel and dirt roads. The hearty breakfast of eggs and bacon, biscuits and butter, eaten quickly as Wayne sat with his little brother at the kitchen table while his mother packed Wayne's lunch of ham biscuits, deviled eggs, and a slice of chocolate cake. The look on his mother's face, filled at once with pride and concern as she pressed the bank notice and a one-dollar bill into his hand. His father, propped up against thick down pillows, his once sun-browned and work-hardened hands resting now almost delicately across his thick, rising chest when Wayne walked in to say good-bye and heard his father say, "Be careful, you hear?"

By the time the sun came up, Wayne was well on his way, sitting high and alone on the wagon seat, looking thin and small in his straw hat and overalls. Twice he stopped to water the horses and get a drink himself. The cotton gin

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was at Mill Creek, three miles from Dalton. When Wayne came in sight of the gin, he could see a long line of wagons already waiting.

It was two hours before Wayne pulled his wagon up to the gin where the cotton was sucked out of the wagon through a big metal tube. Next, he drove the wagon around to the other side of the gin and waited while the cottonseed, separated from the lint, poured into the bottom of the wagon bed. Minutes later, at the loading dock, the bale of ginned cotton was loaded into the wagon. Wayne's first responsibility of the day was completed, and he headed the horses back onto the road toward Dalton and the cotton buyer's warehouse, three miles away. There, the cotton graded above average and brought eleven cents a pound for a bale that weighed a little over five hundred pounds. The seed weighed almost seven hundred pounds, and half of it was traded for cottonseed meal, a highly nutritious feed for the cows. The buyer wrote out a check and handed it to Wayne, who folded it carefully and put it in his pocket. Next stop? Dalton wagon yard, to feed the horses, and then the walk to the Hardwick Bank a few blocks away.

Inside the bank, the young boy became flustered for the first and only time during this long day. He was the only boy standing in line, waiting like

*The Hardwick Bank and Trust in Dalton, where Wayne once renewed his father's bank note (about 1924)*

everyone else to see the bank president, who sat behind a desk, just past a railing. When the man in front of Wayne got to the desk, the bank president looked up and spoke in a loud, unfriendly voice. "What in the hell do you want?" he asked. And the man answered, "Not a damn thing you got!"

Wayne was stunned by the outburst. He all but panicked as he tried to sort out what he had heard and what the conversation had meant, never guessing that these two men were friends and only teasing each other. Wayne's thoughts became jumbled. *I can't say that. I can't do that part. What am I going to say to that?*

He was scared, but when he suddenly found himself standing in front of the bank president, he heard himself announce, "I want to renew the Henry Rollins note." The banker was as nice as could be. Wayne was incredibly relieved as he successfully carried out the transaction and walked out of the bank, ready to begin the long journey home.

Darkness had long since fallen when he drove the wagon into the barn to shelter the cottonseed. He unhitched and unharnessed the horses, led them to the spring near the barn, and waited as they drank long and thirstily of the cold water. Then he took them back to the stable and fed them hay.

He walked back to the house, and before eating, Wayne went into his father's room. "Here's the check," he said, and then told his father how the cotton had graded and what it had brought. "It didn't gin out fifty-fifty," he reported, almost apologizing.

Henry Rollins had always hoped to produce a cotton crop that would gin out fifty-fifty, meaning an equal amount of lint and seed. It was a goal he would never attain. Nor would he ever reach the coveted prize of a bale to the acre; it usually took twice that much land or more for the four or five bales grown each year.

Wayne sat down at the table with his mother and brother for a hearty meal of dried beans, cabbage, and cornbread. There was something special for dessert, peach cobbler, more delicious than Wayne could ever remember. His mother smiled at him. She was proud of him. It had been a good day.

And the young farmboy, who had felt the weight of his entire family's future on his shoulders, had recognized something within himself that day, too. For years, perhaps, he had worked as hard in the fields as any man, but he had not felt the responsibility of being an adult. The trip to Dalton represented an important rite of passage for Orville Wayne Rollins, for along the way he had stepped solidly into the adult world of responsibility and commerce, putting his signature to a bank note that would one day pale in comparison to the checks that would bear the signature of "O. Wayne Rollins." He was twelve years old, but he was a child no longer.

It would take years for Wayne to put his trip to the cotton gin and the bank into complete perspective. That night, he fell sound asleep as soon as his head touched the pillow.

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## SCHOOL DAYS



Within the next year, the Smith Chapel schoolhouse burned down, the fire apparently starting from a spark in the big stove with the long pipe that reached to the ceiling. Wayne stopped and looked wistfully at the smoking ashes, and thought back on his time at the school.

But this wasn't the end of Wayne's education by any means. Henry and Claudia enrolled their sons at Cohutta, about six miles northeast of Smith Chapel. Herschel, a grade ahead of Wayne, and John also attended the large three-story school that went through the ninth grade.

After the crops were harvested and winter closed in, Henry Rollins rented a two-story house in Cohutta where the family would live until spring so that the boys could go to school. Herschel shared a room with Wayne, and the house was next door to Uncle Fred and Aunt Mary Rollins, who had also moved here to enroll their son Robert in school.

Cohutta was a railroad town with lines out of Dalton, forking to Cleveland, Tennessee, and Chattanooga, Tennessee. It was a prosperous town with two cotton gins. There was much more to do and see in Cohutta than in little Smith Chapel, and the Rollins boys weren't about to miss any of it. They would drop in at Oscar Wolfe's store and browse through the merchandise,

*Herschel, Wayne, and John  
attended school in this  
school house in Cohutta after the  
Smith Chapel school burned.  
(about 1926)*



## SCHOOL DAYS

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sometimes buying a few pennies' worth of candy and watching people sell their chickens. Wayne and J. W. took up basketball, practicing for hours with a home-made goal nailed up on the side of the barn and a makeshift basketball made of rubber.

Even under these crude conditions, Wayne and J. W. both became excellent basketball players. Wayne's six-foot-two height made him a natural center, and his soft touch gave him an especially accurate shot from the corner. Both he and J. W. played for Cohutta. And in those days, their highly competitive basketball games on clay courts often as not included a fistfight or two, when an opponent did not take defeat lightly.

But even the rough-and-tumble nature of sports and the demands of his chores failed to dent Wayne's renewed enthusiasm for his studies when he entered the eighth grade, the first year of high school. His two young Cohutta teachers were the most demanding teachers Wayne had ever had, and he responded by studying that much harder. Lacking the background he needed, he had to cram two years of Latin into one school term, something his teacher, Missy Owens, insisted on. Missy Owens, Wayne Rollins later said, "didn't understand" how hard it was for him. "She didn't want to understand and that's what made me get the lessons."

His parents, too, expected no less. His father especially pushed Wayne about his handwriting. Henry Rollins would sit for hours on a rainy day, practicing his own handwriting in the fancy script of his time.

In his family's time-honored tradition, Wayne Rollins continued to learn and grow by observing lessons taught both inside and outside the classroom, absorbing lessons from life that he would never find outlined in a textbook. Consider the two cow stories.

Grandpa Rollins, as Wayne always heard the story, had let someone else keep a cow of his as a way of helping out in a time of need. But after the recipient of this kindness died, members of the family took the cow. Grandpa didn't make a fuss about it — he just went and got his cow. A warrant was issued, and John Rollins was summoned to court for trial. He ignored the summons and kept on with his work.

The morning he was supposed to be in court, Grandma Rollins was worried. "Aren't you going to court?" she asked.

"No," said Grandpa. "They don't have a case. It's my cow, and I've got it."

Soon, a bailiff from the court came to see Grandpa Rollins, who was sitting under a big oak tree with Grandma and Wayne when the officer arrived. The bailiff walked up nervously, holding out a paper. "I got this warrant here to serve on you. To bring you in."

Grandpa Rollins studied it for a long time, staring at the ground and then off across the field. "Well," he said at length, looking the bailiff dead in the eye, "I'm not going."

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“By Jove, you’re going to have to go! I’m a bonded officer, and they’re awful strict on a bonded officer.”

Grandpa Rollins again sat silently for what seemed an interminable amount of time. Then he said, “Well, now, I can take care of that. I’m the one on your bond. So I’ll just come off your bond, and you won’t be a bonded officer.”

Grandpa never went to court. And he kept the cow.

The little drama impressed Wayne tremendously, he always said. He recognized his grandfather’s ability to handle any situation by thinking it through before speaking, and by always sticking to his position when he thought he was right, regardless of the consequences. Wayne was also proud of his grandfather’s ingenuity. Who else would have thought about the bond?

It wasn’t too long before Wayne had to summon some ingenuity and do some fast thinking of his own. Always eager for work, Wayne once delivered milk part-time with his Uncle Marvin Nance, who was in Wayne’s eyes “the best milkman I ever saw.” Uncle Marvin always picked up the morning newspaper if it had been delivered, took the paper, and placed it with the milk, an added service that his customers appreciated. “He just doesn’t lose any customers.” Wayne would tell his mother.

The nephew observed and absorbed every action his uncle took concerning customer relations, service, and handling complaints. And when Uncle Marvin became ill one spring and Wayne had to deliver the milk alone, he nearly lost a customer, something he knew would be extremely difficult to explain to his uncle. The problem resulted when the milk cows grazed in some wild onions, which tainted their milk with the flavor of onions. It had happened once or twice before; Mrs. Mahoney, one of Uncle Marvin’s customers, had warned Wayne about it. “My husband has a very high temper. He said if there ever was onions in that damned milk anymore, ‘You just stop taking that milk.’”

A few weeks later, the cows got out of their pasture and ate wild onions again. The milk was oniony. Mrs. Mahoney told Wayne to stop delivering the milk. “I just don’t have any other choice. My husband said, ‘Quit.’”

“What time does he get off from work?” Wayne asked.

“About five o’clock. He gets here about six.”

“When does he eat supper?”

“He eats supper at six, immediately when he gets here.”

“I want to come back and see him at seven o’clock.”

At a few minutes before seven, Wayne knocked on the door. Mrs. Mahoney led him to the living room, where her husband was, and Wayne came right to the point. “I wanted to come and apologize to you for the onions being in your milk. I don’t blame you for being mad about it. You shouldn’t have to pay for the milk. And I’m just very sorry it happened. And I’ll do everything in my power to see it doesn’t happen anymore.”

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“Well, it just ruined my dinner,” Mahoney said.

“I’m sorry it did,” Wayne continued. “It would’ve done mine that way, and I’m sorry it happened. All I can say is I’ll try my best to see that it doesn’t happen anymore.”

“Well . . .,” Mahoney paused. Then he relented. “Let’s try it again.”

When Wayne left the house, he had not only regained a customer but learned some lessons that would ultimately form a cornerstone of his successful business career. By dealing directly and honestly with a customer’s complaint, Wayne found that the Mahoneys were more loyal customers than ever before. From this one experience alone, he realized that the best response to a mistake was to just come out and say, “I’m wrong.” Good customer relations, he had witnessed firsthand, not only meant giving good service but also taking care of complaints promptly. And while Wayne worked delivering milk for his uncle, he never lost a customer.

Wayne followed in his uncle’s footsteps in another way when he enrolled in high school at Ringgold, eight miles over rural roads from his home. Marvin Nance, who was eighteen years older than Wayne, had been the first of the family to attend high school. He had boarded at Ringgold when the county’s only high school was opened by a Professor Bryan in his home.

But in spite of Wayne’s determination, this country boy met resentment and prejudice from the town students, who made up a majority of the school’s enrollment of 150.

To begin with, he felt awkward and uncomfortable because of his clothes. His legs and arms seemed to grow almost daily; by age sixteen, he was already over six feet tall but weighed only about 140 pounds. When he put on a basketball uniform for his new team, Wayne felt that his legs were “like a rope with a knot tied in them.”

Too, unlike most of his classmates, Wayne wore denim overalls; because he grew so fast, they were always too short — high-water britches, they used to call them. And in the winter, his exposed shins were chapped from the edges of his high-topped shoes to the bottoms of his overalls. Coming from a family that always prided itself on appearance, Wayne knew he looked awkward and poor, and he was truly embarrassed. For the first few days, Wayne got to class early enough to slip in and sit down before the other students came in. Then after class, he waited until the others had gone to avoid attracting attention. Before the first week was over, though, his plan went awry. He was late for school, and the only door to his classroom was in front of twenty-seven students. He hesitated, certain all eyes were on him, the country bumpkin come to town.

A pretty girl spoke up. “Gee, Rollins, I’m glad you got here. I was afraid you weren’t going to be here today.”

Relief swept over Wayne as he felt the acceptance in the girl’s voice and the subtle change in the atmosphere of the classroom. The student’s name was

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## SCHOOL DAYS

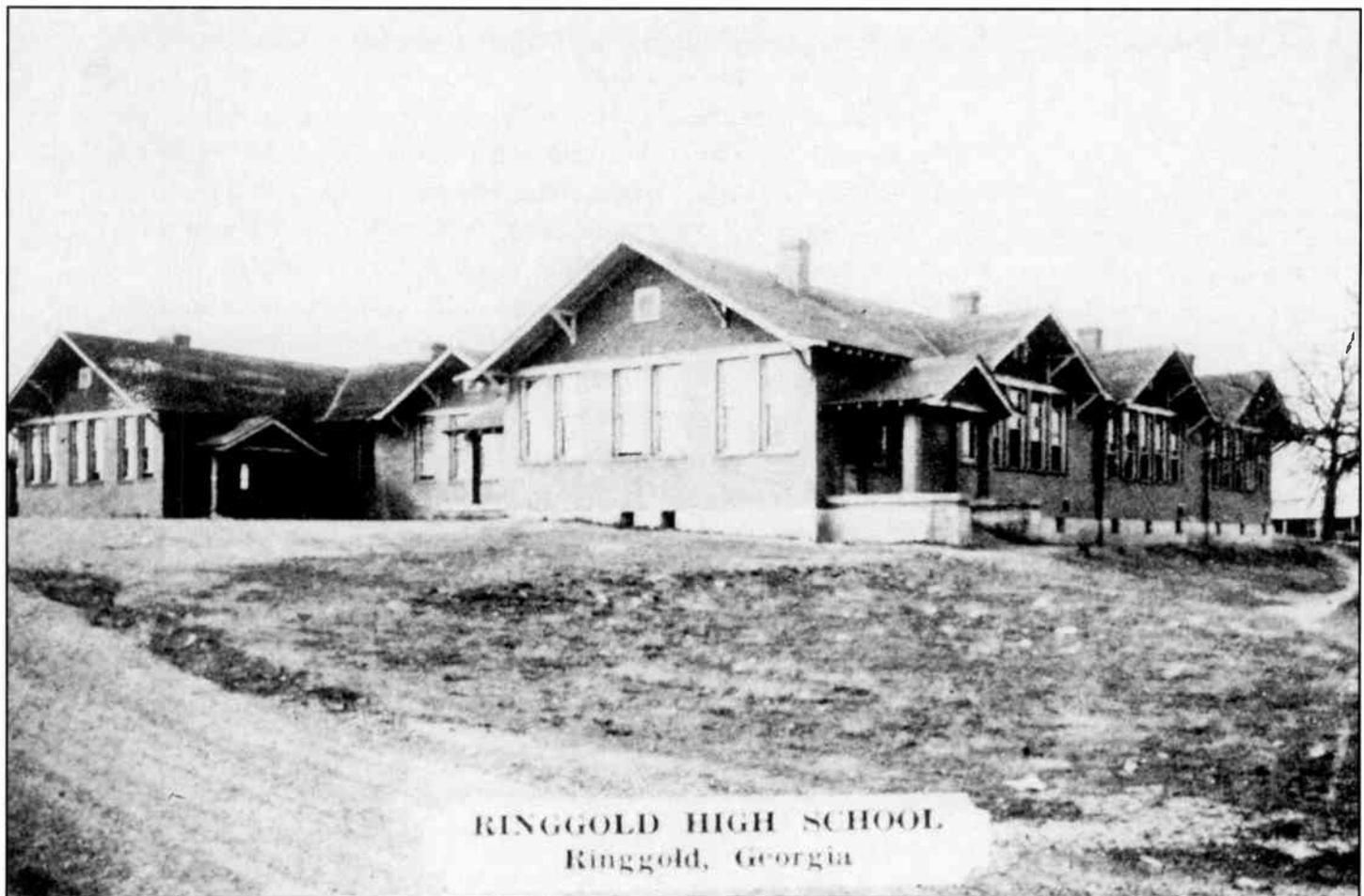
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Eva Ruth Wiggins, and she sat behind Wayne in class. In his eyes, she became not only a good friend but the one who championed his cause in high school. And it was Eva Ruth Wiggins who one day gave Wayne a pen, after Wayne had mistakenly left his prized Conklin fountain pen at school all weekend, only to return and find that it had been stolen. Through his two years of high school at Ringgold, Wayne used the same pen Eva Ruth gave him, and he never forgot the kindness she showed him.

Gradually, Wayne Rollins was accepted as a member of the tenth-grade class. Another Ringgold student named Miller Clark befriended Wayne, and students like Haddie Powell and Helen Satterfield never forgot him. "He always worked hard on his schoolwork, any assignments we had, he worked until he got them in on time," said Helen Satterfield. "His classmates loved and respected him so highly. He also had a funny side about him. I remember having history with him, and our teacher was Miss Lola Emerson, and in particular she would get Wayne when he was in some mischief and he would get out of it so easily. He would put up his hands like this and he would say, 'Miss Emerson, I wasn't doing anything.' And he always got by with it."

But Wayne's previous success as a basketball center didn't count as much on the new team as Wayne had expected, because the team was dominated by

*Wayne and Herschel attended Ringgold High School together and alternated driving the 1924 Model T each week.*



## SCHOOL DAYS

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Ringgold boys. That domination ended, however, when a new principal and coach named Harold L. Brotherton took over. Wayne's career as a benchwarmer soon ended. And due to the long distances the team often had to travel for games, the young teenager was often invited to spend the night with the coach and his family.

Getting to and from school in Ringgold was a challenge in the 1924 Model T Ford that Wayne and Herschel drove on alternating weeks. Many a time, it must have seemed like they could get to school faster if they had walked, particularly when heavy rains made the red clay roads all but impassable, raising the water dangerously high above the Ford's running boards every time they had to cross the creeks along the way. And the boys would learn that you could back up a steep hill more successfully than trying to go forward.

Their long trips to school gave Wayne time to think about the future, particularly when they passed by Catoosa Springs. Even as a boy, Wayne dreamed of owning this peaceful spot where his parents once courted, a collection of pre- and post-Civil War buildings nestled on a gentle southward slope near Smith Chapel. Built in the 1830s, Catoosa Springs was once a favored summer retreat for the wealthy. Seventeen different types of mineral water flowed from the land's fifty springs, known for its medicinal uses since the time of the Cherokee Indians. In its heyday, Catoosa Springs had boasted two large hotels as well as two dozen cottages. In 1861, its owner billed the resort as "The Saratoga of the Confederate States."

On the drive to school, Wayne would look at the land he wanted to own, and in his imagination he could see the untidy hillsides transformed into green pastures ringed by well-kept fences. Catoosa Springs would come to symbolize the kind of determination that distinguished O. Wayne Rollins. When he set his mind on something, he would work for years to get what he wanted.

Of more immediate concern to Wayne in 1930, though, was his choice of career. Already he was making plans to enter college at Young Harris in the fall, after his graduation. For some time, he had dreamed of being a lawyer, a choice encouraged by his father; when Wayne was only a child, Henry Rollins had taken his son to court sessions at the county seat of Ringgold. Now, attending high school and passing the Ringgold courthouse each day, Wayne had plenty of opportunity to whet his interest in the law. When court was held by the circuit-riding judges in February and August, Wayne would sometimes slip out of school and venture into the courthouse where, seated on a large heavy bench in the back of the second-floor courtroom, he would listen to both civil and criminal cases.

Perhaps the courtroom scenes and his dream of becoming a lawyer were on his mind the night of May 16, 1930, when O. Wayne Rollins stood on the stage of the small auditorium. It was commencement at Ringgold High School,

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and emotions were at the surface, the twenty-eight gowned and tasseled graduates alternately laughing and crying, hugging and promising to keep in touch. Wayne wore dark pants and a white shirt under his graduation gown, and on his finger was the senior class ring he had shoveled dirt and gravel to pay for. He felt special, he felt proud. And for good reason.

Tonight, the boy with the ill-fitting clothes who had wanted to hide out of embarrassment when he came to Ringgold two years before had been chosen for the highest honor the school could bestow. Orville Wayne Rollins was the class valedictorian — selected as one of the top three students by virtue of grade averages, and then elected by the popular vote of his classmates.

In this moment of fulfillment, Wayne felt a deep sense of gratitude to all those who had helped him. He thought about his mother and father, his grandparents, aunts, and uncles, special classmates Eva Ruth Wiggins and Miller Clark, Coach Brotherton, and others.

Tugging his mortarboard to just the right angle, Wayne looked out over the audience, seeing a diverse crowd of schoolmates, family, relatives, and friends. It was time to begin his speech. He took a deep breath, and began. “Tonight we launch,” he said to his classmates, giving them the title of his speech. “Where shall we anchor?”

Like the popular song “Beyond the Blue Horizon,” Wayne’s speech looked to the future, to success. Every word had been painstakingly written and committed to memory, the proper way to deliver an address, he believed. “We are going out into the world,” he said. “What we do and how we conduct ourselves will determine our destination. If we are willing to put forth the effort to do the things that are right, we will succeed. Our success will be according to how much effort we are willing to put into it.”

Wayne challenged his classmates and himself to launch out into life with confidence. And if they did, he assured them, they would succeed.

Though different in form, his words reflected what his mother had always taught Wayne and J. W., the very essence of the Horatio Alger stories she once read to them as they sat by the fire. Too, his speech reflected his Grandma Nance’s object lessons in hard work, and his Grandpa Rollins’ commitment to honesty and integrity. And when it was over, the speech drew cheers and applause from the crowd.

And then the moment was gone.

Almost immediately after Wayne’s night in the spotlight, the reality of Wayne’s life in Smith Chapel hammered away not only at his dreams of becoming a lawyer but at the very words of hope and determination that he had spoken in his valedictory address.

Wayne had planned to enter Young Harris College, following the example of his Uncle Frank, who had answered a call to the ministry and enrolled at the

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*The Class of 1930,  
Ringgold High School. Wayne,  
class valedictorian, is seated in the  
first row, second from left.*

little college in the town by the same name to the east. Wayne had a cotton patch that he figured should produce enough cotton to pay for his tuition, board, and expenses. When he walked off the stage at his graduation, diploma in hand in the spring of 1930, that was his plan.

Realizing this dream, Wayne knew, would require a tremendous amount of work from his entire family, with one exception: Henry Rollins, forty, had suffered another heart attack, one that made him all but an invalid for the rest of his life. Alone with their mother, Wayne and John worked long days in the field that summer, planting and tending and harvesting the crops that would help secure Wayne's future. But on July 2, after cleaning stables and hauling wagonloads of cow manure onto the fields all day, Wayne was struck with severe



pains in his right side. The agony became so severe that his mother and father took him to the hospital in Dalton.

Wayne was examined by Dr. J. C. Rollins (no relation to the family). His diagnosis was appendicitis, which alarmed everyone. The death rate from appendicitis was very high in 1930; Wayne knew that the last four patients who had undergone surgery at Dalton for appendicitis had died. But even more dangerous than the surgery was the chance that the appendix would rupture, causing massive infections that could prove fatal; surgery to remove the organ was the only choice. Dr. Rollins wanted to wait for another physician to confirm the diagnosis, but when the colleague failed to show up, Dr. Rollins proceeded with the surgery.

Despite his apprehensions, Wayne came out of the operation in good condition. He quickly discovered that the postoperative treatment was worse than the surgery. For two days he was covered with woolen blankets to sweat out the ether, a procedure necessary for preventing pneumonia, he was told.

Wayne's parents retained a nurse for five dollars a day, someone who stayed with him almost around the clock and slept on a cot in his room. And as was the custom then, the offending appendix was pickled in a little bottle after surgery and brought to Wayne's room. He immediately concluded he had not had appendicitis because the appendix showed no signs of inflammation. It was his steadfast conviction that he had severely pulled a muscle while working on the farm. "Might be the reason I didn't die was because I didn't have appendicitis," he decided.

Cheered by the success of the operation and prospects of a good yield from the crops that year, Wayne found it easy to doze off into a peaceful sleep in the hospital bed.

A few days later his mother came to see him. The look on her face told him there was bad news. "Wayne, there's been a hailstorm." Her voice was filled with heaviness. "All our crops were completely destroyed."

Wayne heard the news as if detached from his body. His mother described how the hail beat the corn, shredding the leaves and the roasting ears at their peak growth, and stripping all the foliage from the cotton, leaving only bare stalks standing desolate in the fields. The Kentucky Wonder beans, two acres of them that would have brought a good price, were gone, not a bean left, so complete was the destruction.

As his mother talked, Wayne could see her shoulders bowed by an invisible weight. She seemed ready to drop, this strong and determined woman who had never faltered under the burden of an invalid husband and the task of keeping the farm going.

Then without warning the tears came, streaming down her cheeks. She could not speak for a long time, standing by the bed and weeping. It was the second time Wayne would remember seeing his mother cry. She had cried when the lumber for her new house was sold during the depression, her dreams of a new home gone forever. And now, it seemed, she cried for the seemingly lost dreams of her firstborn son, knowing in her heart that the family had lost more than the year's crops.

The stunning loss of the crops was a crushing blow to the young man. For two weeks, Wayne had to stay in the hospital bed. The medical bills, which had presented a problem even before the hailstorm, now seemed an insurmountable financial burden. The surgeon had charged a hundred dollars; the anesthesiologist, twenty-five; and the physician who assisted, thirty-five. The nurse, at five dollars a day for two weeks, would cost about seventy dollars.



*Wayne on the family farm in Ringgold  
(about 1932)*

Wayne had no idea how the family would pay the hospital bill or the bank notes that waited at home, or buy the clothes and food they needed to live. But he knew one thing. All his life, Wayne Rollins had competed against average. He had been taught to settle for nothing but the best from himself and others, and he was not about to quit now.

And while he lay in the hospital bed, Wayne had time to think. He knew that the loss of the crop and the burden of paying his medical bills meant that he would not be able to go to college. His dream of being a lawyer was clearly gone.

But O. Wayne Rollins had not forgotten how to dream. And in his head, perhaps, was the voice of his mother, the voice that, even when angry at some mischief her sons had gotten into, could not conceal her pride and her confidence in her sons' ability to pick themselves up and go on.

"I thank God my boys are leaders," Claudia Rollins had once said. "And not followers!"

She was right.



# CHAPTER III

*He is the sweetest thing  
there ever was.*

— *Grace Crum Rollins,  
describing her husband*

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PARTNER FOR LIFE:  
AMY GRACE CRUM ROLLINS

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*Amy Grace Crum  
as a young girl  
(about 1925)*

# W

ayne's setback with appendicitis kept him away from the Smith Chapel homeplace and in Dalton for a month — two weeks recovering in the hospital, and another two weeks recuperating under his mother's care at the home of Pastor W. L. Hampton. The pastor and his wife were gracious and kind, but Wayne had never been so happy to return home as he was that first week in August in 1930, a month after his operation.

Back on the farm, Wayne didn't dwell on the ruined crops or his shattered dreams, nor did he take time to feel sorry for himself and his family's dire situation. It was too late in the growing season to plant more crops, so Wayne and his brother earned money for their family by going door-to-door in Chattanooga, selling farm-fresh milk, buttermilk, butter, and eggs, as well as fresh sausage.

And as soon as he was physically able, Wayne signed on to work on the county roads, shoveling and loading gravel, working ten-hour days for \$1 a day. It was the exact same work he had done to earn the \$7.50 for his senior class ring, the one he had worn when he presented his valedictorian speech at Ringgold High School. So much had changed since that May graduation night — his plans for college, his dream of being a lawyer, his family's fields full of thriving crops now stripped to nothing. But one thing Wayne knew: He had met the girl he wanted to marry.

He was in love with Amy Grace Crum.

By the end of the summer of 1930, Wayne and Grace had known each other for almost a year, having met one night in the fall of 1929 when there was a revival at Mount Vernon Baptist Church. Wayne had accepted an invitation from his Uncle Fred and Aunt Mary Rollins to attend the revival, located in the Mount Vernon community in the easternmost part of Catoosa near the Tennessee line.

As the singing began that night, Wayne looked around the church. Across the aisle sat Grace, petite with auburn hair. When she turned, her eyes met Wayne's, and it was a long moment before either looked away. Again and again, they looked at each other during the service, and as Grace later admitted, "We didn't know a thing that happened that night" at the revival.

When the service was over, Grace hurried back to the door, thinking that the tall, handsome Wayne Rollins would offer to take her home. They did speak at the door, but Wayne told her he was with his aunt and uncle and wouldn't be able to take her home. They parted, with another long look.

"Naturally, I thought she was good-looking," remembered Wayne. "Her eyes just sparkled." But when he first met Grace, Wayne still dreamed of going to college. "Girls never had bothered me much. I had the ambition that I was going to college and I was going to do certain things before I was going to consider the girls."

And yet, Wayne kept thinking about this Amy Grace Crum, and it wasn't long before he went to see her at her parents' farm near Howardsville. A group of friends were visiting Grace that day, and one of the guests was her date. No matter to Grace. When her cousin told Grace that Wayne wanted to go out with her, Grace ignored her date and left with Wayne — a decision that enraged her mother and resulted in a scolding when she returned home.

But the feisty and free-spirited Grace Crum claimed she didn't care how the boys felt about her. At least, it seemed, she didn't care until she met Wayne Rollins. And in Wayne, Grace Crum readily acknowledged that she had finally met her strong-willed match.

Grace was attracted to Wayne Rollins even though he represented a way of life that Grace had promised herself she'd never freely choose: Wayne was a farmer, and Grace had vowed never to marry a farmer. She had grown up on a farm, born on September 22, 1910, the sixth and last child of James Alexander Crum and Hasseltine "Hassie" Crum. Her ancestral roots were in Georgia, Tennessee, and North Carolina. And while Grace never knew any of her grandparents, she loved hearing stories about them. For instance, her mother's father, William S. D. Smith, was a talented violinist who played for his five daughters while they danced, a musician who was often hired to entertain the wealthy guests at Catoosa Springs.

Such stories of music and dancing and enjoyment must have seemed a fantasy to young Grace, who detested every minute of growing up on a farm with her three older brothers (another brother died as a child) and one older sister. "There must be a better life somewhere," she often said to herself, scrubbing her hands with Cutecura soap and rubbing them in Woodbury lotion, anything to try to erase the unpleasant smell of the cows after her daily chore of milking was over.



*Hassie Crum, Grace's mother (about 1942)*

## AMY GRACE CRUM ROLLINS

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As the baby in the family, Grace was showered with attention and teasing. She spoke her mind freely. She was repeatedly scolded but rarely spanked by her mother, whom Grace felt was one of the sweetest and kindest persons that ever lived. She was not as close to her father — a strict man who forbade his wife and children to play cards (though Hassie would often play with her sons when he was out of the house), and someone who held strong moral values. He didn't believe in owing anything, and he always paid cash for what he bought.

"We're a poor family," Grace's father would tell her, explaining why his daughter should be particularly vigilant about her actions. "You have to be very careful about your character and the way you act. Anyone can be honest, honorable, and truthful."

Grace's childhood playground was the loft over the smokehouse behind the house and the hayloft in the barn, the pasture where she swung on pine saplings and the swing by the woodpile. Her best friend and playmate was her first cousin, Clara Ruth Hunsucker, who was a year younger and lived only a mile away. Grace attended a small school in Howardsville until the sixth grade, when she transferred to a much larger consolidated school in Apison, about five miles from Howardville. She considered herself only average as a student, and had to work very hard to keep up her grades. After finishing school, she went to live with her brother Maze and his wife Estelle in Chattanooga.

But Grace didn't stay in Tennessee very long. She secured a job in a clothing factory, where she was assigned to inspect underwear produced by the plant, making sure every seam was sewn properly and that it was packed correctly. She worked one day, then quit. "It was a terrible job and I was bored to death," she told her mother.

Back home in Howardsville, Grace began hooking rugs, using the materials provided by a jobber who picked up the finished products and paid for them.



*Amy Grace Crum was born on September 22, 1910, the youngest of six children for James Alexander and Hassie Crum. (about 1913)*

Grace earned about ten dollars a week, more than she could make at any other job, and she became very skilled at rug-making. And true to her pledge that she would never marry a farmer, Grace eventually accepted an engagement ring from a man who operated a laundry in Chattanooga.

Wayne Rollins knew that Grace was engaged when he met her, yet oddly he didn't care. They started dating, and one night when Grace had a date with Wayne, her fiancé showed up unexpectedly. That was too much for Wayne, and he gave Grace an ultimatum.

"You can't go with that fellow and go with me," he insisted.

"I'll go with whom I please!" Grace fired back.

"Well, you won't go with me anymore!"

"All right!"

Wayne left in a huff, but still he kissed Grace goodnight. She went out with her fiancé that night, but broke off the engagement shortly thereafter. In her heart, Grace Crum had already decided that she didn't care what he did for a living, she wanted to be with Wayne Rollins — a man who wasn't about to share her affections with anyone else.

"He has never given up on a thing that he wants," Grace recalled, years later. "He had the determination of a bulldog. I realized when we were dating that he had the determination."

For two lonely weeks, Wayne didn't come back to see her, and Grace was miserable. And then they began to see each other often — for movies on Saturday nights, church on Sundays, occasional parties at the homes of other young people. They still had their arguments, though.

"If I wanted to break a date, I broke it," said Grace. "Of course, I did with him, too. Then he made me pay for it. He'd break one with me." Wayne, for instance, was upset that Grace visited him only once in the hospital when he had appendicitis. And when he got home, he let her know just how slack he felt she had been.

Grace often smiled, remembering their early courting squabbles. "I think we have been pretty evenly matched," she said.

Gradually, their stormy courtship became more predictable. They began to double-date with Clara Ruth Hunsucker and Herschel Rollins, Wayne's uncle and best friend. The four young people enjoyed listening to the radio, to such romantic songs of their day as "Got a Date with an Angel" and "When the Moon Comes Over the Mountain."

Oscar C. Rollins, Jr., remembered all too well what it was like when his two cousins came home from a double date. "They had an old Model-T, or some open car, and Wayne and Uncle Herschel courted together," he said. "And if I happened to be spending the night out at Aunt Claude's or Grandma's, they would come in as cold as they could be, and put those old cold feet up to my back. I'll tell you it was awful!"

*Opposite page:  
Grace and the day's catch  
(about 1942)*





By the spring of 1931, Wayne had already proposed to Grace. "Well, this was just out of a clear blue sky because I didn't think he was that serious," remembered Grace. "I don't know what we were talking about, but he said, 'I love someone enough to marry them, if they would have me.' Or something to that effect. It was a roundabout proposal. I said I didn't love anyone enough to marry them, and I'd say it scared him! But it was so gradual that I just enjoyed being with him. We just had a good time together. We didn't do anything exciting or go anywhere, but it was just the fact that I started feeling comfortable with him. And after going together for so long, I guess we just more or less took it for granted that one day we would be married."

Wayne was eighteen and Grace was twenty when they decided to get married on Easter Sunday, April 5, 1931. They first told Herschel and Clara Ruth, who were also engaged, and the two couples agreed to have a double wedding. With the blessings of their parents, they went to the Whitfield County courthouse in Dalton on the Friday before the wedding and obtained marriage licenses.

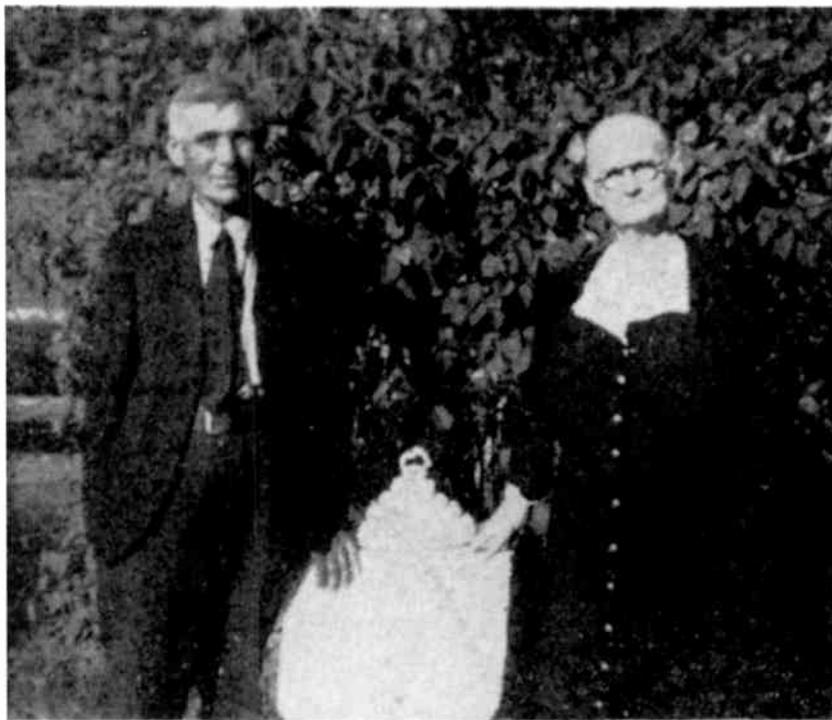
Both Wayne and Herschel wanted the ceremony to be performed by Frank Rollins, Herschel's older brother and Wayne's uncle, who was now a Methodist minister. For the past two years, Uncle Frank had been preaching, and was now serving five small Methodist churches while attending college at Young Harris. He had to walk to the churches from the college, and one was twenty-one miles away.

Wayne Rollins was born on a rainy day, and his wedding day proved to be the same. A steady rain fell that Easter as Wayne slid into Herschel's 1929 Cabriolet Ford coupe, and they went to pick up their brides-to-be. Wayne had on the new blue suit he had worn for his graduation. Grace and Clara Ruth both wore ankle-length beige dresses with tight bodices and full skirts, with matching purses, hats, and shoes. For a change of clothes the day after the wedding, Grace had packed her new three-piece green knit suit into a hatbox, and stowed it in the rumble seat of the little roadster. It was raining too hard to sit in the open seat, so both couples squeezed into the front seat of Herschel's car for the trip to Young Harris, a trip that would take much of the day over mostly dirt roads in mountainous rural north Georgia.

Wayne and Herschel took turns driving. The two couples laughed and talked, never for one moment letting the dreary weather or cramped quarters spoil their day. When a heavy fog made it difficult to see, Herschel put his head out the window to see where they were going. They stopped at Cleveland, Tennessee, for lunch, then drove on to Ducktown and up to Murphy, North Carolina, in order to get through the mountains and down to Blairsville. It was late afternoon before they turned onto the road to Young Harris.

*Opposite page: Wayne Rollins  
seated on cannon and Herschel  
Rollins standing  
(1930)*

## Celebrate Golden Wedding



*Jim and Hassie Crum, Grace's parents, celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary in 1942.*

**Mr. and Mrs. J.A. Crum celebrated their golden wedding anniversary Oct. 4, with a dinner at their homes in Howardsville, Tenn., for fifty-five relatives and friends. Mr. and Mrs. Crum have five children, Abraham Crum, of Chattanooga; Coleman Crum, of Cincinnati; Mrs. Mazie Crum, of Howardsville; Mrs. J.O. Ware, of Ringgold, Ga., and Mrs. Wayne Rollins, of Lakeview, Ga.**

They arrived at Uncle Frank's boarding house in Young Harris a few minutes before seven o'clock. Frank had only minutes earlier returned from preaching at one of his churches, walking back in the rain and getting soaked. The two couples went up to his room, and when Frank opened the door, he was completely surprised. No one had taken time to write him of their plans. "We want you to marry us," Wayne told his uncle.

Frank Rollins was not prepared for this, and at first he thought it was a joke. When they insisted, he shook his head. "Do your mother and daddy know?" he asked Wayne, who said they did. Still Frank was skeptical. Only when he realized that the young people would have someone else perform the ceremony if necessary did he agree to marry them.

The couples stood facing Frank Rollins, who held his Bible and Methodist Discipline. The ceremony was solemn but not overly long, and then Frank prayed for the two couples. There were no wedding rings, but Wayne promised himself that someday Grace would have one. In his records, Frank Rollins entered "farming" as the occupation of both Wayne and Herschel. They each paid him five cents for conducting the ceremony.



*Grace Crum Rollins (about 1939)*

Now feeling strangely different, excited, and giddy, the couples piled back into the roadster and pointed it toward Murphy, North Carolina. It was almost ten o'clock when they arrived and checked into the Murphy Hotel, the only hotel in town. It was not impressive. Wayne and Grace entered their room to find a naked light bulb hanging on a long cord, the switch on the socket holding the bulb. There was a sink in the room, but the bathroom was down the hall. The windows, opening on the mountainside behind the hotel, had no shades. When the newlyweds stepped across the threshold, the floors squeaked under them. Wayne would always remember the naked light bulb and the creaky floor, yet matter-of-factly and without embarrassment.

From the first moment of their married life, O. Wayne Rollins and Amy Grace Crum shared something that meant more than where they lived, how much money they had, or what kind of work they did. And that "something" would be recognized by each and every generation of the Rollins family, a lifetime commitment that decades later would be eloquently described by a granddaughter named Amy.

"I really respect their marriage," said Amy Rollins. "I don't know what secret ingredient they have, but I wish I could figure it out. I think it is that they had so much in common when they started out. I think Nanny had a lot of faith in Granddad. I think that is very important. She always stood behind him. She really took her vows to heart to be with him, in good and bad. I think that he has a lot of respect for her also. So I guess it's that mutual respect and faith in each other. They have definitely taken their marriage vows to heart."

After breakfast at the hotel the day after their wedding, the newlyweds headed back home. Hours later, when the roadster came to the fork in the road at Cohutta and turned toward Tunnel Hill rather than toward her parents' home, it finally dawned on Grace that she was really married. She felt apprehensive as they neared Wayne's home. During their courtship, she had seen Wayne's parents from a distance, but she had never met them! And now, the new bride and groom were going to live with Wayne's family until they could build a house of their own. "I just remember Mrs. Rollins coming to meet us," said Grace. "She hugged me and welcomed me. We always got along beautifully."

Wayne and Grace moved into the north room of his parents' house. Thirteen-year-old J.W. happily gave up the room he had shared with Wayne and slept on a single bed in the kitchen. J.W. would fondly look on Grace as the sister he never had.

A short walk up the road, Herschel and Clara Ruth set up housekeeping at Grandpa Rollins' house until they, too, could save enough money to have a place of their own. And neither Clara Ruth nor Grace would ever forget the first meal they cooked for Herschel and Wayne and Grandpa Rollins.

According to Clara Ruth, Grandma Roxie was away helping Aunt Nellie, and Clara Ruth and Grace had to cook supper. They cooked vegetables and cornbread, but oddly enough, the cornbread didn't brown and it looked uncharacteristically white. Sitting down at the dinner table, Wayne and Herschel began to joke about the meal, and Wayne cracked a joke about the cornbread, saying, "Pass me the white militia." Herschel laughed, but Grandpa Rollins thought the teasing had gone too far.

"I've heard all I want to hear, now. That's enough, boys," he said.

"And I mean, they stopped," said Clara Ruth. And none of the four young people ever forgot how John Rollins defended Grace and Clara Ruth.

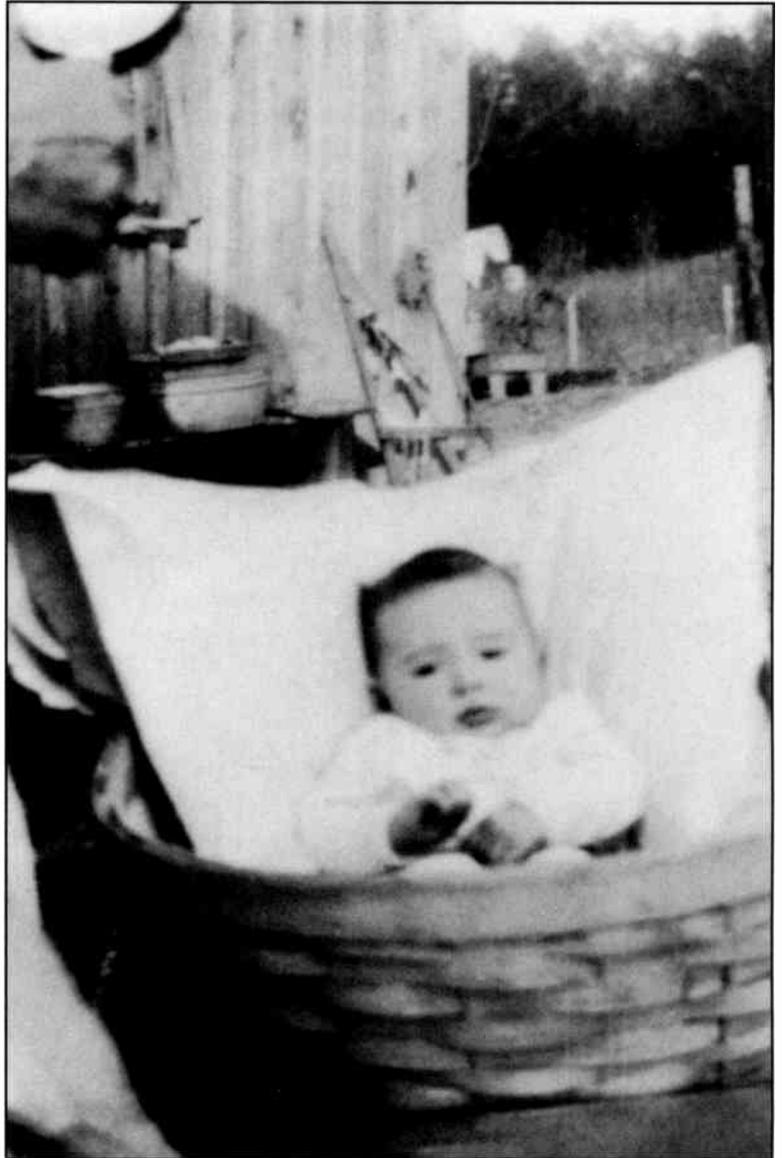
There were, however, not too many things to joke about in 1931, as the Great Depression worsened and nine million Americans were suddenly out of work. More than two thousand banks had failed, and farming began to reel from an unprecedented downward spiral in agricultural prices. Average annual farm net income sank to about \$341 in 1931, down from \$847 in 1929. Though Wayne planted crops of cotton, corn, beans, and potatoes, he had to find other ways of earning income. Again, he turned to working on the county roads, shoveling chert for a dollar a day. He and J. W. again peddled milk, butter, eggs, and produce. For meat the next winter, Wayne wanted to buy a Poland China pig for three dollars from a neighbor of Grace's family. The families had lived next to each other for years.

"I'd like to take this pig, but I don't have the money and won't have it for two weeks," Wayne told the man.

"No. I couldn't sell it to you," was the terse reply.

Wayne was shocked. This was the first time something like that had ever happened to him, but it wouldn't be the last.

For her part, Grace hooked rugs at home, eventually taking in enough money to pay off nearly \$230 in bills for Wayne's appendectomy. One of the



*Richard Randall Rollins  
(1931)*

added joys of her marriage was her immediate and warm acceptance by Claudia Rollins. They enjoyed working together, and Grace made sure that she never shirked her responsibilities in the household. It would not be long before Grace and Wayne were expecting their first baby. Taking time when she could from hooking rugs, Grace started sewing baby clothes. She and Wayne talked about names for their baby — a child whose name would not be chosen like his daddy's, from pieces of paper drawn out of a hat.

When Grace went into labor around midnight, Wayne was at her side, giving ether on the instructions of their physician. Grace was afraid she was taking too much ether. Fearful it would stop the labor, she never went to sleep. Around five o'clock that morning, on November 5, 1931, the baby was born. The doctor held the infant up by the feet, and Grace saw the baby as soon as it was born. She knew it was a boy. In minutes, bundled in a blanket, the little boy was handed to Grace.

The baby had a mop of dark hair down his neck, and when Grace could get out of bed, she took a pair of manicure scissors and cut his hair. He was a beautiful baby, said Grace. "He really was pretty."

They named him Richard Randall. The first name was Wayne's choice, the name of an uncle. Grace remembers that Claudia came up with the name Randall. And though Wayne thought he should be called Richard, he was soon known as Randall.

Like his father before him, the newborn baby cried more than normal and didn't want to eat. Claudia Rollins would take the child and wrap him tightly in a blanket, then hold him close. He would stop crying and go to sleep. Claudia and Henry happily cared for their first grandchild so that Grace could keep up her rug-making, and Wayne spent long days working in the fields or on the county roads. And even in those days of the depression, Wayne and Grace managed to begin saving for their own place. Within two years of their marriage, they had saved four hundred dollars. They used the money to buy forty acres of land from Grandpa Rollins, land that adjoined Henry Rollins' farm. And on this land they began to build their first home.

The lumber for the house came from timber cut off the Rollins place, dried in a makeshift kiln that Grandpa Rollins had first constructed for building his own house. Grandpa Rollins helped Wayne build the new house, using a framing square and showing his grandson how to cut rafters and do other carpentry jobs. Money that Grace earned from rug-making supplied the necessary funds to pay for roofing, doors, nails, and other materials that had to be purchased. Though the house was only twelve by twenty-four feet, with two rooms, it took about a year to complete the structure because Wayne could work on it only during his spare time. And though he and Grace wanted a fireplace,

AMY GRACE CRUM ROLLINS

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*Wayne Rollins holds Richard Randall, born November 5, 1931.*

they didn't have enough money to build one, and they spent their first winter warming by the cookstove.

When they moved in, Wayne got his second lesson in buying on credit — or lack of credit. His young family needed a dining table and chairs, and Wayne went to Chattanooga, where he had seen a nice-looking set at Hatfield and Keefe, a used-furniture store on Main Street. The table had a drop leaf and was painted a bright blue, trimmed in cream with four matching chairs. The price was fifteen dollars, and Wayne asked if he could buy the table and chairs on credit.

"Just give us three references of where you've bought things," the salesman replied.

"Well, I don't have any."

Sorry, the salesman replied, but without references there would be no credit.

All right, Wayne decided, if that's the way it works, then I'll figure a way to build my credit.

In the meantime, Wayne still needed a table and some chairs. He bought a wide piece of enameled metal (cut originally for the side of a refrigerator but damaged in some way) and made four wooden legs to go with it. And so, the Rollins family had a new table. Two used chairs completed their first dinette set until Wayne and Grace saved enough to buy the kitchen set from Hatfield and Keefe.

They scrimped until they could hire a brick mason from Chattanooga to build their cherished fireplace. Wayne insisted on the more expensive face brick, and the work had to be done properly for the kind of fireplace Wayne and Grace wanted, one that people would admire and that drew correctly so there would be no smoke in the house. The bill for the fireplace and

chimney totaled \$150, as much as the entire house had cost, but Wayne and Grace never regretted spending the money.

Near the house Wayne had dug a well, but it wasn't deep enough, and it went dry that first summer. Oscar Rollins remembered what happened next. "Tom Nicodemus arrived to dig the well deeper, and Grandpa and I drew the dirt out of the well while Tom dug it," said Oscar. "I didn't know I was going to get any pay, but at the end of the week when we finished, Wayne put my money in my shirt pocket and took a safety pin and pinned it so I wouldn't lose it when I went home that weekend to be with my mother."

The story of the building of their first house speaks volumes about the entire Rollins family. As always, they worked hard. No work was beneath them,



*Wayne out for a walk  
with his son Randall  
(1932)*



*Grace Rollins (1938)*

and yet there was a standard of excellence that Wayne and Grace would never compromise. If they were going to build a chimney, they would build the best, even if they had to wait longer to get it. And an honest day's work deserved payment, Wayne knew, even in the depths of the depression.

By the time Wayne and Grace and little Randall finally moved into their own two-room house, this new Rollins household was firmly entrenched in the values of their ancestors — hard work, integrity, commitment, and, of course, knowing how to save. No less a figure than Grandma Nance was tapping on Wayne's shoulder that day when he pinned Oscar's money into his shirt pocket. The woman who taught her grandson to save by pinning his hard-earned money into a pocket sewn to her petticoat was forever instilled in Wayne's memory, and his heart.

It wasn't long before Wayne would take his grandmother's principles of organization and planning and put them to work outside of the Smith Chapel community. As he struggled to earn a living for his new family, Wayne Rollins quickly realized just how valuable the lesson of his grandmother's eight water buckets would become.

# CHAPTER IV

*People never accomplish much  
with negative thinking,  
and if they do  
accomplish anything,  
it's an accident.*

— *O. Wayne Rollins*



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WORKING  
FOR OTHERS

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*John, Henry, and Wayne  
(before 1945)*

# F

rom the earliest time he could remember, Randall Rollins had one overwhelming impression of his parents.

“I don’t remember Mother and Dad ever sitting down,” said their first-born son. “They worked. They came home at night, they milked, they cooked supper, they cut wood, they fixed the roof, they did something. My mother could work side by side with Dad, doing anything. Mother is very, very good at doing things. She worked and she saved and she canned and she cooked and she sewed and she did everything. And my dad knew how to do everything, whether it was building a house or working on a car or working on a wagon or whatever.”

“I feel that Mother and Dad could make a living on a rock,” Randall often said, recalling his parents’ struggles to make a living during the 1930s. “I believe you could take every nickel away from them, and they would be fine. Between the two of them, they just had it all together. It’s a rare combination.”

Wayne and Grace Rollins were, indeed, a rare combination. Here was a couple who seemed to thrive and prosper under the most adverse economic conditions. A couple who just worked even harder if the well went dry or the crops failed. A couple who didn’t see themselves as poor, and therefore never felt crippled by poverty. A couple who throughout their lives felt the shared burden of not having enough education, but nonetheless believed in their ability to be better than average through sheer hard work and determination.

“People never accomplish much with negative thinking. If they do, it’s an accident,” Wayne Rollins would explain, simply. “But if you work hard and you are better than average, you will have guaranteed success. And how much better you are than the average person is how much more successful you will be than the average person.”

## WORKING FOR OTHERS

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With this philosophy in mind, Wayne and J. W. never hesitated to work if they could find jobs. And during the depression, neither of the Rollins brothers was very particular about the work or the pay.

Despite the fact that the job was a long way from home and paid little, Wayne felt lucky in 1933 when he found work packing stove parts into shipping crates at the Mascot Stove Works in Chattanooga. Every Sunday night, he walked the 5.7 miles to the Stone Church near Ringgold, caught a bus to Chattanooga, boarded with his brother-in-law, Maze Crum, put in six days of work, caught the bus back to Stone Church on Saturday night, and walked the nearly six miles back home. The pay for six days' work was ten dollars. Out of that, Wayne paid a dollar for the round-trip bus fare and four dollars for room and board — half of his weekly earnings. But Wayne kept up the pace for six months until the company went bankrupt and closed. After that, the young father and husband continued to farm, and for a while he returned to shoveling chert on the country roads to support his family.

Life was no easier for J. W. When he graduated from Cohutta High, J. W. found work as a jobber, taking cloth and thread to women who made tufted bedspreads in their homes, the start of the area's tufted bedspread industry. J. W. had a partner, and they were paid by the bedspread. This partnership would be short-lived, as they soon went broke and their car was repossessed. J. W. took a job with a construction crew at a woolen mill. "Every morning they'd put six of us in a ditch and fire the two that dug the least that day," recalled J. W.

In 1934, on the recommendation of his Uncle Fred Rollins, Wayne got a job at Standard Coosa Thatcher, the textile plant where both Uncle Fred and Aunt Mary worked, in Rossville, Georgia, in the south suburbs of Chattanooga.

Fred Rollins was highly respected at the company because of his devotion to his job and his loyalty to his employer. Although he was supposed to report for work at seven in the morning, Fred Rollins routinely came in at six and took yarn to another division so the workers there would have materials when they arrived at seven. Nobody said he had to do that, but it was typical of Uncle Fred to go the extra mile on all his jobs. Wayne vowed to follow his uncle's example, and he developed a philosophy that became his motto while working for others: "Make your boss's job easier."

At Standard Coosa Thatcher, Wayne was assigned to operate a twister, a machine that could spin single strands of yarn into three plies. Eight hungry twisting machines ate yarn at a tremendous rate, while the roar of the machinery filled the high ceilings of the mill. After the yarn was twisted and spun onto spools or bobbins, it was shipped to other mills for use in sewing. The Rossville plant produced all kinds of knitting yarns and sewing threads, and Wayne worked six twelve-hour shifts per week.

The hours were long, and the labor tiresome and somewhat monotonous, but Wayne didn't complain. When he started to feel tired at the end of his

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graveyard shift, all he had to do was look out the second-floor window of the big mill. Every morning, just at daybreak, Wayne could see unemployed men gathering to stand in line, forming two rows that flanked each side of the driveway leading into the plant's main entrance. From the window, Wayne could see the plant superintendent, Henry Egar, park his car and begin his daily walk past the lines of men. "Anything today? Any work?" the men called out as the superintendent kept on walking, shaking his head no.

Wayne never forgot the look on the men's faces as they stood outside the mill, practically begging for work. The scene so epitomized the despair of the depression that Wayne was determined to perform any task, work whatever hours, and even do someone else's work if that's what it took to keep his job. Soon, Wayne found himself doing just that.

An older man named Sam worked with Wayne, and the two of them were supposed to keep the eight twisters operating constantly. While Wayne scrupulously carried out his duties, Sam would work for only about thirty minutes after arriving at the mill. Then he slid into a big box of soft yarn and quickly went to sleep. Not until the next morning, about an hour before the day shift came on duty, did Sam arise from his bed of yarn, wash his face, and complete his shift.

"Sam, wake up!" Wayne would plead as one of the machines went down or too many bobbins filled with yarn or thread at the same time.

"I'm not asleep," Sam would answer. "Just resting my eyes." He would go right back to sleep, leaving Wayne to do the work of both men and make sure that the production quota was filled.

Wayne never reported Sam to the boss. He kept silent. After all, it was his first job at the mill, and he didn't know what to expect. He didn't know if Sam enjoyed some special status with the boss. And he felt that it wasn't his responsibility to tattle on a fellow employee. "I know I'm supposed to work," Wayne told himself. "The fact that he's not working, that'll have to be up to his boss to come by and find out."

After several months of faithfully doing both jobs, Wayne was summoned to the supervisor's office for some stunning news. "We're going to have to lay you off," the supervisor said, offering some explanation about lack of orders and the depression. Sam, however, was kept on.

Deeply disappointed, Wayne left the plant wondering, "Is this the way the world runs?" He picked up his things from the home of his brother-in-law, boarded the bus to Ringgold, and then made the long walk back home. At first, he was angry and hurt, discouraged that his hard work had saved Sam's job but not his own. But after two weeks, he got a call from Standard Coosa Thatcher. They had let Sam go, and they wanted Wayne back on the job. "That's how long it took for them to find out who was running the twisters," he told Grace.

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It wasn't long before Wayne's conscientious performance on the job brought him a promotion to the dye house, where he matched shades of colors for threads and yarns so precisely that no one could distinguish the thread from the material. Wayne demonstrated an exceptional ability to match colors perfectly and to test them for fastness against water, light, or soap. And from the outset, Wayne decided to learn how to run all the dyeing machines, unlike most workers, who wanted to stick with one particular machine. During the lunch hour, Wayne voluntarily stood in for all the other workers so that he could learn the different equipment. Only after all his coworkers had had their breaks did he eat his sandwich. His innate curiosity, as well as his determination to keep his job, drove him to learn everything he could. What's more, he often washed windows or did whatever he could think of to make the boss look good. With so many people unemployed, Wayne realized he had to make himself indispensable, even when orders were slack.

As fewer orders came in, more people were laid off. Wayne Rollins was not one of them. At one point, Wayne was the only employee left in the dye house, the only man who could run all the machines for the small number of orders that still trickled in. His ingenuity and hard work had paid off; Wayne managed to keep a job in the depths of the depression, an achievement that always made him feel proud. Wayne was equally proud that he and Grace always managed to save some money from his salary and her rug-making. Every week, they saved a few dollars, even though half of his ten dollars a week in earnings went to pay work-related expenses. Whenever possible, Wayne and Grace were clever enough to try and work a trade instead of paying cash for something they wanted. "When I was coming up as a kid," Randall recalled, "my mother traded a hen and her chicks to someone she worked with to get me my first dog."



*Richard Randall Rollins  
(about 1936)*



*Ona Mae Sloan Hall  
(about 1935)*



*Mary Lou Nance Rollins,  
Claudia's sister, married  
Henry's brother, Walter  
Fredrick Rollins.*

During those early days at Standard Coosa Thatcher, Wayne and a friend would sometimes talk of financial security, a vague and distant dream. "If somebody would come along and offer you a lifetime contract, to pay you so much a year for life, would you agree to that?" Wayne once asked.

"Yeah," his friend replied. "But I don't know what it would take. What would it take for you?"

"Ten thousand dollars a year, and I would sign up," said Wayne Rollins, who would one day look back on this sum and marvel.

Despite his long work hours, Wayne found time for sports. He often listened to the fights on the radio at the little country store near his home, even when the static was so bad it nearly drowned out the ringside announcer. Sometimes he and his dad went to local baseball games. Since his early teens, he had dreamed of going to the World Series. He followed the national games faithfully on the radio.

In the fall of 1935, Grace was pregnant again and became very sick. In August, seventeen-year-old Ona Mae Sloan, Wayne's cousin, came to cook and help Grace with the chores. Because Wayne and Grace's well went dry that summer, Ona Mae had to walk to his parents' house to get water. Sometimes she and Claudia would wash clothes together, and she would sample Claudia's lemon cheese cake, one of her favorite Rollins desserts.

Five weeks after Ona Mae came to stay, Grace lost the baby, and the little house at Smith Chapel was filled with sadness. For Grace, this was a deep and private trauma not to be shared with others. That was her nature, her way of healing. As soon as she recovered, she returned to her chores.

In 1936, Aunt Mary Rollins found Grace a job in an inspection and packing room at Standard Coosa Thatcher. By now, Wayne had been promoted again and was in charge of the entire dye-processing operation, drawing the night shift regularly after his promotion. He and Grace often had to work different shifts, playing havoc with their family life. When the two of them got home, there were still chores to do: Wayne fed the livestock, and Grace milked the cow (something she still hated to do) and then fixed supper if her mother-in-law had not already prepared it, which she often did. In the morning, Grace again milked the cow while Wayne cooked breakfast, just as he had done while growing up. On weekends they visited both sets of parents to take care of their laundry and other needs. They had little time with five-year-old Randall, though he felt no lack of attention, for Randall had the best playmates a boy could imagine — his grandparents, particularly his granddaddy.

Henry Rollins' own sickness was now more debilitating, and he spent his days lying down or sitting on the porch swing with Randall, the apple of his grandfather's eye.

"Aunt Claude and Uncle Henry just had one grandchild for a long time, and that was Randall," said Oscar Rollins. "Randall was with them all the time."

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And I believe Randall loved his grandmother as much as he did his own mother, they were so close. And you could just tell that Randall adored his grandfather and thought that he just hung the moon. Uncle Henry was sick, he had a heart condition, so he could spend a lot of time with Randall. And Uncle Henry would tell Randall all kinds of stories and make up stories to tell him. They all had vivid imaginations. Wayne told colorful stories, and oh, Lord, but Randall does, too.”

Even as an adult, Randall Rollins’ face would soften, thinking about those wonderful days with his granddaddy, sitting on the porch of the old homeplace, and taking a nap after lunch whenever his grandfather would softly sing “Put My Little Shoes Away.”

“He was a whale of a man, and he thought I was wonderful. He spent all day, every day with me. As a boy, you couldn’t ask for more than a granddaddy who taught you to whittle, shoot, trap rabbits, ride a horse, and told you stories. He spent all his time with me and so did my grandmother. And when Uncle John was there, he played with me, too.”

“You know, I really had three fathers — Dad, my grandfather, and Uncle John,” Randall once said, “and any *one* of them would have been plenty!”

With their son in such loving hands, Wayne and Grace continued to work hard, and long days were of little consequence. In addition to working for Standard Coosa Thatcher, at home they raised cotton, corn, beans, and potatoes on the land near Smith Chapel.

When it came to farming, Henry Rollins would often tease his younger son. Unlike the steady, predictable Wayne, who enjoyed the challenge of working the land, J. W. had few kind words for farming and escaped whenever he could. Though he didn’t enjoy farming like his brother, no work was beneath the determined nineteen-year-old J. W. Rollins.

When his construction job at the Peerless Woolen Mill ran out, John found work washing bottles at a milk plant south of Rossville and was eventually



*John W. Rollins, Sr.  
(about 1937)*

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promoted to assistant to the manager of the plant. Through a series of events, he then began working for Combustion Engineering in Chattanooga, while taking evening classes in accounting and penmanship. He sometimes endured humiliating treatment from those around him — a landlady who made him sleep in a chicken house, another who refused to give him as much to eat as her son — but the depression left no permanent scars on J.W. or Wayne. With everyone around them in the same circumstances, they always said they did not feel poor. Indeed, compared to the seven million unemployed Americans on relief rolls in 1937, Wayne and his brother felt fortunate to have work, food, and loving families.

And they still dreamed of something better, recalling time and again the voice of their mother as she read them the stories by Horatio Alger — “Only an Irish Boy,” “From Farm Boy to Senator,” “From Canal Boy to President” — stories about poor boys who combined hard work, honesty, and integrity to turn their lives around. Those stories, said Wayne, “had a lot of effect on both our lives, because we both went out to do something away from where we were.”

In the fall of 1937, two months before his sixth birthday, Randall started the first grade at Catoosa County Consolidated School. Every day, his parents dropped him off to catch the bus in front of his Granddad Henry and Grandmother Claudia’s house, and they returned in the evening in their 1934 two-door Ford to pick him up and go home.

About the time Randall entered school, his great-grandpa John Rollins suffered a heart attack that left him bedridden. No one would ever know how much his health had been impaired by the Great Depression, but it had a profound effect on his attitude. For years he had been unable to pay even the interest on the Federal Land Bank loan on his farm, and he had worried himself sick over it. The interest on his four-hundred-dollar loan amounted to only sixteen dollars, but after finally paying off the note, John Frank Rollins declared, “I’ll never go back in debt. Never. I’m never going to live through this again.”

Grandpa Rollins stuck to that vow. When one of his daughters wanted to build a house, she asked him to cosign a note for a bank loan. “We’ll build our house up here,” she said. “And we’ll be here to take care of you and Mother.”

As usual, John Rollins thought about the matter for a long time before he spoke. Then he said, “No. I’ll tell you how strong I feel. I’m not going back in debt anymore. I’ll live in a hollow log if something happens to this house here. I’d live in a hollow log before I’d borrow any money for anything.”



*Grandpa John Frank Rollins  
(about 1932)*

On October 10, 1937, another heart attack took the life of this man whom Wayne Rollins respected and adored. A pillar of honesty and integrity, Grandpa Rollins had brought laughter and enjoyment to those around him, particularly to the young people who gathered around him wherever he went. He was seventy-five when he died.

On the day of his funeral, the little Smith Chapel church was filled with flowers and mourners. Wayne sat on a church pew, memories of his grandfather wrapped around him like a warm, familiar blanket — memories of the bootlegger returning from the chain gang, the court bailiff coming to arrest Grandpa over a dispute about a cow, the supper when Grandpa Rollins had silenced all teasing of Grace and Clara Ruth's cooking. And as Wayne often said of his grandfather, "They built the church on his land, and I don't guess the doors were ever open in his lifetime that he wasn't there."

Everyone sitting in the church that day felt the silence, the absence of John Rollins' strong melodious voice, a voice that always led the congregation in song. Ida Carpenter, Wayne's cousin, always remembered the echoing sound of John Rollins and her father singing the chorus of one particular hymn, "In That Beautiful Land Where the Angels Stand." Said Ida: "Uncle John would come out on the lead and Daddy would come in on bass, one after the other. Their voices sounded like this: 'We shall meet,' 'Shall meet . . .'"

When the service was over, the granddaughters of John Frank Rollins served as flower girls to carry the many wreaths to the graveside, and his grandsons were pallbearers. Roxie Rollins was now a widow after forty-nine years of marriage, and her great-grandson asked the question that had no good answer.

"Why did he die?" Randall asked his father.

"Well, he was just old, and his heart gave out on him," Wayne tried to explain.

Randall thought about it. Then he spoke solemnly. "I don't see why the Lord doesn't make people old and let them get younger all the time," the six-year-old said. His father marveled at the ingenuity of his son's idea and smiled a wistful smile as he thought of the lessons of life the boy must learn for himself.

Less than a year later, on July 21, 1938, Emma Scott Nance died, two weeks before her seventy-fifth birthday. Her death was not unexpected, but for Wayne the loss of his grandmother brought a feeling of shock. From Grandma Nance, he had seen and absorbed values and principles that would forever be part of him and his future business success. "She's the most unforgettable character I ever knew," he said. "She had the greatest follow-through I ever saw. She didn't only tell you what to do, but she always followed it through to see if you did it."

Though he was still years away from putting his grandmother's principles to work professionally, Wayne's home already reflected many of the ideals he had seen in Grandma Nance. He and Grace were frugal, never wasting money or resources. They were strict disciplinarians, but loving. And by the time Randall was eight, his parents were working hard to save for a new house, a dream that was constantly

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clouded by the growing realization that America was edging closer to war.

Their new house, Wayne and Grace agreed, would put them closer to the Standard Coosa Thatcher plant at Rossville. In late 1939, Wayne found several nice lots for sale in the Lakeview community on the side of Missionary Ridge in the southern suburbs of Chattanooga; in December 1939, Wayne bought two of the lots for two hundred dollars apiece, one for a homesite and the other for a garden. And in the summer of 1940, they started building a house the lot at Number 3 Lakeview Drive, having secured a \$1,272 construction loan from the Bank of Ringgold.

The house was large, with four bedrooms, a living room, dining room, kitchen, and full basement. Facing south, the house had an entrance and a side porch on the east. The foundation was a pink-tinted granite, laid by an expert stonemason from Ringgold. The outside was choice eight-inch weatherboarding Wayne bought in Ranger, Georgia, and trucked to the building site. "The weatherboarding doesn't have a knot in it," Wayne proudly told Grace.

Weeks before the house was finished, Wayne went to the Sears store in Chattanooga and bought a coal-fired furnace, tile for the bathroom, blinds for the windows, and other materials that totaled almost fifteen hundred dollars. When Sears officials sent Wayne a bill to try to collect the money before



*Randall playing at his family's new home in Lakeview, about 1940*

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completing the work, Wayne was furious. He confronted the Sears manager face-to-face one Saturday in late October, and told him he wasn't going to pay until the work was completed. And Wayne finally got results. On Monday morning, a dozen Sears vehicles pulled up to Wayne's house, and a score of workmen installed the furnace, the tile, and the blinds, and finished up the house. The total cost of the house when completed was \$4,800.

Grace enjoyed their home, which offered space and convenience and an attractive neighborhood, tangible evidence of what they had achieved and how far they had come from the little farm and that first two-room house on Dalton-Ooltewah Road. The extra lot provided plenty of room for a garden — a garden so large that they still had enough produce to sell to the store.

Another important advantage of the new home was its proximity to the Lakeview School, where Randall would enroll in the fourth grade. Randall could walk to school, and he was now big enough to handle his share of the household chores.

"We always made our children work for their money," said Grace. "They didn't just get money. That was Wayne's theory. He wanted them to learn how to work. I have really been proud of that because I have seen so many children

that are unappreciative and expect everything to be given to them. Randall started mowing the yard when he was old enough. We had a coal furnace, and he would carry out cinders."

Randall had a paper route in Lakeview, a job that caught the attention of a neighborhood bully. The boy was older than Randall and had learned how to fight from his father, a prizefighter. The bully would search Randall out when he got paid for his paper route and help him spend his earnings. When the money was gone, the bully would pick a fight with Randall.

When Wayne noticed how dirty Randall was, he asked him what had happened, and Randall told his father. Wayne, like his Grandpa Rollins always did, thought the matter over before responding, though he was angered by what had happened.

"I'll tell you what you do," he instructed his son. "The next time you go with that boy, get you two rocks about the size of your fist — because you may miss him with the first one. When he starts that fighting, you try your best to hit him right between the eyes with that rock."

The next week Randall reported back to his father. "Daddy," he said, "I hit him with the first one."

"What did he do?"



*Mack and Bessie Nance  
(about 1935)*

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“He just took off home,” replied Randall. He had no more problems with the bully.

At that time, Wayne was on the third shift at the dye house, and he usually took care of the household chores during the day, doing the laundry and fixing dinner for Grace, who worked the first or second shift. The appearance of their home and property was important to both Wayne and Grace. In fact, Randall never forgot how his mother made sure her yard was kept clean of rotten apples. A neighbor, known to the Rollins family as an old grouch, had an apple tree in his yard, which was overgrown and unattractive. By contrast, the Rollins yard was neatly mowed and well kept. Time after time, the old grouch would pick up fallen apples from under his tree and throw them over into his neighbor’s yard. One day, the ever-feisty Grace Crum Rollins had had enough. She walked into her backyard, picked up some apples, and started throwing them back at the neighbor until he ran inside his house!

By now, Wayne felt that his ailing father, Henry, needed to be closer to doctors than he was in Smith Chapel. So Wayne rented a place for his parents in Cohutta. With medical care closer, Claudia finally had help in giving Henry the morphine for pain, a chore she had taught herself to do by practicing with an orange. And they were closer to relatives in Cohutta: Mack Nance, Claudia’s brother; his wife Bessie, who was Henry’s sister; and Claudia’s sister, Lillie Cooper.

With family close by, Wayne and Grace often entertained their relatives and enjoyed their company. So it wasn’t unusual on Sunday, December 7, 1941, that Wayne and Grace had invited Uncle Marvin, Aunt Laura Nance, and their daughter Willena over for a midday meal. After the meal, the group went to the living room and turned on the Silvertone table model radio. Suddenly, a news bulletin crackled over the radio, stunning the listeners into silence. Japanese warplanes had bombed Pearl Harbor, killing more than two thousand Americans and destroying the Pacific Fleet and numerous aircraft in a sneak attack that had come without a declaration of war.

Thunderstruck, betrayed — Wayne never forgot how he felt on that otherwise quiet Sunday afternoon. Like many other Americans, he and his family had not imagined any serious problems with the Japanese, whose ambassador had been in Washington talking peace while the bombers were on their way. Now America was at war with Japan. A few days later Germany and Italy declared war on the United States. Shortly before Christmas, President Roosevelt signed a new Selective Service Act requiring all men eighteen to sixty-four years of age to register, with the draft age set at twenty to forty-four.



*Lillie Dale Nance Cooper  
(about 1923)*

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As the nation mobilized with factories converting to wartime production, Wayne found another job opportunity. It was time, he felt, to leave Standard Coosa Thatcher. For one thing, despite several years on the night shift, he could never sleep soundly in the daytime. It not only made him feel terrible, he was admittedly hard to get along with. "I just wanted to go out and sit down by myself and just be alone," was how he once described it.

Another reason for leaving the job was his boss, a tough man whose approach to all problems was, "If you don't like it, punch out!" Wayne got along on the theory that the best thing he could do was to make life easier for his boss. So at eleven o'clock every payday, Wayne took the boss's check home to his wife. He also drove the man's car to town for servicing when necessary. When he tried to imagine his future at the textile plant, Wayne was not encouraged. His boss had a very serious heart condition, and Wayne felt "like an undertaker just waiting for the man to die" in order to get a promotion or move to another shift. "I don't like this situation," he told Grace.

Wayne's laboratory experience at Standard Coosa Thatcher opened the door at the Hercules Powder Company, which planned to set up an explosives plant in Chattanooga to supply ammunition for the Allies. Here Wayne landed a new job running a TNT operation at three hundred dollars a month — a fifty-dollar raise over his old salary.

Wayne was in a deferred category as husband and father, although his job in a vital defense industry alone would have exempted him from military service. In addition, he had his parents as dependents. Still, Wayne had to go to Fort Benning, Georgia, for a physical examination and then appear before his draft board in Ringgold before his exempt status was granted.

Wayne and a half dozen other area recruits for the new Hercules plant were sent to a Du Pont plant at Kankakee, Illinois, to learn how to produce TNT and start up the TNT lines for Hercules at Chattanooga. At Kankakee, Wayne worked a day shift and attended classes at night. Every night after class, he returned to the lab to check out the things he had learned that day. Because of his curiosity and a desire to know things for certain, Wayne did not accept everything he was told at face value. He particularly had questions when one piece of equipment, a fortifier, kept fuming, which it was not supposed to do.

In class, the instructor said the reason for the fuming was the water content of the acid when it reached a low level in the tank. Wayne wasn't sure about that, so he later took three samples from the fortifier: one when the tank was full, another at the half-full mark, and the third when the tank was almost empty. He tested the samples. At the next class, he was ready for the instructor.

There were forty people in the class. When the instructor again explained why the fuming occurred, Wayne spoke up. "You might be interested in knowing that I took those samples, and there's not any difference in the content



of the water in the last, middle, or the first," he said. The instructor said nothing. But the next day Wayne was transferred to the graveyard shift at the plant, making it impossible for him to attend any more of the classes.

The lack of further instruction didn't hurt Wayne; though he was only about one-third through the training course, he had already learned enough on his own to understand the TNT process thoroughly, drawing flow charts of the entire manufacturing operation. But from his classroom experience, he had learned something important about getting along with people. The first thing he learned, said Wayne, "was that you don't state something as a fact and get out on a limb when you don't know for sure, which is what the instructor did. The second thing I learned was, if you have something to say in a situation like that, wait, and get the man off to himself, then give him the analysis like you were helping him rather than trying to show him up."

Back in Chattanooga, Wayne and his group began setting up the Volunteer Ordnance Works, as the new Hercules complex was known, on twenty-four thousand acres along the Tennessee River at Chickamauga Lake. Each of the

*Left to right: Grady Gant, Mack Gross, R. King Stone, O. Wayne Rollins, and Joe Hixon (1945)*

production lines constituted an individual plant, a collection of wooden buildings situated far enough away from the next line to ensure that an accidental explosion would be confined to the plant where it occurred. Surrounding each line of buildings were huge barricades made of foot-thick timbers and filled with tons of earth to contain any explosion.

Starting as a line foreman, Wayne had charge of one of the plants that turned out TNT. The stuff looked just like soap flakes when it poured into twenty-five-pound boxes — boxes that were stored under huge mounds of earth, or magazines, to be loaded on freight cars bound for shell-loading facilities and eventually Allied guns and bombs.

TNT, which stood for trinitrotoluene, was an extremely powerful explosive, composed of three nitrates as opposed to the two found in dynamite. To demonstrate how potent the explosive was, Wayne would take new employees outside the plant and have them place a pound of TNT dust in a bag, then set it inside a large outdoor toilet left by the construction company.

When the TNT was set off, the three-hole toilet disintegrated. Nothing but dust was left, and the new workers got the message: Be careful, and follow the rules when working around TNT. Everyone had to be very, very safety-conscious.

“You can’t afford to make a mistake opening the valves on the line,” Wayne would tell his men. He warned them of the two ways an explosion could occur: either by opening two valves and mixing two flammable ingredients in error or by allowing the temperature of the TNT mixture to rise too high. To prevent any inadvertent mixture of ingredients, a worker could remove the handle on a valve only when it was closed, and there was only one handle for all the valves. It seemed impossible for anyone to mix the wrong ingredients together.

But someone did the impossible, on Wayne’s line. One of the operators, for reasons never known, went to another line — about one-quarter mile away — and took a valve handle, brought it back to his line and ran the two explosive ingredients together. The stuff detonated in a booming explosion that shook the building. The man who mixed the chemicals survived, but one of the other workers died from burns received in the explosion.

Fire was not the only hazard of working with TNT. The process involved the use of an extremely toxic sulfuric acid, and breathing fumes from that chemical could cause blisters inside the lungs, in effect drowning the victim with water that formed in the blisters. Several workers died of such acid poisoning during Wayne’s four years at the Volunteer Ordnance Works.

The inherent dangers in his daily work made Wayne more determined than ever to maintain safety and keep the premises clean while still turning out the highest quality and the largest quantity of TNT of any plant. The old-timers scoffed at Wayne’s notion of keeping the plant spotless while increasing

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production. But Wayne disagreed. He knew pride was a motivator, and he soon had his men shining the lead floors with steel wool and polishing the brass valves and risers. Everything in his building was kept freshly painted, and stringent safety measures were imposed. There could be no soft drink bottles out anywhere, no hose unwound, no ladder standing up. As they worked, Wayne trusted that his workers would be motivated by pride in how their plant looked, as well as by how much it produced.

After all, hadn't his father taught him to sweep the front yard every day and brush every horse before taking it out to the field? Hadn't his mother insisted on looking her best, even when cooking the early morning breakfast? Wayne could expect no less of others than he was taught to expect of himself. And before long, Wayne's instincts proved overwhelmingly correct. All the flags flew on his line at the same time — Best Housekeeping, Best Safety Record, Best Quality of TNT, and the Highest Output. And he earned the respect not only of his workers but of every employee who came in contact with him.

"In the war years, I worked at TNT, and Wayne was the supervisor there," remembered Madison Nance, Wayne's cousin. "And I carried mail, and when I would come in the plant, the employees would always talk about what a gentleman Mr. Rollins was. I never heard anything negative. And no one knew that I was connected with him."

To achieve the production record, Wayne went to unusual lengths, and his analytical mind found a solution that did not strictly follow regulations. Wayne realized that the biggest problem in trying to increase production was avoiding excessive heat buildup in the TNT flakes. If the material ran hot, it would cake up in the container and have to be sent back for remelting and reprocessing — a step that virtually ruined any effort to increase production.

So Wayne looked around and zeroed in on the flaker machine that cooled the newly composed TNT at the end of the process. After exposure to water for cooling, the TNT flakes fell through the funnel-like flaker into boxes. Somewhere along the way, from the second story to the first story of that flaker chute, Wayne knew the TNT flakes had to be cooled just a bit more. His solution? He removed the back panel from the flaker chute, a step that exposed the hot TNT to just enough cool air to bring the temperature down before the flakes fell into the carton beneath. "Just like pouring coffee out of a cup," was Wayne's simple description.

It was also bending a rule. But if it worked, why not do it? There were too many crazy regulations that hampered instead of helped production. By modifying the equipment, the plant could have increased production, but those in charge wouldn't listen.

Wayne fumed. Faced with the resistant attitude of officials, Wayne kept quiet about how he planned to set a new production record. He had it all worked out in his mind, and he chose a Sunday for the attempt.

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That morning, he rode in on the bus with Big 'Un Howell, a bear of a man who tipped the scales at three hundred pounds plus and stood six-feet-six in his bare feet. Big 'Un came from the Tennessee hills and had been in the moonshine business before taking a job at the Hercules TNT plant. "Just as rough as a cob," Wayne would say of Big 'Un. But he was a good man to have if you wanted to break a record, and Wayne explained his plans on the bus ride to work. Big 'Un grinned with anticipation. "I hope we got some hot powder down there," he said. "We'll break the record today!"

At the plant, Wayne and Big 'Un removed the back cover of the flaker chute, carried boxes of TNT upstairs, and poured it into the chute — working as fast as they could and intent on making a record. Unexpectedly, a company official in charge of monitoring the operation walked into the plant. He was R. King Stone, almost the size of Big 'Un, with a blustery manner, always wanting to know how many boxes had been packed.

"Wayne! What are you doing?" Stone asked as Wayne met him at the door, heading upstairs with another box, with Big 'Un close behind.

"We're going to break a record today, Mr. Stone. Grab a box and come on up!" Wayne kept moving.

Stone dutifully grabbed a box and followed Wayne up the stairs, poured the material into the chute, and repeated this several times, unaware that he was also breaking the rules.

Then even more surprising to Wayne, a government inspector named Sharp came on the scene. Immediately Stone yelled, "Grab a box, Sharp! Come on! We're going to set a record today!"

Just like Stone, Sharp got a box, carried it up, and emptied it into the chute, unaware that he, too, was violating regulations.

Throughout the shift, Wayne kept up the fast pace. He could see it was easily going to break the record, but he couldn't have guessed by how much. At the end of the shift, Wayne's line had turned out 25 percent more TNT than any line had ever produced. He and his crew celebrated with handshakes and smiles when the flag of recognition was flown at their line.

The celebration, however, was not shared by everyone. A group of chemists and analysts, whose opinions were generally derided by the working men, reviewed the record output. Based on the temperature of the water as a cooling factor, the chemists reported that it would have been impossible to flake the number of boxes that Wayne's line had packed that particular day. There was no way the water could have removed that much heat, they correctly concluded.

An investigation was demanded, a hearing was called a few days later, and everyone involved was summoned to the Administration Area. Wayne arrived for the hearing, not knowing what to expect.

The first surprise was the hearing officer. It was R. King Stone, the same man who had helped Wayne break the record on the day in question. He

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listened as the chemists testified it was impossible, given the temperature of the water, to flake as many boxes as Wayne's line had done. They trotted out charts and graphs to prove their conclusions. "Impossible," declared one after the other.

Wayne listened, certain only that he would tell the truth. And after hearing all the testimony from the chemists, Stone called Wayne to the witness chair. While he was making his way to the front, the wheels were turning in Stone's mind. When Wayne sat down, Stone suddenly spoke. "What the hell! I don't see anything in this. Case dismissed! Let's go back to making TNT!" And Stone never said another word to Wayne about it.

Wayne did not stop using his secret method of cooling the TNT. There was no logical reason to do so, no safety risk — only a bureaucratic regulation to be broken. It was Wayne's first encounter with government bureaucracy, and it left him feeling frustrated but determined to work around roadblocks wherever he could.

Wayne's drive kept his production line in the lead at Volunteer Ordnance, and contributed to the record output by the complex. At its peak, with all sixteen lines operating, Volunteer Ordnance had twelve thousand employees, daily churning out tons of TNT.

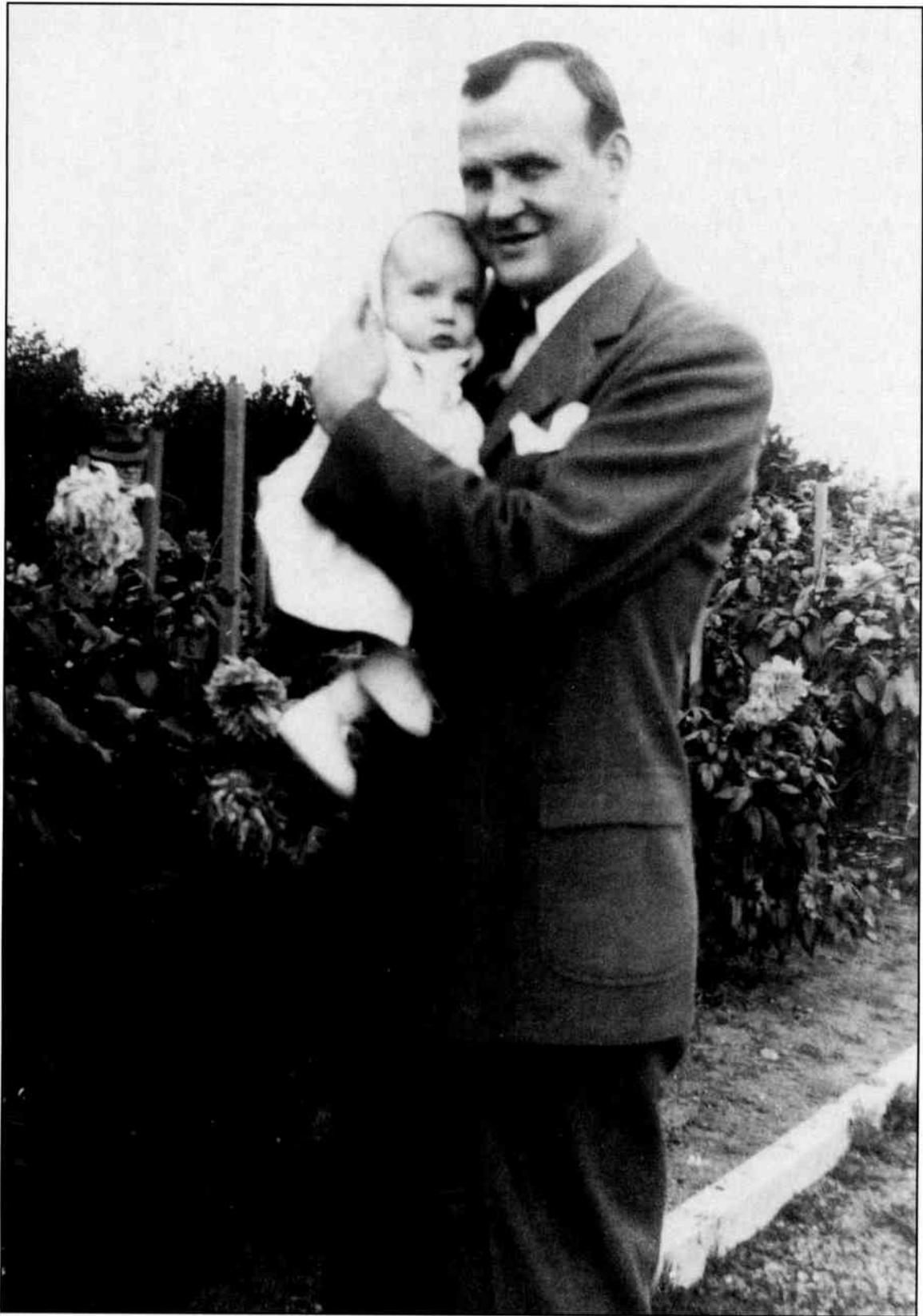
But Wayne walked away with more than production records at Hercules. His success in making TNT gave him the necessary confidence to trust his instincts, and it taught him not to be afraid to try new things. From then on, lack of experience was never a stumbling block to O. Wayne Rollins. If anything, it just made the challenge more exciting.

Wayne advanced steadily at Hercules, rising from line supervisor over one line to senior supervisor in charge of all the TNT lines for one shift. He took advantage of the company-sponsored Dale Carnegie management course in the evenings, and always credited the course with improving his management techniques, which led, perhaps, to another of Wayne's most effective innovations at Hercules: the equal distribution of days and shifts worked by employees. Every worker rotated among three shifts so that everyone worked the same number of Sundays and nights.

"It's not conducive to getting your sleep straightened out," Wayne acknowledged to Grace. "But it sure cuts out the gripes." Wayne pulled so much night-shift duty that some of his coworkers nicknamed him "Hootie," for hoot owl.

The war now dominated people's lives. Sugar rationing started, followed quickly by gasoline and then coffee rationing. Tires were rationed. Everyone had books of rationing coupons that usually had to be stretched over many days. Rent was frozen by the government. Over the radio a popular song was "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition." Grand Ol' Opry devotees couldn't get enough of Roy Acuff singing "There'll Be Smoke on the Water" and "The Great Speckled Bird." At school, the children sang "Let's Remember Pearl Harbor."

WORKING FOR OTHERS



## WORKING FOR OTHERS

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In the summer of 1942, death again touched the Rollins family, but it wasn't related to the war. Roxie Rollins died July 15, 1942, at the age of sixty-nine. Again the family gathered in mourning at the little Smith Chapel church, their minds filled with memories of the tiny, always serious, matriarch who had never been quite the same after the death of her husband, Grandpa John. Said Ona Mae, "When Grandpa Rollins died, it just seemed like part of Grandma was gone."

A month after his grandmother died, Wayne sold his original forty-acre homesite near Smith Chapel for thirteen hundred dollars, nine hundred more than what he'd paid his grandfather ten years earlier. Deducting the value of the house with the expensive chimney, Wayne was left with only a modest profit. But Wayne figured it was time to sell — he didn't need the place and he could make better use of the cash.

Wayne was taking steps to do something different with his life and his resources, and in his new ventures, Wayne could imagine no one other than his brother as his partner.

J. W., now known as John, was married with one son, and he had been on a career fast track. While at Combustion Engineering, he had completed a hundred hours of study in production control through correspondence and night courses. Confident, John had taken twelve Civil Service examinations for an ordnance inspector's job and had been turned down twelve times for lack of a college degree. On the thirteenth exam, he was accepted by the Philadelphia Ordnance District, which on the basis of his practical experience selected him as one of seventeen candidates to train for key positions in the event of war. His first job was supervising inspectors of army ordnance, and by 1941, he was assigned to the Lukens Steel plant at Coatesville, Pennsylvania. In 1942, John became planning director over the Army and Air Corps Ordnance and Quartermaster Division contracts for the Crosley Corporation in Cincinnati, with responsibility for all incoming material. Crosley produced bomb releases, airplane gun turrets, and army field stoves, and John was soon promoted to planning supervisor.

In 1943, John joined Bendix Corporation, which was urgently pushing production of field radios. Bendix developed a two-way radio needed for the Allied invasion of Africa and another field radio used during the heavy German bombing of London. John managed three plants that employed three thousand women on the production lines, working twelve to fifteen hours a day.



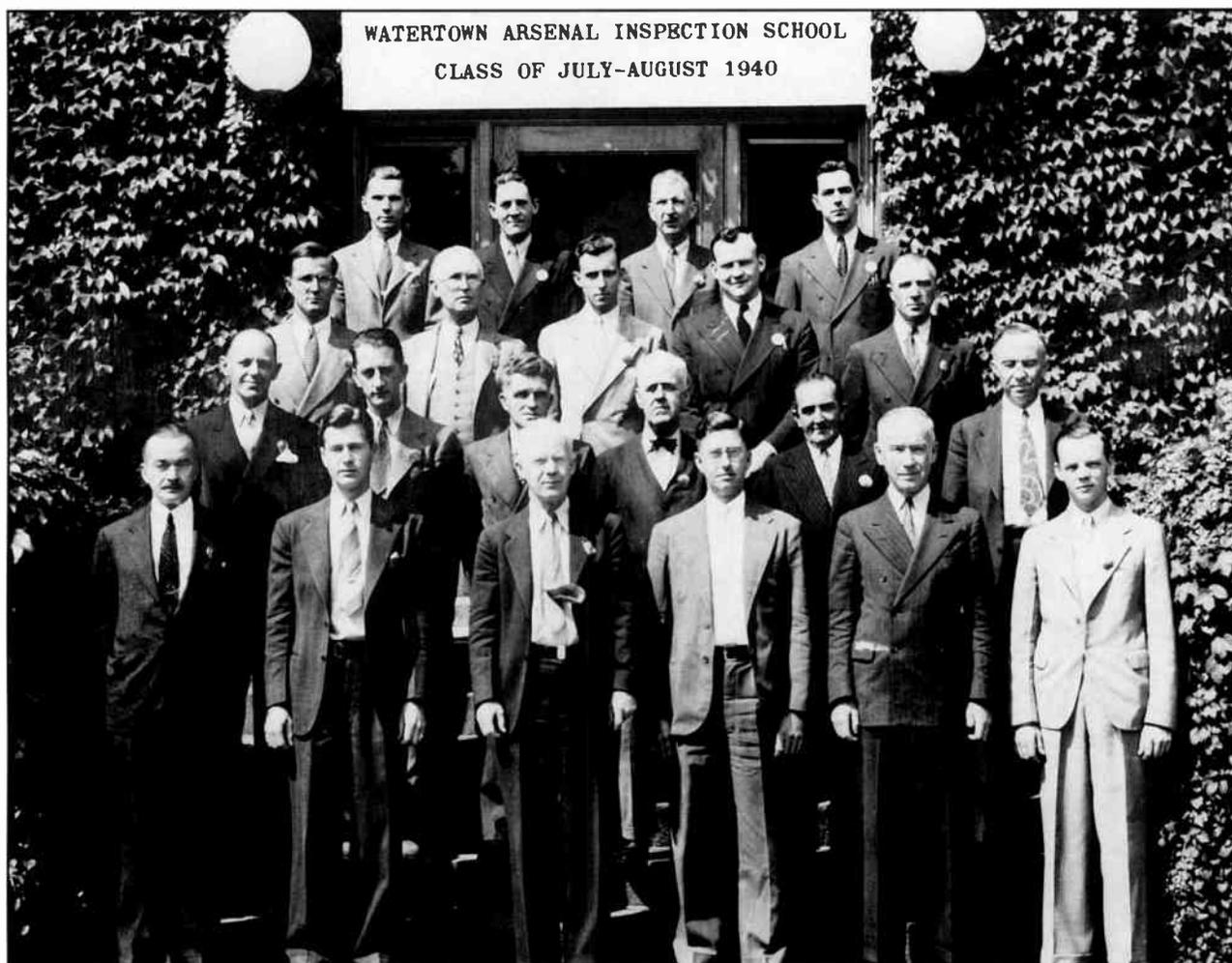
*Roxie Elaine Tatum Rollins  
(about 1932)*

*Opposite page: In 1941, John married Katharine Jacob, and on May 23, 1942, they had their first child, John William Rollins, Jr.*

## WORKING FOR OTHERS

Throughout the feverish pace of his work, John kept in touch with Wayne and the family by calling or writing. The two brothers began to make plans for buying land in Catoosa County. And again, they listened to the advice of their mother.

“My mother said when we were going into business, ‘Now, listen,’” John recalled. “‘If you are going into business together, you’re going into business to get along, not to have problems. And I never want to hear either of you talk to me about what one or the other did in business. If you can’t do it on that basis, don’t do it.’ So we did that over the years, and never had any problems.”



*Before John worked as an ordnance inspector with the Philadelphia Ordnance District, he completed training in Watertown, Massachusetts, and is shown above (third row, fourth from left) with his graduating class.*

# CHAPTER V

*The Lord gave us the land,  
and we should improve it,  
not wear it out.*

— *Uncle Frank Rollins*

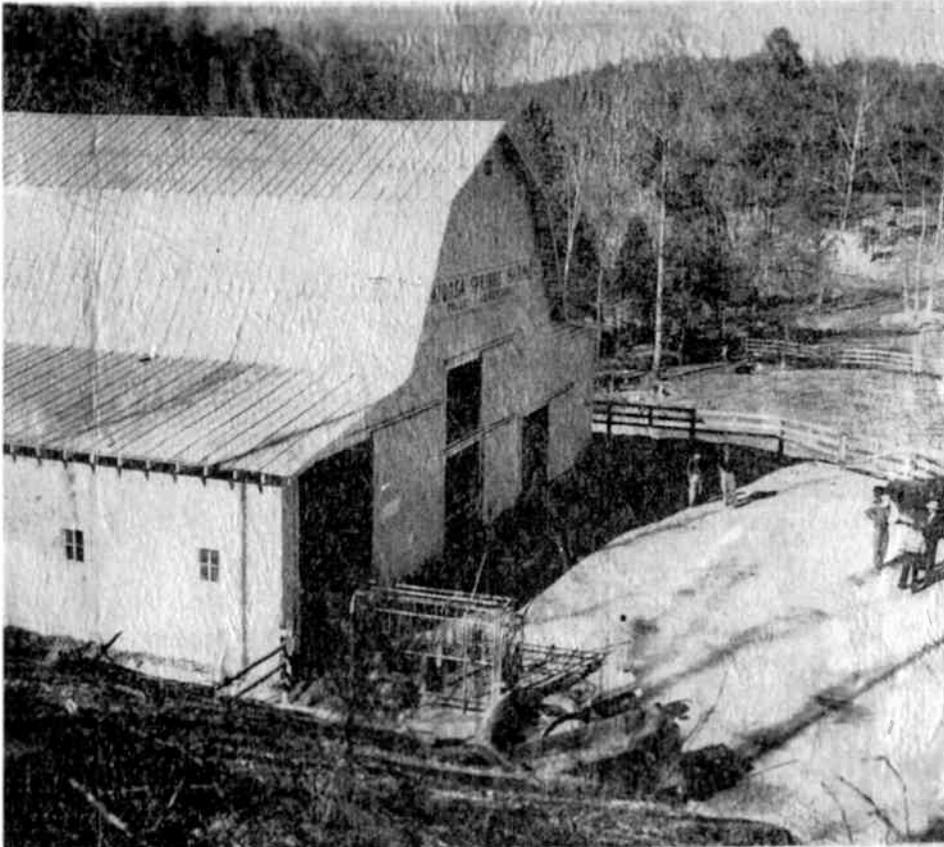


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# BUYING LAND, SHAPING THE FUTURE

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THE CHATTANOOGA TIMES: CHATTANOOGA, TENN., THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 1955.



**NEW BARN AT CATOOSA SPRINGS FARM**—Rapidly coming to the front in livestock, equipment and facilities is the Hereford breeding establishment at Catoosa Springs near Ringgold, owned by Wayne and John Rollins. Shown here is the newly completed main barn of the farm. The place, site of a one-time widely-known resort, now features a large herd of Polled Herefords. The Rollins brothers, natives of Catoosa County, are prominent East Coast businessmen, automobile dealers and operators of a chain of radio and television stations. In addition, John Rollins is lieutenant governor of Delaware.

—Times Staff Photo by Bob Day

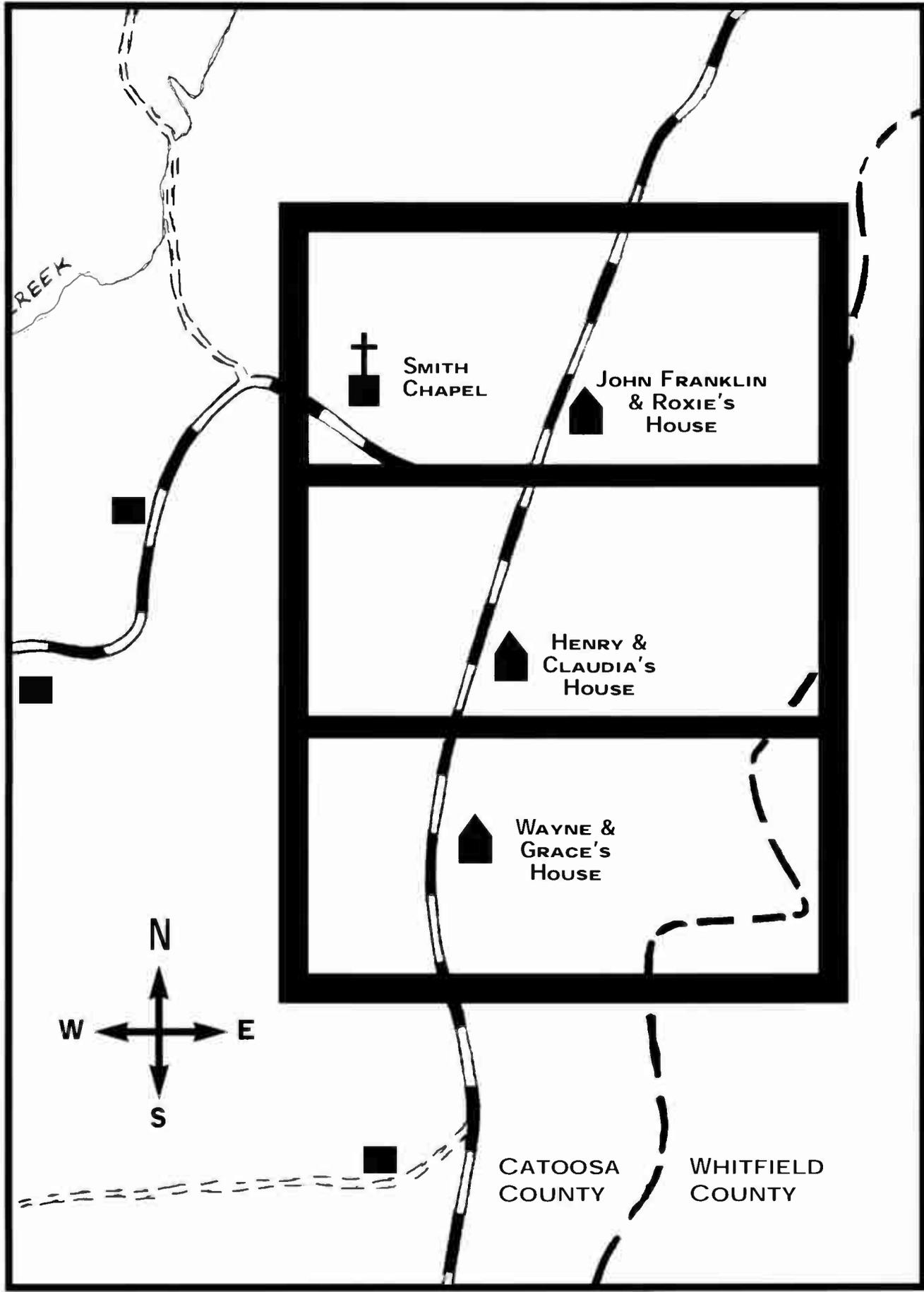
**I**n early August 1943, it was time to

settle Grandfather John Rollins' estate. The estate was composed of eighty acres of land in Smith Chapel, and it had to be sold in order to divide its value among the heirs. The sale was imminent, but Wayne knew that his Grandpa Rollins wanted Herschel and Frank to have some of the homeplace — certain land in the eighty-acre spread that Grandpa always said he wanted his sons to own.

The Rollins family, everyone would agree, had a love affair with the land. Cast a look in any direction in the Smith Chapel community in the early 1900s and there would be a Rollins-owned pasture and field, dotted with homes and barns that after 1907 belonged to John and Roxie, who then sold parcels of the land to Henry and Claudia and Wayne and Grace; at one point, these families, along with the bank, owned a combined two hundred acres in the area. Here lived farmers who coaxed from the land all that it had to give, men and women who turned to the land not only for crops to sell and food to eat but to provide a purpose for their very daily existence. And here lived not simply farmers but stewards, too, men and women who treasured and respected the land around them and did their best to take care of it.

At times, it seemed, the land was embraced by the Rollins clan like a beloved family member. Uncle Frank Rollins often preached whole sermons about the land. "The Lord gave us the land," he said, "and we should improve it, not wear it out." Wayne and Grace always said that the first four hundred dollars they ever saved went immediately to buy their own land. "As quick as we got anything," said Wayne, "we bought the first forty acres of land." And when he tried to describe how he felt about the land, Oscar Rollins would borrow a quote from a friend: "A kid who's raised in the soil never departs from it. And anybody who loved the soil would be all right."

*Opposite page: This map shows the three tracts of land belonging to John, Henry, and Wayne Rollins.*



The one exception to this, of course, might be John Rollins. To be sure, Wayne's younger brother loved land, and would one day own his share. But he hated farming. As an adult, John once went so far as to stop the construction of a stable near his home. "I worked all my life," he said, "to get away from the smell of horse manure."

Wayne Rollins always looked to the land as his key to a better life, but he learned quickly that farming the land was not the answer. After the hailstorm ruined not only his cotton crop but his dreams of going to college, Wayne would never again trust the land to provide a living for him or his family. After he married Grace, they farmed together for nearly three years, but they both found work unrelated to farming to support their new family. Indeed, the last year he ever made a crop on the little farm next to his parents left him with a net return of \$156. "I got beat in the ground so bad farming," Wayne would one day tell his friends, "that I've been trying to get even with it ever since."

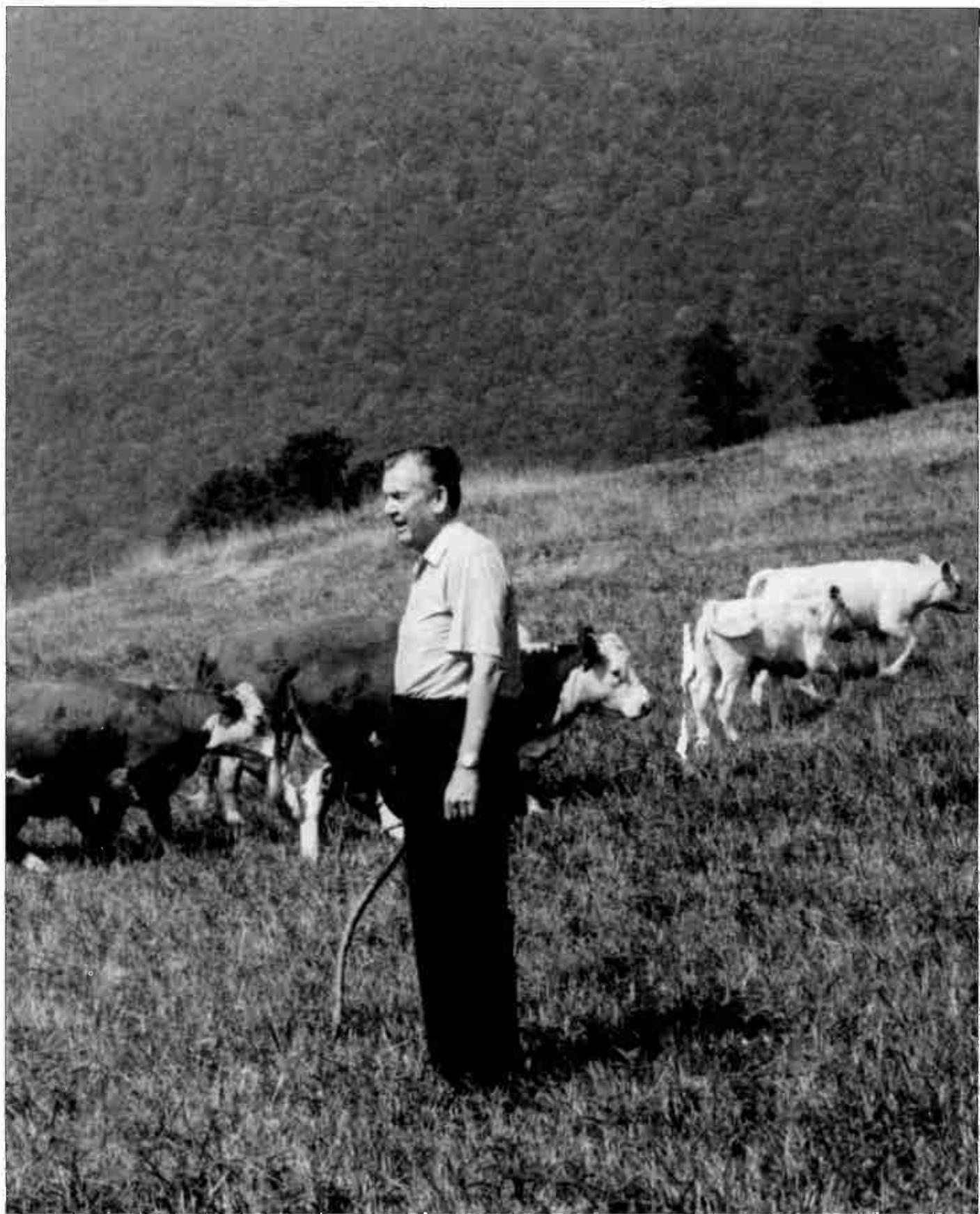
But Wayne was determined to make the land work for him. By the time he was a young man, he had begun to see land through the eyes of an investor instead of the eyes of a farmer, working to make the land more beautiful and ultimately more valuable. And Wayne figured that when land became worth more than what he paid for it, it was time to sell. When he sold his first forty acres for a profit, Wayne Rollins began to trust the land again.

When John Rollins' farm was sold at public auction at the Catoosa County courthouse in Ringgold, Wayne bought the eighty-acre homeplace for \$1,300. Proceeds from the sale paid off all the debts on the estate, and the rest of the money was divided among the heirs. Then, Wayne made it possible for Frank and Herschel, through their portion of the estate, to buy back the land that their father had wanted them to have. This left Wayne with thirty-eight acres. Wayne later sold this farm parcel to an adjoining landowner for \$2,000, emerging from all the transactions with a gross profit of \$700. The money, no doubt, went into Wayne and Grace's joint savings account, and Wayne began to look around for more land and more opportunity.

While they planned for their future, there was another concern demanding Wayne's attention. His father's heart condition had grown worse, with more frequent attacks that left him crippled with pain while Claudia or a hastily summoned doctor administered shots of morphine. The doctors said Henry Rollins' heart was about three times the normal size. At first, the doctors thought Henry couldn't live with such an enlarged heart. Then they discovered that this was the very reason he was living: His heart had enlarged in order to carry the extra load. At the time, there was no surgery available to repair the defect.

Faced with his father's deteriorating health, Wayne decided he must move his parents closer to him. He arranged for them to take a basement apartment in Lakeview in the home of Uncle Fred Rollins — just a few backyards away. Now Wayne and Grace could continue to work but still visit with his mother

*Opposite page: Wayne looked to the land as his key to a better life, and in the 1940s began acquiring his own property.*



and father every day, do their laundry, get their prescriptions filled, and make certain that all their needs were met.

With his parents settled nearby, Wayne resumed his search for land to acquire while working at Hercules. Within months, he located almost four hundred acres for sale in Cherokee Valley, Georgia, about five miles north of Catoosa Springs.

The land in Cherokee Valley was owned by Hardwick Lumber Company, which had recently cut all the timber off the land and left the hillsides scarred with ugly stumps. But Wayne didn't see barren land when he looked out across the valley. Rather, he visualized how he could make it productive and beautiful again, with a lot of hard work. On May 24, 1944, Wayne bought this tract of 390 acres from the lumber company for \$50 an acre, for a total price of \$19,500. It was his first major purchase of land outside the family, and he and Grace paid for the purchase from the savings they had steadily acquired after years of saving and working at Standard Coosa Thatcher and Hercules.

As he walked over the rolling landscape of the valley, Wayne had any number of ideas for the land. It could be farmed, he knew that. Also, it would one day be an excellent location for building houses or apartments to help meet the growing demand for housing in the vigorous wartime economy. And to Wayne Rollins, there was nothing more satisfying than the land and the chance to change its appearance and value.

"Land has a character and you look at it and you see it," he often said. "And you think, 'Now I can do something with this land that would completely change it.' Certainly it makes it more valuable. But the biggest thing I approach it from is, 'How can you make it more beautiful?'"

In the spring of 1944, Wayne had more on his mind than his new property. He was worried about Grace, who was pregnant again and very sick. In August, she was admitted to Erlanger Hospital in Chattanooga, suffering from nausea and pain, crying a lot and unable to keep food down. Her doctor, a former military physician, marched in and out of the room to check on Grace, and ordered that she be fed intravenously. This troubled Wayne, who felt there had to be a better solution. After the doctor ordered the nurse to start another bottle of fluid, Wayne said to the nurse, "No. I don't aim to start another one."

"Well, the doctor said he wanted to," the nurse replied.

"The doctor's not going to pay the bill," Wayne answered, his tone leaving no room for disagreement. "I'm going to pay the bill. So I'm saying that we don't start another one. I want to get another doctor tomorrow."

When the doctor returned, Wayne could see he was angry. "I hear you want another doctor," he snapped. "Do you have one in mind?"

"Whomever you select," Wayne responded. "You know the doctors better than I do. So whatever doctor you select is all right with me. But I want another one."

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## BUYING LAND, SHAPING THE FUTURE

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A new doctor came to see Grace, an older man with a friendly, easy-going manner. He walked over to the bed and sat down beside her. "Now, honey," he said in a kind, concerned voice, "what do you feel you want? You just think, and you tell me what you feel like you could eat today."

Grace thought a while. "Baked chicken," she replied. "I'd like to have some baked chicken." The doctor picked up the telephone and called the dietitian. Wayne was flabbergasted, although he said nothing. He was certain Grace had never eaten baked chicken in her life. But she ate it that day, and thereafter she ordered what she wanted from the kitchen.

After the one visit from the new doctor, Grace kept her food down. There was no more intravenous feeding. Wayne knew it was the bedside manner that had been the medicine Grace needed, and this was proven when he saw how the doctor worked with other patients. Every day when that doctor arrived on the ward, he brought up a case of Cokes for all the nurses. They all loved him. The new doctor continued as her obstetrician, and when Grace went into labor, he was there.

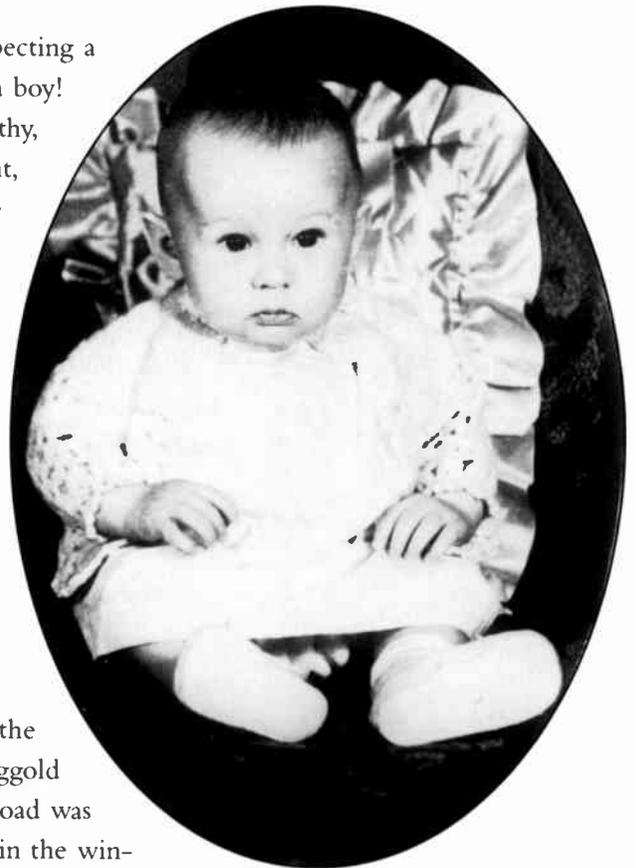
All along, Wayne and Grace had said they were "expecting a girl." When the baby arrived on August 30, 1944, it was a boy! The proud, laughing parents, so pleased their child was healthy, named him Gary Wayne Rollins. This son, Wayne thought, would be called Wayne after him. But Grace liked the name Gary. "Now, I wanted him called Gary," said Grace, and so it was.

Immediately, Wayne and Grace wondered how Randall would react to a new baby, a rival for all the attention he'd received for thirteen years. But when they showed the baby to Randall, he was delighted. Right away, he wanted to take his little brother around and show him to people. Wayne and Grace smiled with joy and relief as Randall hugged the little newcomer.

During the year after Gary's birth, an opportunity came along that Wayne had dreamed about ever since he was a young boy: Catoosa Springs was up for sale.

"I always came by it," Wayne said, remembering the Catoosa Springs he often walked by as a boy going to Ringgold or rode by with Herschel on their way to school. "The road was so muddy you couldn't get through in a wagon or buggy in the wintertime. There was a big stand of pine trees, all virgin forest. And the trees grew so high that the sun never did shine on the road. So it would never dry out. From one rain to another, it stayed wet and boggy."

By the time Catoosa Springs was up for sale in 1945, the land where both Henry and Claudia and then Wayne and Grace had courted was completely



*Gary Wayne Rollins, born  
on August 30, 1944*

stripped of its timber. The trees had been cleared, leaving the land covered with unsightly clumps of bushes and briars that grew around the stumps. But in his mind, Wayne could already see how the land would look: When he cleared away the stumps and brush, he saw green pastures stocked with purebred cattle, restored land peppered with renovated houses and cottages. He was determined to make the Catoosa Springs in front of him the one he saw in his dream.

When Hargis Lumber Company put the property up for sale, Wayne knew this was the opportunity he had waited for ever since he was a youngster. He talked to Grace, and he contacted John. And in July 1945, the three of them came up with \$10,900 to buy Catoosa Springs — 280 acres of rolling land, a string of old buildings that were once the heart of the resort, with freely flowing mineral springs that were still vital.

At thirty-three, Wayne Rollins had made his boyhood dream come true.

His happiness was less than complete, however. Wayne Rollins would witness the decline of his father's health over the next several weeks. "He just ceased to be able to breathe, and that was just such a strain on the heart that his heart just quit. It was in the daytime. It was about two o'clock," recalled Wayne.

On August 2, 1945, with Wayne at his bedside, Henry Rollins died. Despite their grief, Claudia Rollins and her sons knew the relief of adults who have watched a loved one suffer. Such consoling thoughts, however, were not possible for the fourteen-year-old Randall, nor did they soften his feeling of loss for a man who had been his constant companion, who loved him unconditionally, who sang to him, sat with him in the porch swing, and took walks with him. How he would miss his beloved granddad.

With the war soon ending and the TNT plant phasing out, Wayne increasingly turned his attention to Catoosa Springs. He and Grace, who had not returned to her job at the textile plant after Gary's birth, had decided to fix up the buildings and turn them into rental units, tapping into the strong post-war demand for housing.

Commuting from Lakeview Drive on weekends and during off-hours, Wayne and his family began working to repair the seventeen houses and twenty-two cottages, their whitewash grayed and peeling. The buildings needed painting, plumbing, water, and electricity; some still had remnants of resort furnishings, like beds, chairs, marble-topped dressers and washstands with heavy porcelain washbowls and pitchers.

With the help of two hired hands, Wayne, Grace, and Randall renovated all the cottages and nine of the houses. And they went to work clearing the land, which was badly overgrown with weeds and briars, poison oak, scrub and pine thickets, and had many nests of yellow jackets and wasps. Grace made curtains for the newly remodeled apartments, and it wasn't long before the houses began to attract tenants.

## BUYING LAND, SHAPING THE FUTURE

Wayne loved the challenges of Catoosa Springs, primarily because he loved the opportunities this boyhood dream provided. Here, he had the chance to build his own business — not only in rental properties but by developing the nearly fifty mineral springs as well. And like the rental cottages, the mineral springs business needed some attention.

When the Rollins family bought Catoosa Springs, a seventy-year-old man named Mr. Watkins seemed to come with the property. For years, Mr. Watkins had been delivering water to customers in the Chattanooga area, and Wayne kept him on while renovating the property and developing a plan for increasing sales of the mineral water. But by early fall, several customers had called Wayne at Lakeview and complained of not getting their mineral water delivered. Wayne had to find out what had happened.

“Mr. Watkins,” Wayne began. “Mrs. Bailey called and said she didn’t get her water. Did you deliver her water?”

“Oh, yeah. Yeah. Yeah,” Mr. Watkins replied, scratching a short stubble on his chin. “I delivered her water.”

Then he stopped and thought for a moment. “No. I didn’t. No. No. No. I didn’t.” And again he paused. “Yes. I did! Yes, I did!”

*Wayne made his boyhood dream come true in July 1945 when he, Grace, and John purchased Catoosa Springs.*

# Catoosa Springs Water

## Red Sweet Water

Good for Pulmonary Trouble and Tuberculosis  
in Early Stages

*Bottled at the Spring*

**CATOOSA SPRINGS, GEORGIA**

☞ See that packages are sealed ☜

**HARGIS LUMBER CO.**

CLEVELAND, TENN.

PHONE 152

Wayne checked another name on the list of customers. "Mr. Watkins, did you deliver to the Vaughns?" The book had not been marked to indicate a delivery.

"Oh, yeah. Yeah. Yeah," Mr. Watkins said. "No. No, I didn't. They had some water. No. They didn't have any water. They weren't at home."

By the time Wayne had gone over the complaints, neither he nor Mr. Watkins had a clear idea whether the deliveries had been made or not. At the time, there were only about fifty customers, most of them in Chattanooga and a few in Dalton, customers whose families had purchased Catoosa Springs water for generations. They wanted their water without fail when it was due for delivery, either once or twice a week. After his discussion, Wayne realized he would have to go ahead and let Mr. Watkins retire soon. And when the time came, Mr. Watkins was invited to continue to live in his house at Catoosa Springs, a small reward for years of faithful service.

The more Wayne worked at Catoosa Springs, the more he realized that he and his family should live there, not only for business reasons but simply because the place was so beautiful and peaceful. He talked it over with Grace, and they agreed to sell the house near Missionary Ridge and renovate one of the Catoosa Springs houses for their own. Together, they decided that one of the four houses up on the hill, the ones that overlooked the springs and the quiet sweep of land up from the road, would be perfect. And with Claudia's consent, Wayne decided that she would have her own house at the springs, right next door to Wayne and Grace. Soon, Claudia was going with the rest of the family to Catoosa Springs, watching the renovation of a home that was closer to the Smith Chapel homeplace where she had raised her own family.

With the work at Catoosa Springs moving at a good pace, Wayne advertised the Lakeview house for sale. In August 1946, Wayne sold the house for the full asking price of \$6,500. After closing the deal, Wayne realized a profit of \$1,700. And once again, he and Grace saved what they could and used the rest for their renovations at Catoosa Springs.

Three months later, Wayne completed his most successful real estate transaction to date. He sold 130 acres of his property in Cherokee Valley for \$100 per acre, double what he had paid for the property when he acquired the 390-acre tract just over two years before. Wayne sold the land to a fellow worker at Hercules, with one special condition. "If you ever get ready to sell it," Wayne told the purchaser, "I would like the opportunity of buying it back." Yet when the owner decided to sell less than a year later, he sold to someone else, never even mentioning it to Wayne, although they both still worked at Hercules. It was the kind of thing that Wayne Rollins could never understand. "Your word was your bond," he thought.

At Catoosa Springs, Wayne and Grace completed the renovations to their white frame house, built from solid heart pine. The flooring was made of six-inch pine boards that, though lacking tongue and groove, were so well

seasoned and cut that no cracks could be found. The ceiling was tongue-and-groove beaded pine. The walls were plastered, rough because the laths had been split, not sawn, when the house was built before the Civil War. A high front porch overlooked the springs. The house had a very large living room and a spacious master bedroom, both with fireplaces from the stacked chimney between the rooms. There were two more bedrooms for the boys and a newly installed bathroom, a comfortable kitchen, and a back porch.

Looking out the front bedroom window, Wayne and Grace could see the mineral springs down near the roadway. In front of the house were three large post oaks. Gnarled cedars, half a century old, and giant sycamores dotted the slope near the site of one of the two hotels that had stood here when Catoosa Springs was a resort.

To clear the land he wanted to cultivate, Wayne hired a man from Dalton to bring in a bulldozer, the first one ever used in the area. And he planted grass, another innovation. Where ugly stumps and brush once greeted passersby, a beautiful green pasture appeared on the rise across the road from the springs, transforming Wayne's vision of Catoosa Springs into reality. It was deeply gratifying to Wayne to see the land changed and improved, to make the land better than he found it.

And on this new land, Wayne and John developed another mutual interest: purebred cattle, top beef stock for show and sale on the land around Catoosa Springs. Not long after buying the land, the two brothers started their future herd of prize-winning Herefords when Wayne went to an auction at LaGrange, Georgia. There, his successful eight-hundred-dollar bid bought Catoosa Springs its first registered bull. Wayne knew that if he bought a bull and didn't have a cow, people would laugh him out of the county. Before the auction was over, Wayne had purchased several cows for between two and three hundred dollars each. The cows and the bull were registered Polled Herefords, a top-notch breeding stock for this new Rollins venture.

The livestock represented another chore for Randall, who was now fifteen and in the ninth grade at Ringgold High School. He toyed briefly with the idea of playing basketball (his height and athletic ability made him a natural player), but Randall never loved the sport like his dad and neither his mother or father insisted that he play.

"I can't say that Dad lectured," Randall said, "or had a lot of rules and a lot of things you had to measure up to. He never once said to me, 'I made A's in school, and there's no reason why you can't.' I could have been a railroader or a telephone man or a farmer or anything I wanted to be, and my parents would have been proud if I did a good job. What they both did expect of you was to do what was right."

From an early age, Randall had been taught to work. At Catoosa Springs, Randall was paid three dollars a week to wash water bottles, fill them,

and load them on a truck for delivery. In addition, he had other farm chores that didn't pay — plowing, planting, mowing, building fences, and caring for the cows and hogs.

And every Saturday, Wayne Rollins would give his son assignments. "Now, you do this job and this one and this, then when you get done it's all right for you to go to town," Wayne would say. Randall never stopped to think that the challenge was too much for the time allotted. "This," he always thought to himself, "is going to be the Saturday that I make it." But by the time he got all of his chores done, it would be after dark. Randall could never get away early to go to town.

And while the toddler Gary played under his grandmother's care, Randall and his mother shared maintenance duties at the rental properties. "Randall and I were the plumbers," said Grace, remembering the unpleasant task of unclogging toilets. "I have done every menial job there is to do, I believe. I'm happy for it, because there's a lot of things that I know how to do."

In addition to her responsibilities for the rental property, Grace opened a little general store, or "commissary" as Wayne called it, where she sold canned goods, dry goods, and some vegetables, primarily to their tenants. The store, operating only a few hours in the morning and the afternoon, added little to the family income. But unlike the commissary, Wayne had decided that the mineral water business could be a major enterprise with significant profits.

For several months, Wayne had carefully studied the mineral water business — traveling to Hot Springs, Arkansas, to see how the water was bottled there, and getting the water at Catoosa Springs tested for content and composition. He was impressed when studies showed that the Catoosa Springs lithia water was almost exactly the same composition as the highly desirable Hot Springs water, a finding that further convinced him that the mineral water business offered a promising future. But to expand the business and realize its financial potential, Wayne needed more customers. And to develop more customers, he needed more time.

By now, Wayne knew that his job at Hercules, much like the entire TNT plant operation, would soon end, due to the welcome end to World War II. Now working in the management level of the entire manufacturing operation, Wayne knew that he could stay on and help close down the plant. Instead, Wayne decided to resign from Hercules in 1946, a move that would allow him to devote all of his time to the mineral water enterprise at Catoosa Springs.

Opening two new markets, Wayne began delivering mineral water to Atlanta and Birmingham twice a week. For the trip to Atlanta, between fifty and sixty of the heavy five-gallon bottles had to be loaded on a truck, and then hauled by hand to the customer's house or apartment. Sometimes this meant climbing one or more flights of stairs, in order to leave the full bottle and pick up the empty one. It was, to say the least, an awkward task that Wayne performed as readily as any of his workers.

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*In 1946, Wayne resigned from Hercules to devote all of his time to Catoosa Springs.*



“The bottles were not easy to lift,” Wayne always remembered. “It was not because it weighed that much, but the way I lifted those bottles. You have to take them by the neck, a five-gallon bottle, and lift them by the neck. You had to lift them in the truck that way, and take them out and deliver them. A lot of those people lived upstairs. And wherever they lived, you had to carry them in.”

Unexpected problems cropped up in Atlanta, where Wayne had developed one of his biggest routes. In order to sell the mineral water, Wayne had to obtain a permit from the official in charge of the city water system. And this official was none too thrilled with the competition.

“You’re a crook! You’re a crook!” he told Wayne. “That’s all there is to it. Any fellow that’d sell a person water when he can get that water out of the hydrant, and you sell him water and charge him for it, you’re a crook!”

Steaming with anger, Wayne had to listen in silence. To get the required permit meant the water had to conform to Atlanta’s chlorination ordinance. So Wayne went back to Catoosa Springs and set up a process for adding chlorine to the water. Begrudgingly, the Atlanta official approved. But knowing that his

customers would never accept chlorine in their mineral water, Wayne had the water immediately reprocessed to dechlorinate it.

To help with the operation, Wayne enlisted his friend and uncle, Herschel. Herschel began bottling and delivering water for Wayne, driving a Ford truck with a high body built to hold the bottles of water. "Flicker High," Herschel called the truck, indulging his habit of naming all his vehicles.

On a delivery run to Atlanta in "Flicker High," Herschel miscalculated the height of an overpass. It was too low for the truck, and the collision took the top off of "Flicker High," scattering broken bottles, water, and debris along the street.

Despite such setbacks, Wayne could sometimes look on the lighter side of his business. When high school classmate Miller Clark ran into Wayne and learned of his new venture, Clark asked, "Are you making any money selling that water, Wayne?"

"No," Wayne replied. "I'm losing a lot."

"What do you mean, losing?"

"All that water's running off," said Wayne, laughing, "and I'm not selling it!"

In expanding the mineral water business, Wayne sought out not only relatives like Herschel but former fellow workers, among them Hoyt Murphy, a Hercules foreman who lived in Cleveland, Tennessee. A traveling salesman and furniture dealer, Hoyt was always ready to introduce Wayne to every neighbor he could find, as well as new ideas and ventures. As Wayne's younger brother, John, had done after high school, Wayne and Hoyt dabbled in the tufted bedspread industry, selling bedspreads to retail outlets. It took Wayne and Hoyt even less time than it had taken John to decide that selling bedspreads was definitely not for them. But Hoyt and Wayne, who would later participate in some major Florida real estate deals, always had a good time on their trips in Wayne's Ford pickup. There was the time they had to stay in a seedy hotel together, and just about got into an argument with the manager over a two-dollar key fee. And there was the trip to West Virginia and Cleveland, Tennessee, in 1946, when Hoyt remembers taking Wayne into the first radio station he had ever seen.

"I said, 'Wayne, have you ever been in one?' He said no. I said, 'Well, I have a friend that's manager of one in Cleveland and I set us up an appointment,'" Hoyt remembered. "And we went up and David McLain showed us all through this radio station. It was the first radio station Wayne was ever in."

And while Wayne would never forget the sights and sounds of that radio station, Hoyt forever remembered a lesson he learned one day from Wayne, during another trip to Cleveland to try and drum up business for Catoosa Springs. "I would go with him to Cleveland and introduce him to different people, and we would carry those five-gallon jugs of water into a place," said Hoyt. "We spent an hour with one man. He had the reputation of being pretty successful."

## BUYING LAND, SHAPING THE FUTURE

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Wayne listened intently to every detail of the man's career, even though Hoyt was ready to leave. Hoyt continued, "And I said to Wayne, 'Gee, we've wasted an awful lot of time there.' And Wayne said, 'You never waste time when you are talking to people like that. You get ideas. I am always willing to listen to somebody who's more successful than I am.' And that taught me something, because that's a pretty good philosophy."

While Wayne developed the Catoosa Springs enterprise, John had ventured into the automobile business in Delaware. As usual, John and Wayne kept each other informed about their businesses in telephone calls and visits to Catoosa Springs. The brothers constantly talked things over, each seeking the other's insights and each investing financially in the other's businesses. And they both took to heart their mother's advice to "get along, not to have problems."

But despite the promise of the joint cattle-breeding endeavor and their early success in expanding the mineral water business, Wayne soon encountered unexpected difficulties at Catoosa Springs. The first was the discovery that mineral water had never officially been exempted from the wartime federal price controls, even though there was no rational reason for applying the controls. This oversight made it impossible to increase the price of the Catoosa Springs water in existing markets in order to offset higher costs.

The rental housing market also had its problems. Though nearly a dozen families were now renting the cottages and houses around Catoosa Springs, the task of maintaining the property had begun to take its toll on Wayne and Grace. It was hard work "to put up with the public," Grace said, with little reward.

And though Grace had initially enjoyed running her small commissary store, she discovered that many of her customers bought on credit and then failed to pay their debts. Grace's father had raised her to frown upon any form of debt, and Grace found this practice unacceptable. After almost two years, Grace was so fed up with storekeeping that one day she simply walked out of the place, turned the key to lock the door, and just that suddenly went out of business.

But the proverbial straw came during the summer of 1947. For over a year, Wayne had been plagued by a serious back problem, brought on by loading and delivering the mineral water bottles. Now, his body rebelled against the physical demands of this awkward, heavy work, and Wayne was diagnosed with two ruptured discs in his back. The pain was excruciating, running at times from his hip to his heel and completely disabling a man who had always relied on sheer physical strength to get him through the day. For relief, Wayne was forced to lie in bed, his back resting on a three-quarter-inch plywood panel positioned on the bed.

Flat on his back that July, Wayne Rollins had a lot of time to think.

As he surveyed his large bedroom, he often thought again of the road he had traveled to this time and place. He saw the faces of his mother and father and little brother sitting at the table in the old store-turned-kitchen, joined to the two-room house his father had built near Smith Chapel. He saw again his mother's tears when the precious lumber for her house was hauled away during the depression. He recalled how his plans for college had disappeared while Claudia grieved and told of the hailstorm that destroyed their crops while he lay in a hospital bed.

He thought of his own dreams. "My ambition right then if I'd got off into what I wanted," he acknowledged years later, "would have been in construction and development. Improving the houses. That's always appealed to me. That would have been the thing that I'd do."

After all, he had the land for building houses — Catoosa Springs, Cherokee Valley, even the old homeplace if the roads were improved. But lying on a plywood board for long days that turned into weeks, Wayne began to accept that his dream of real estate development was slipping away. "There was no place in construction to save your back," he finally admitted.

It was not easy giving up a goal, not for Wayne Rollins. Quitting before a job was finished or an objective was reached went against his very nature. Success came by working harder, by discovering better ways to do things. Single-minded pursuit of what you wanted brought success.

But where should he look for the future?

He knew how to run textile machinery and match the dyes in the laboratory. He knew how to produce more TNT than any other supervisor at Hercules. He knew how to plant corn and cotton and potatoes. He knew how to raise cattle. He knew the mineral water business, which he'd expanded from the local market into Atlanta and Birmingham. He knew construction and renovation of houses. But none of these offered the answer he needed.

Lying there on the plywood board, Wayne had time to think and to read, two things he enjoyed all his life. And this day in July, Wayne turned as he always did to the *Chattanooga Times*. Thoughtfully, he read page after page of the newspaper, until a headline caught his eye. The article was about a man he knew, a man he had worked with at Hercules. According to the article, this former coworker had purchased a large tract of land on the Tennessee River at Chattanooga — after starting a radio station from scratch.

"That's very valuable land. Must be about four hundred acres. And it's being farmed now," Wayne mused. "So he's done well. There must be money in the radio business because he didn't have anything before. If he's able to buy this land, he's got to have some money. And he has to have made it in the radio business." The story both tantalized and agitated Wayne Rollins.

The radio business was worth considering, Wayne concluded. He began examining the idea from every angle, though handicapped by an almost total

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lack of knowledge of the subject. "The only thing in the world I knew about the radio business was the microphone," he confided later. "I knew the name of it. I didn't know the name of anything else."

But on this July day in 1947, after reading the newspaper article over and over again, Wayne began to connect radio broadcasting with his future. Radio. He had an idea, but no master plan. "If you went into radio," he reasoned, "then you added another radio station or you improved on that one. You added another one and another one. You built just like building blocks."

Excitement began to build. The fact that he knew next to nothing about radio — after all, there was not even a radio in his bedroom, and he and Grace rarely listened to the one sitting on the table in the living room — didn't faze Wayne at all. For from his experience at Standard Coosa Thatcher and at Hercules, Wayne had gained an invaluable advantage: He knew that he did not have to have experience in a particular business to be successful.

"That gave me confidence, that you can go into something that you don't know anything about and really concentrate on it and do something with it," he would explain later. "I didn't know anything about radio. But neither did I know anything about TNT when I went into that."

And if Wayne had learned but one thing from farming and dye machines and TNT and bottling water, he had learned this: He had learned how to work.

From the days when he raced to plow a field faster than the day before; from the nights when he taught himself to run every machine in the dye plant; from the Sunday shift when he figured out how to make more TNT than anyone else; and from the moment when he lifted his last bottle of mineral water, Wayne had realized one of the greatest lessons of his professional career. "I know of nothing more important in preparing to win," Wayne said, "than learning how to work."

With the clarity of someone who can forever recall the details of an episode that changed his life, Orville Wayne Rollins recounted what happened next. He eased himself off the bed. Carefully avoiding any sudden moves to favor his back, he slowly walked to the living room, where the wooden telephone box was mounted on the wall. A black mouthpiece protruded from the box and a receiver was attached to a black cord. There was a crank on the side of the telephone box. He turned the crank, and the Ringgold operator answered. Wayne listened as she connected with the Chattanooga operator, who relayed the call to Louisville, then Cincinnati, and after several minutes, Lewes, Delaware.

Suddenly, the booming voice of John Rollins crackled over the wire. "Wayne! How are you?"

"John," Wayne began, "I've got an idea."



# CHAPTER VI

*If you wait  
until you're ready,  
you'll never do anything.*

— *O. Wayne Rollins*



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AUTOMOBILES AND RADIOS:  
THE ROLLINS BROTHERS  
BEGIN ROLLINS  
BROADCASTING, INC.

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*John, standing on the right, opened a Ford dealership in Lewes, Delaware, with partner T. R. Bryan. (1949)*

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he midsummer telephone call between Catoosa Springs and Lewes, Delaware, in 1947 set in motion a remarkable business relationship between Wayne and John Rollins, one that positioned these two brothers from Georgia on a path that rivaled any story line ever created by Horatio Alger.

The phone call was characteristically short and to the point. Wayne quickly explained about the newspaper article, highlighting his gut feeling that there was money and a future in the radio business. He pointed out that John was already spending as much as two hundred dollars a month on radio advertising for his automobile dealerships, which would automatically be a good base of revenues for their new venture. What did John think?

“Great!” came John’s enthusiastic response.

The brothers agreed to discuss the idea in greater detail when John visited Catoosa Springs in a few weeks.

“John wasn’t hard to sell on anything,” Wayne would often say.

Throughout their adult lives, Wayne and John Rollins rarely made a business decision without consulting one another. And make no mistake: Claudia Rollins may have admonished her two sons to get along in business, but their radically different yet complementary styles, coupled with their great respect and devotion to each other, left little room for any other way.

Consider that while both brothers were hard-driving and tireless, Wayne was often introspective and reserved, while John was a gregarious super salesman whose trademarks were his hearty smile and humorous homespun quips. Wayne usually served as a check on John, who rarely encountered a business idea he didn’t like or one he didn’t embrace wholeheartedly.

Said Wayne: “My brother and I, now, other than the fact that we sound alike on the telephone, are just as different as can be. John works always on the

principle that he will make more so he can spend more. I'm always the one who's cost-conscious as far as being sure that it is profitable. John works the other way. His whole situation is to make more than he can spend."

Said John: "Wayne always had an open mind. I would say, 'I think we should do this and this.' And he never did tell me it was a lousy idea. He never said that. He would say, 'How would it be if we would just change these few things?' So he and I together would come out with a heck of a plan. We really didn't give a damn who got credit for it."

This time, however, it was Wayne who proposed a new venture. When John arrived at Catoosa Springs in August, Wayne discussed the newspaper article and the man who had apparently made a lot of money in a short time in radio broadcasting.

At John's suggestion, Wayne made an appointment to meet at the Chattanooga station and talk with this radio executive, who had worked at Hercules with Wayne. The brothers drove to Chattanooga, confident that the man would tell them what they needed to know. But their visit was fruitless.

"We sat there in the reception room and cooled our heels for two hours," Wayne recalled. "We never did see him."

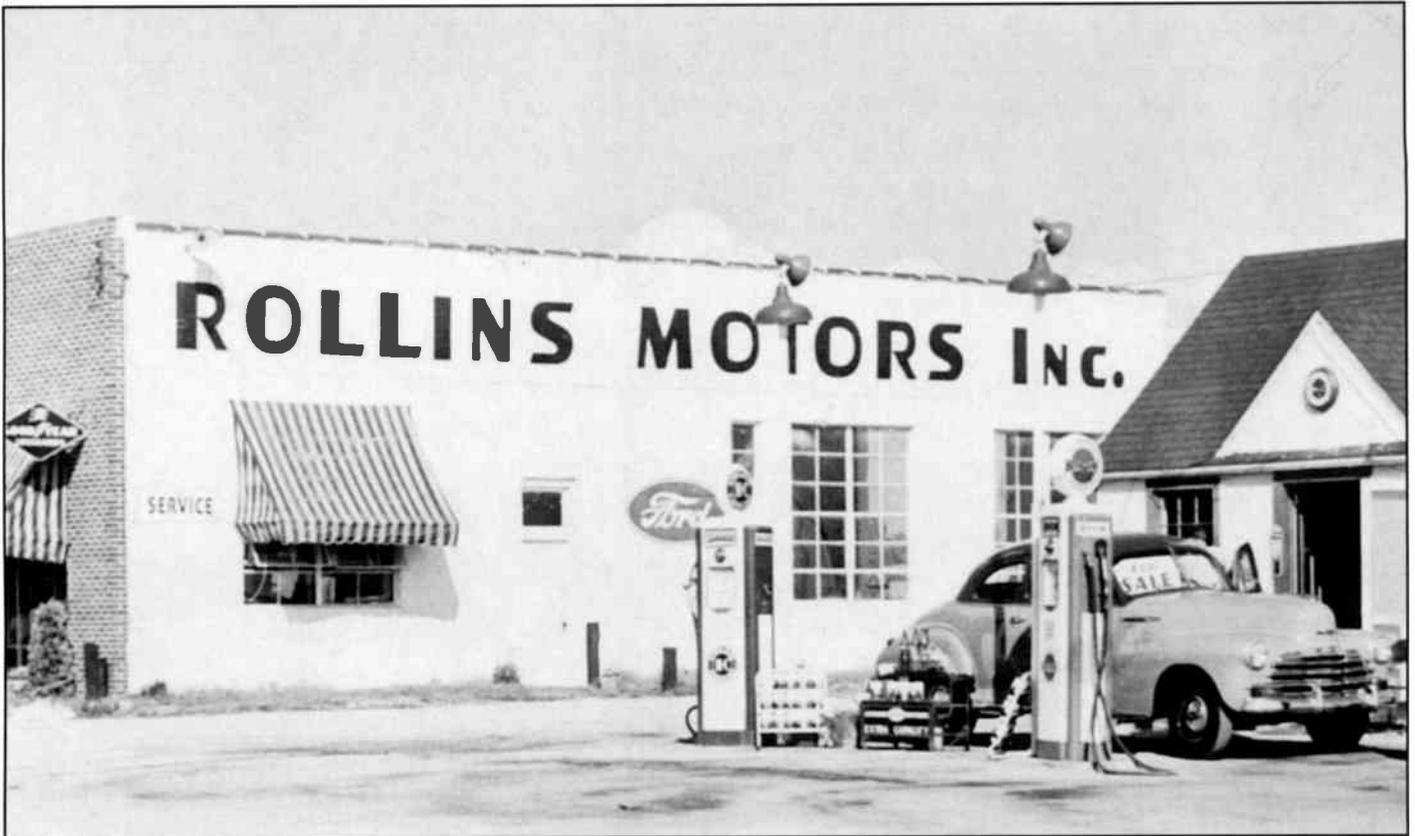
But Wayne was not discouraged. If anything, he was more determined than ever. Radio held an almost magical attraction for him, and he felt certain that it would open the way to a profitable business future. If he had any misgivings, he shared them with no one. As always, he relied on his innate sense of timing, clear thinking, and common sense born of experience. And in this and many other business ventures, both Rollins brothers were driven by the exact same professional tenet — though true to their opposite natures, they would invariably describe this business credo in remarkably different styles.

Said Wayne, simply and seriously: "If you wait until you're ready, you'll never do anything."

Said John, enthusiastically: "Everybody tells you they started and they dreamed and the dreams came true. But you know, good



*John Rollins, Sr. (about 1945)*



*John opened the Princess Anne dealership in 1948 with a massive ad campaign.*

decisions aren't made; they're made good after they're made. You make a decision and to hell with it! You ride with it. And Wayne and I have always made the decisions. We said, 'Let's go! Let's go with it.'"

When John ventured into the car business, Wayne was as supportive of this new enterprise as John was when Wayne wanted to buy Catoosa Springs. Married with two sons, John had left a top job with an engineering company in 1945 to strike out on his own, setting up a Ford dealership in the little Atlantic Coast town of Lewes, Delaware, where his mother-in-law lived.

The dealership opened in an abandoned tavern at a time when rationing of steel and other materials made it almost impossible to obtain new cars. The business had to survive on service, sales of parts, and used cars. Neither John nor his partner knew anything about running a dealership. What John lacked, Ford Motor Company provided with training seminars and the wise counsel of Ford managers.

At the outset, John drew twenty-five dollars a week in salary from the dealership. The business grew so rapidly that he devoted all his time to it, selling from fifteen to twenty used cars a month. Within the next three years, he acquired a second dealership in Princess Anne, Maryland, and bought out his partner in Lewes. Sales of Rollins used cars hit two hundred a month.

Like Wayne, John was never afraid to try something new. But when Wayne told Grace about his idea for a future in radio, he could tell that she wasn't too

impressed, that she didn't take the notion too seriously. For Wayne, this was the ultimate challenge.

"With all these different things I got into, Grace was a very conservative person," Wayne loved to tell people. "And she'd say, 'Wayne, you are going to lose your behind in this.' I would work so hard to try to prove her wrong that I would make it successful. I took it to be a challenge."

Before Wayne could devote himself to the new venture, the stabs of pain in his back and legs forced him to do something about the ruptured discs.

Having seen all the chiropractors and doctors that he knew in north Georgia, he finally obtained the name of a Dr. Shaw in the south Georgia town of Tifton. Shaw was supposed to be very good at manipulating the protruding cartilage back into place. If that could be done, a patient might have a considerable period of time without much pain and could carry on a fairly normal life, excluding hard physical work.

Before contacting the chiropractor, Wayne decided he should have an examination at Emory Hospital in Atlanta. Wayne was not surprised when the Emory doctor recommended surgery, the only treatment at the time other than lying flat on the board, taking sedatives, and sharply curtailing physical movement. After the doctor explained that there was a risk of paralysis, Wayne at once decided he wanted another opinion. John arranged for Wayne to see an eminent neurosurgeon with an impressive record at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, where John had his annual physical examination.

John was utterly surprised at one of Wayne's questions for the neurosurgeon. "Doctor, there's a chiropractor down in south Georgia that can put those discs back in place," said Wayne, aware that chiropractors were generally rejected by medical doctors. "What do you think about that?"

John was even more surprised with the doctor's answer. "You know, Mr. Rollins," the specialist replied, "I've operated on a lot of backs and discs. And I can tell you one thing. I'd try that chiropractor or anybody else before I had the operation."

The doctor gave Wayne the name and address of a company in Atlanta that could construct a brace for his back. "And if you can get that chiropractor to put it back, and you can put the brace on, then certainly give it a try before you have surgery," the doctor advised.

Wayne made an appointment with the Tifton chiropractor, and Grace and his Uncle Marvin and Aunt Laura Nance made the trip with him. The first attempt by Dr. Shaw to remedy Wayne's problem failed. Three days later, after the swelling decreased, Dr. Shaw's second try to manipulate the offending tissue back into place failed, too. The third time the chiropractor called for gas, which put Wayne to sleep and helped relax his muscles. When Wayne awoke, he was given good news. The treatment was successful, although Wayne felt extremely sore. "It'll take a week before the soreness will leave," the chiropractor answered. "And when the soreness is out, the pain is relieved."

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True to Dr. Shaw's word, the treatment was effective, and Wayne began to resume a normal life. However, for the rest of his life he had to avoid heavy lifting, exertion, or any other movement that would cause the discs to slip out of place.

With his health much improved, Wayne turned his full attention to radio broadcasting. One of his first objectives was to learn all he could about the operation of a radio station, and he made plans to visit as many stations as he could for firsthand knowledge. Over the next several months, Wayne also obtained information on the markets served by John's automobile dealerships, which would provide advertising for their new radio station. And from these early scouting reports, the brothers settled on the two towns where a radio station just might profit — Georgetown, Delaware, for its proximity to the dealership in Lewes; and Radford, Virginia, where the third Rollins dealership was located.

Granted, these two small, rural towns might have seemed like dubious choices to those in the broadcasting industry. But after analyzing the data, Wayne discovered that Georgetown's Sussex County had the highest per capita income of any farm county in the United States, proof that "the dollars were coming in." And Radford was a small but promising market — an agricultural and manufacturing town that was the home of thousands of college students at what was then Radford Teachers College, and at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, located at nearby Blacksburg.

With confidence, the Rollins brothers officially started their new business venture on February 24, 1948, when Rollins Broadcasting, Inc. was incorporated in Delaware. The initial directors were John W. Rollins, O. Wayne Rollins, and John's wife, Katharine. John was elected president, and Wayne secretary.

Initially, Wayne and John each invested \$12,500 in their new enterprise, for a total of \$25,000. It was every penny that Wayne and Grace had in their savings — money from the sale of their Lakeview home, the Cherokee property, and their savings from the mineral water business.

The first order of business was to retain an engineer and an attorney, who filed federal applications for radio licenses in both Georgetown and Radford. With the applications filed, Wayne and John had only to wait for the decisions by the Federal Communications Commission. The process, they knew, might take six months to a year or even longer.

While they waited, Wayne had his hands full. An immediate complication arose for the prospective Georgetown station when a rival applicant filed for the same frequency — a "strike application," designed to block the Rollins station from going on the air. Wayne continued to visit other radio stations, absorbing all he could about broadcasting, while studying the broadcasting markets and continuing to work in John's auto businesses.

"Wayne had an ability to think and reason things out," remembered Hoyt Murphy. "Let's say, if you were thinking about building a home, he

would look at dozens of homes. The same was true in his business, particularly for radio.”

In 1948, as preparations for the radio stations and a booming car business took up more of his time, Wayne turned the mineral water distribution over to his uncle, Herschel. And leaving his wife and two sons at Catoosa Springs, Wayne began commuting to Delaware to be closer to his business interests. For months, Wayne lived in John’s guest house at Lewes or drove to Princess Anne and stayed in a motel while running the Ford business there. Typical of his promotional flair, John had launched this particular dealership in 1948 with a massive advertising effort, particularly impressive for a small town. His advertisements portrayed John as “Uncle Johnny Rollins — the Working Man’s Friend,” and created the slogan “A Rollinized Car Is Best by Far.”

Immersed in the business, Wayne learned quickly that high volume was the key to the success of the Rollins dealerships. But when sales slumped after a while and profits fell off badly, Wayne and John decided that Ford Motor Company was at fault. Ford, the brothers agreed, was not handling its business well at all. They telephoned Charlie Beacham, who was the top Ford executive for the eastern region of the United States, and made an appointment to visit Beacham in his office in Chester, Pennsylvania. They were determined to straighten Ford out, and in their meeting, Wayne and John spelled out what they thought was wrong with Ford.



*Wayne and John combined two businesses in the beginning — radio stations and automobile dealerships. (1953)*

“Ford is making too many two-doors and not enough four-doors,” John complained. “Too many sixty-horsepower engines and not enough eighty-five. Too many blue cars and not enough red ones.” He and Wayne said if all of Ford’s problems were fixed, sales would improve at their dealerships.

Charlie Beacham, who grew up in Dahlonega, Georgia, some one hundred miles to the southeast of Tunnel Hill, had a fondness for the Rollins boys, and he listened politely. Like Grandpa Rollins, he also liked to think things through before he spoke.

“Well,” he said, getting up from his chair and looking out the window. “I was standing up here and I saw you fellows when you came up. And I saw what’s wrong with your business.”

He pointed to the parking lot. “I saw you with this lot boy that you got off the used car lot and you dressed up as a chauffeur, and you came up in a big black Lincoln. You weren’t riding in a Ford, were you? You were in this Lincoln.”

Mr. Beacham looked John in the eye. “And John, you had on a homburg hat.” John grinned sheepishly at this indictment. He’d left his homburg in the Lincoln down in the parking lot.

“There’s not a thing in the world wrong with your business but one thing,” Mr. Beacham went on. “You’ve stopped working. You’ve stopped growing and started swelling. You go back and put your chauffeur back on the lot. You get those cars ready to sell. And you sell that Lincoln, and, John, you throw away that homburg hat — and you get back to work. There’s not another thing that’s wrong with your business.”

John and Wayne looked at Mr. Beacham and at each other. They knew what he had said was the simple truth, and he’d said it in such a direct yet empathetic way that they took no offense. With equally sheepish looks they shook the Ford executive’s hand, thanked him, and left, chastened but feeling better, nevertheless. They knew what their problem was. Now they could solve it.

When they reached the Lincoln, John got in, picked up the homburg and threw it on the shelf behind the back seat. “I won’t need this anymore,” he said, and his booming laugh echoed in the parking lot as they drove off.

The brothers followed Mr. Beacham’s advice. “We went back, sold the Lincoln, put the lot-boy back on the lot, and went to work,” remembered Wayne. “Our business immediately improved. What we learned was how much work will do.”

It was a lesson that neither John nor Wayne ever forgot, this lesson that reminded them of the value of plain, hard work. And though they learned many business maxims from Beacham over the years, the one that never failed to charm any audience was the story of the two brothers who had “stopped growing and started swelling.”

When Wayne vacationed with his family in Catoosa Springs, the tranquility that surrounded him gave him both comfort and reason to pause. Thinking about the solitude of this place, Wayne felt a twinge of wistfulness as he realized

his future lay elsewhere, and that he had to give up his plans for a large-scale mineral water business and real estate development.

And while Wayne wrestled with his own thoughts, his firstborn son had begun to wrestle with his own time-honored rites of passage — breaking away from his parents, questioning their authority, establishing his own independence. To Randall, it seemed that no matter how he did a task, his father always felt it should be done differently. For instance, Wayne once insisted that Randall plow a field in a particular direction, to prevent erosion. Randall, however, thought that he had plowed the field the right way, and a heated discussion followed.

Another source of conflict was Wayne's insistence that his son ride the school bus to class functions. Father and son clashed fiercely over that issue when Randall didn't want to ride the bus to the school prom his senior year. He was seventeen and in the eleventh grade, the final year of high school in the spring of 1949. Still, his father made him ride the bus.

"I would say that there wasn't much compromise between the two of us," Randall realized, years after time and perspective had taken the edge off their relationship. "The way I wanted to do it versus the way he wanted to do it was just as different almost as two people could be."

There were some rules, however, that Randall later remembered with a laugh. Randall couldn't take the car out on Friday nights because Wayne knew his son wouldn't be able to work much on Saturday if he stayed out late on Friday. And even on Saturday, Randall had to be home by midnight. Wayne Rollins always reminded his son, "I don't want my car seen out after midnight."

When Randall graduated from high school in 1949, his father insisted that he go to college. Randall liked the University of Georgia — particularly the carefree scenes of campus life witnessed while driving by fraternity row. Wayne favored North Georgia Military Academy at Dahlonega, even though Randall couldn't understand why he had to go to college at all.

Less than a year after he enrolled in North Georgia Military, Randall realized that he wasn't interested in school, so he and two friends quit. These friends had grand plans to get jobs and make a lot of money. Between the little funds they had and a few odd jobs they found, the boys managed to stay in a rooming house in Chattanooga for two or three weeks before they ran out of money. When Randall went home, he acted as if he were on a visit from school and said nothing about having quit the academy. But his parents already knew. Someone had seen Randall and his friends and had told on him.

His father was furious. Randall was put to work on the Cherokee Valley farm with a family of sharecroppers, building fences and helping with other chores. It was not the kind of work Randall liked, and he began to think of other ways to earn a living.

At this point, unknowingly, Randall's opportunities to work with his dad and Uncle John were just about to expand. Nearly two years after the Rollins brothers had filed the application, the Federal Communications Commission

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granted Rollins Broadcasting a license for a radio station in Radford. And so, on a Saturday afternoon in January 1950, Wayne Rollins took time off from the Ford dealership in Radford, Virginia, and drove down to Pulaski, another small town nearby in Virginia that was different in one major respect. It had a radio station, and Wayne wanted to see how it worked. More important, he wanted to see how the staff worked.

For some time, Wayne had been analyzing markets about the size of Radford, which had a population of nine thousand. He had concluded that controlling expenses was a priority for a radio station, and he realized that he had to design and build a far more cost-effective station than he had seen so far. Every time he met a station owner or manager, he asked the same question: "What would you do differently as far as the building is concerned?" Always the answer was the same: "If I had thought to build it this way, I could have made it more efficient." The design of his new station, Wayne Rollins knew, would be the cornerstone of his business plan.

With a clear objective in mind, Wayne parked his car outside the small building that housed radio station WPUV in Pulaski, got out, and walked to the door of the station. He knocked. When there was no response, he stepped inside. There was no one in sight. The announcer's seat was empty, the microphone leaning expectantly forward while a record revolved on a turntable. Wayne could hear the station broadcasting but, looking all around, could see no one at work.

Suddenly the slight figure of a man materialized from behind the transmitter equipment. He scurried to the microphone, flicked it on, and spoke into it. "This is W-P-U-V, Pulaski, Virginia." He was making his station break. Then the man read a commercial, started up another record, and disappeared again behind the bank of transmitting equipment.

Curious, Wayne followed and saw the man at work on the transmitter, making repairs while he handled the announcer's job. Here was an all-purpose, combination announcer and engineer — a man who reminded Wayne of himself, the young employee at the textile mill during the depression, determined to know every machine and every job and help make his boss's job easier. Wayne knew nothing about the man hard at work in front of him, but he immediately thought to himself, "He will be my first employee."

In a few minutes, Wayne shook the hand of Fitzgerald "Mac" McDaniel, a gifted engineer with the rare ability to repair electronic equipment and create anything from metal or wood. Wayne talked only briefly, but that evening he called McDaniel on the telephone. "Would you be interested in making a change?" Wayne asked. McDaniel indicated he might. And so they agreed to meet that evening at the Governor Tyler Hotel.

Born in Atlanta, Mac had gone to work for Southern Bell after graduating from high school in 1935. Four years later, he moved to Martin Aircraft in Baltimore, and during the early years of World War II he installed radio

equipment in bombers. Drafted into the navy in 1943, he was assigned to teach radio technicians at Wright Junior College in Chicago. He was discharged on Christmas Day, 1945, looking for a way to use his first-class radio engineer's license in broadcasting. He found the engineering slot open at WPUV in Pulaski.

Wayne and Mac talked for a long time about how a new station could be constructed to permit easy operation by one person, a combination announcer and engineer. "See, the concept of radio production then was that they had an engineer that played the records and did the switching, and the announcer sat in a booth," explained Mac. "I designed it so that the announcer could play the records and turn his microphone on and off himself."

The conversation confirmed Wayne's first impression. Fitzgerald McDaniel was precisely the engineer needed for the success of the highly efficient station that Wayne envisioned. By having one person do the jobs of two, expenses would be reduced drastically. And the concept, Wayne thought, could be applied to other positions as he attempted to hold down costs.

Before the meeting in the Tyler Hotel ended, Mac McDaniel was offered and accepted a job as engineer with Rollins Broadcasting. He would report to work on March 15, 1950, when construction was scheduled to begin on the Radford station. With 250 watts of transmitting power, the new station had been assigned a frequency of 1340 kilocycles and the call letters WRAD.

Returning to Georgia that winter, his head filled with plans for WRAD, Wayne discussed with Grace how they could rent a house in Radford, temporarily, while he started construction of the station. Randall could stay with his Grandmother Rollins and his Uncle Herschel at Catoosa Springs and work on the farm until his parents were settled. Grace felt a sense of relief that they would no longer be tied down to the springs and their farming operations, although she assumed it would be some time before they would move to Virginia.

But the move came sooner than expected. One day, Wayne left the house for a trip to Ringgold and the bank, and it was midafternoon before he returned. Grace had been running the washer all morning with loads of her laundry and that of her parents. She had no clothes dryer; much of the wash was now piled in clothes baskets, waiting until the weather broke before it could be hung outdoors. When Wayne returned from Ringgold, he turned to Grace. "Can you be ready to go the day after tomorrow?" he asked.

Grace looked at him in astonishment. Here she was with three large baskets of wet laundry to dry and nothing packed. "I'll help you," Wayne reassured her. Sizing up the situation, he fired up a small heater in one of the rooms and used it as a makeshift walk-in dryer. He and Grace hung laundry anywhere there was space to hang something, and the clothes were dry by the next morning. Wayne and Grace and five-year-old Gary were soon on their way to Virginia, where they would live in a hotel until Wayne could find a furnished house. Grace had her hands full keeping Gary occupied, playing games in the room, or walking around the town.

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The town of Radford was situated forty-five miles southwest of Roanoke. Farming and manufacturing were the major industries, and the largest operations included the Norfolk & Western Railroad, the Radford Army Ammunition Plant, which was a Hercules facility, Lynchburg Foundry, and Clover Creamery. Radford Teachers College was then the women's division of Virginia Polytechnic Institute at nearby Blacksburg. These institutions would form an important part of the marketing plan taking shape in Wayne Rollins' mind. The combined populations of the colleges probably exceeded that of the town proper, he figured, and this large market segment would be a key to the programming for the station.

After about a week and a half, Wayne found a house for his family in the Fairlawn subdivision across New River, which ran through the town. When Grace saw the house, she fell in love with it. It was almost new, a white frame house with four comfortable rooms completely furnished. Across the street was a large vacant lot, a hillside that had not been developed. That was plenty of playground for Gary. And with his family settled, Wayne turned all his energies to building a radio station.

Already, Wayne had purchased a site on the Old Lee Highway, and now he began clearing the land. While the work was under way, Randall arrived to help. For engineering at the transmitting tower site, which had to be done prior to the license application, Wayne had retained a well-known engineer, Bill Foss. And as the project moved into the final phase of construction, Wayne and John found that the total cost would be at least \$50,000, much higher than their initial cash investment of \$25,000. John put in another \$12,500 in cash, which brought their cash investment to \$37,500. And Wayne was able to defer the rest of the cost of materials and equipment by buying on time (several years later, Wayne later put in his second \$12,500 to match John's earlier contribution and "stay even as far as the cash" was concerned).

And in a transaction that would have made his parents and grandparents proud (hadn't they early on taught Wayne to work a trade instead of paying cash?), Wayne gained a financial advantage with a supplier/vendor because of an error with the wiring conduit for the radio tower. The tower was located four hundred feet from the studio building. Rigid conduit had been ordered, but the supplier shipped a flexible type, which nevertheless had to be installed, at least temporarily, in order to begin broadcasting by the scheduled date.

For months, Wayne debated with the manufacturing company experts about whether the flexible conduit was as good as the rigid conduit (it was), and then he had an idea. "What discount in price will this mean if I do use the flexible conduit?" By the time a final bill arrived, the conduit had long been in place and the new station was up and generating the cash flow to pay the invoice. What Wayne had achieved was an extremely long delay in making a significant payment without any interest being charged.

*Opposite page: Fitzgerald "Mac" McDaniel, the first employee of Rollins Broadcasting (about 1950)*

The station building was about thirty by fifty feet, with both a small studio and a larger studio that could seat up to fifty people for the bands and other live performing acts. Mac McDaniel started to work on March 15, creating the innovative station design that allowed one person to serve as both engineer and announcer, all within FCC regulations. The console was built with all the vital controls at the fingertips of the operator, who could play records, make announcements, and, at the same time, monitor all the meters on the station transmitters as required by the FCC. The engineer-announcer could look through glass windows into both the large studio and the small studio. Close at hand was the wire service teletype, allowing the newscaster immediate access to the news copy at all times.

The new station, Wayne and Mac agreed, was a model of efficiency compared with all the other stations they had seen. WRAD would operate with a staff of only eight people, half the normal requirement. The engineer would double as announcer. The copywriter would handle "traffic," which was the logging and scheduling of commercials. And the secretary would also be the receptionist and bookkeeper.

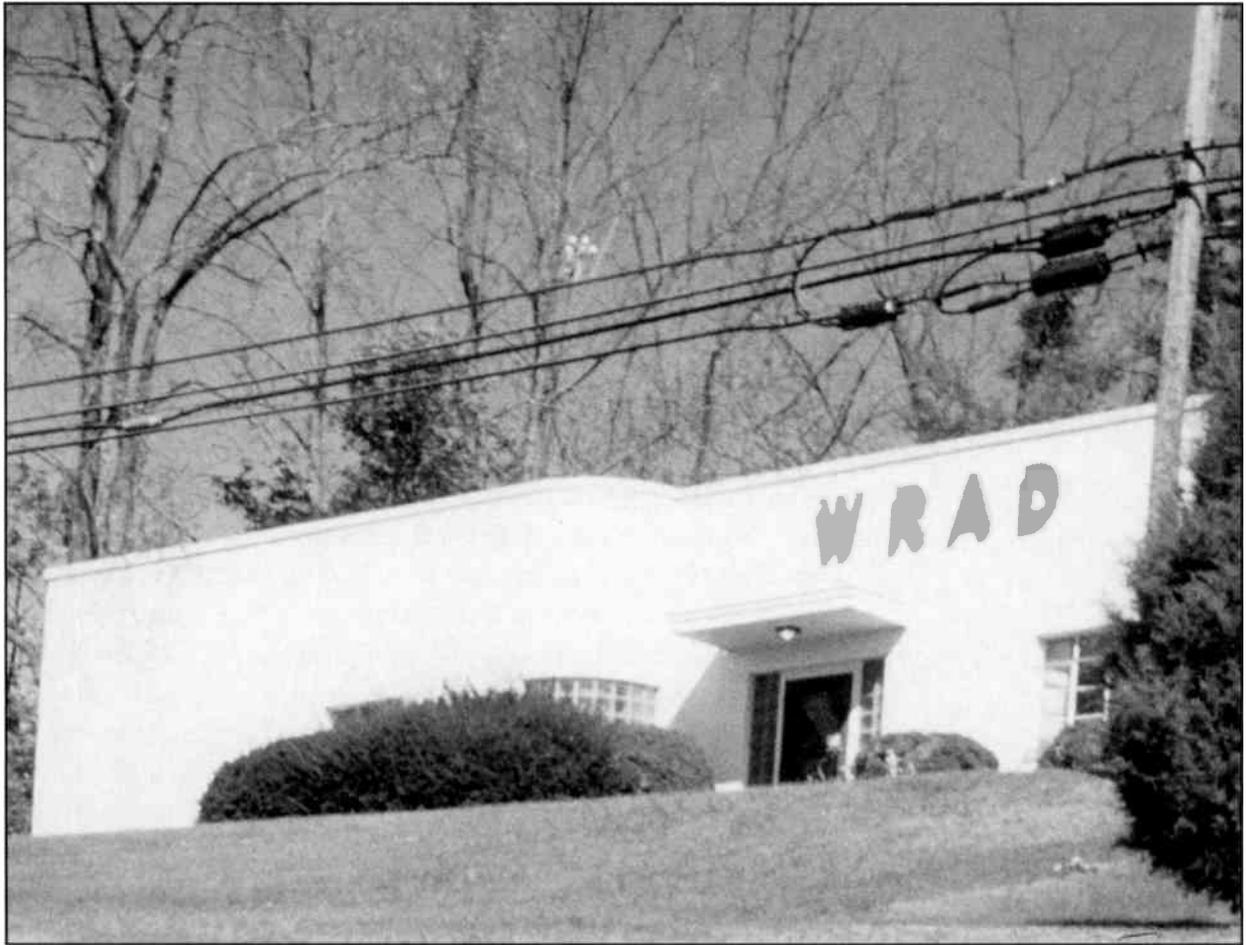
"Everything we can do to keep down expenses, that's what will determine how quickly we'll be able to make it," Wayne told Mac. "We can't sell ourselves rich. We don't have that kind of a market."

What the new station did have, however, was a hometown market with a lot of local loyalty. WRAD was the only station in town, but it had stiff competition from other, more powerful broadcasters in the region. And to succeed, Wayne believed that his station needed to find its own niche, something that would really distinguish WRAD from its competition and help it perform as he knew it could.

Finally, Wayne had an idea he thought would work. He decided to target the area's college listeners, instead of the broad, general audience. This led to another inspiration: Wayne would extend the station's programming for the college audience, especially on weekends when most radio stations closed down live programming and only played records for two days. By keeping the station active on the weekend, Wayne knew, advertisers would have more opportunities for airtime and the station would earn more revenue.

"A whole lot of people don't have a chance to listen to radio through the week, and they ought to have the chance to listen on Saturday and Sunday," Wayne told McDaniel. Programming that featured live hillbilly bands and religious services or music on weekends would attract those listeners, Wayne figured, whose only source of radio before WRAD had been out-of-town stations playing records.

As construction proceeded, Wayne launched an aggressive campaign to sell advertising on WRAD. Well before the station went on the air, most of the businesses in Radford agreed to buy advertising on WRAD, and no



wonder. For the first time, their commercials would be heard on the week-ends throughout Radford.

By now, the WRAD staff was in place. Madalyn Copley, the bookkeeper and receptionist at Radford Ford, became WRAD's combination bookkeeper and secretary at a salary of \$27 a week. Jim Rutherford, a news announcer and production manager, was hired at \$37.50. McDaniel, the engineer, drew \$40 a week. Wayne's salary as general manager was the lowest, at \$25 a week.

But despite this knowledgeable staff, his highly efficient station, and his initial success in selling advertisements, Wayne felt a sense of uneasiness about his inexperience in radio.

"I don't know anything about radio," he told Mac McDaniel in the midst of the advertising sales blitz.

"Mr. Rollins, you sure are learning fast!" Mac replied, aware of the success of the introductory sales campaign.

So Wayne made his staff a promise. "If you will teach me about radio, I will teach you how to work."

By spring, the building was nearly finished, the tower and broadcasting equipment were in place, the staff was ready to get on the air. For the new

*WRAD in Radford, Virginia, was the first station built by Wayne Rollins. (about 1950)*

station's inaugural broadcast, Wayne selected May 5, 1950 — his thirty-eighth birthday. Newspaper advertisements announced the launch, ambitiously proclaiming WRAD's area of service as southwest Virginia and promising Montgomery County, where Radford was the county seat, "its strongest day and night-time coverage." WRAD was also billed as the region's only "full-time independent radio station" with complete coverage of news, music, and sports. "Independent," Wayne knew, meant that WRAD was not part of a broadcasting group or network.

And while Wayne didn't fully realize it yet, his idea to target the college audience made him the first in radio broadcasting to tailor programming to specific community segments — a practice that later became known as "niche marketing."

Wayne found himself increasingly nervous as the launch date neared. Truth to tell, Wayne was not yet the confident businessman who would one day claim that he never lost sleep after a decision was made. This time, Wayne Rollins did worry about their new investment and whether everything would work. This time, he did wonder if the business would go as planned. For Wayne, the financial stakes had never been so high, nor had he ever been on such unfamiliar ground. And, too, he had so much riding on the station. "I've never been down this road before," Wayne thought, worried about the \$37,500 that he and John had already invested in the station. "It's all we've got."

And there was a bit of Smith Chapel left in Wayne, a bit of the kid who would sit in the country store and marvel at the sounds of baseball and boxing matches coming out of that little box known as a radio. Now, as owner of a radio station, Wayne couldn't help but wonder, "I don't know, when the station is turned on, if it's going to broadcast or not."

He would soon find out. On the morning of May 5, 1950, Wayne was up hours before the launch time of seven o'clock. At the new station, he nervously paced about. "Is everything ready?" he asked McDaniel again. Mac nodded.

Minutes dragged by. Wayne watched the second hand on the large clock in the control room come up straight on seven o'clock. Suddenly a sign was illuminated: "On the Air."

WRAD began broadcasting. From a monitor emerged the announcer's voice, music, and commercials. The little group at the station joined in excited laughter and cheers. Wayne beamed like a proud father. It was, he thought, the best birthday present he had ever had. The station was broadcasting. Their new design, all the equipment, the console constructed by McDaniel — everything worked!

"It went off without a hitch," said Mac. "It was really good, and the city of Radford was proud of the fact that they had a top-notch radio station. It sounded good. The music we played was good. And they had people to run it who knew what they were doing."

“And furthermore,” Mac continued, “Mr. Rollins had done his part of the job real well. He was a super salesman. There is no question about that. He was a man dedicated to his job. That was the downfall of most of those people back in those days, when they thought the radio stations were gold mines. The difference in Mr. Rollins and some of the others who fell by the wayside is that Mr. Rollins tended to his business.

“He knew practically at the close of business every day whether he had made money or lost money. And if there was something wrong or something didn’t go right, he knew about it and he did something about it.”

On the evening that WRAD went on the air, Wayne and John hosted a kickoff celebration for the new station and invited the community to the Radford College Auditorium. A huge congratulatory basket of gladiolus was placed in front of the microphone, and a banner with the call letters “WRAD” hung over the stage. Wayne was still exhilarated as he and John stepped onto the stage and greeted the mayor of Radford, the president of the Chamber of Commerce, and the presidents of both Radford College and Virginia Tech. There were a half dozen speakers, followed by live entertainment by the V.P.I. Quartet, the Radford College Trio, the Virginia Gentlemen, and the Christiansburg Industrial Institute Orchestra.

Wayne and Grace went home that night completely elated. The excitement of the day’s events kept Wayne awake long into the night, reliving the thrill of that first moment when Mac flipped a switch and WRAD began broadcasting.

WRAD quickly gained listeners and sponsors. By the end of the first month, Wayne began to see enough advertisers to convince himself that this first broadcasting operation would work. The sales efforts were impressive; all but three businesses in Radford had purchased time on the station, and those three firms were going out of business. In the second month, WRAD’s daily advertising sales hit a hundred dollars for the first time, a goal that Wayne had set to establish the profitability of the station.

“Now I know we can cover our bills,” he said to Madalyn Copley with a smile of relief.

In the third month of operation, WRAD began making a profit. Its success, Wayne knew, was now assured. And he could reassure Grace, his primary supporter and practical motivator, that he wasn’t going to “lose my behind” in radio.

In a small community like Radford, Wayne dealt with personnel and business problems with great finesse, taking care never to hurt anyone’s feelings but at the same time letting everyone know who was in charge. At some point, his staff seemed almost like family, and Mac even lived in the Rollins home for a while.

"I'll never forget it for as long as I live. It was a home away from home," he said. "Gary was just a little fellow and I'd put him in the station wagon and take him to school. One night, he was having trouble trying to learn how to tell time. Mr. and Mrs. Rollins had already retired, and Gary and I were still up there, and long about ten o'clock, in sheer desperation, he finally got the idea of what the second hand and the hour hand and the minute hand meant and how they worked. It was like a light came on! We have a big laugh about that till this very day."

*WRAD, the first Rollins radio station, recognized the potential of the college market. (about 1950)*

**Tonight at 8:00 P. M.**

1340 KC

**WRAD**

1340 KC

*Will Broadcast  
A Dedication Program  
From Radford College Auditorium*

• • •

**Hear!**

Dr. Walter S. Newman, Pres. V.P.I.  
N. W. Kelly, Pres. Va. Chamber of Commerce  
Dr. David W. Peters, Pres. Radford College  
Hon. John B. Spiers  
State Senator, Ted Dalton  
C. K. Howe, Jr., Radford City Mayor  
And Civic & Industrial Leaders of Southwest Va.

**Hear!**

**Hear!**

Entertainment  
V. P. I. Quartet  
Radford College Trio  
The Virginia Gentlemen  
Christiansburg Industrial Institute Orchestra  
Dick Morgan — WRAD  
& WRAD Staff

**Hear!**

Produced & directed by Jack Weldon  
WWOD — Lynchburg, Va.

While Wayne ran the radio station, he still worked part-time at the Ford dealership in Radford. With his low-key style in contrast to John's talkative nature, Wayne readily conceded that he was never the car salesman that John was.

And gradually, WRAD demanded more and more of his energy. The hours were expanded, and the station went on the air at 6 A.M. and broadcast until midnight. Wayne was in his office by seven in the morning and stayed until after the eight o'clock evening news. In addition to working on sales, he wrote some of the advertising copy. Before the first year of operation ended, he hired a combination copywriter and traffic manager named Leslie Scott and purchased new furniture for WRAD. And Wayne Rollins gave himself a raise — from twenty-five dollars a week to one hundred dollars.

In an entirely different way, Grace also achieved a milestone that year. She got her driver's license. Driving the straight-shift pickup truck that Wayne had bought for use around the radio station, she practiced for her exam in the field across from the house, going so far as to place boards on the ground to represent curbs. In this manner, she learned to parallel-park.

This, in a sense, says a lot about Grace Crum Rollins. She always figured out a way to do things for herself around the house or the garden or when it came time to learn to drive, because she never wanted to interfere with her husband's work. She always felt that it was her job not to interfere.

For the first time in her married life, Grace did not work outside the home after she moved to Radford. She didn't work in a textile mill, answer the calls of tenants, or run the commissary. She no longer shared with Wayne the responsibility of providing for their family financially, and he, in turn, shared less and less in the responsibilities of running the home. Their marriage now had clearly defined roles, with little question of who did the wash or who worked the second shift or who milked the cow while the other cooked breakfast. Grace's role in the marriage was now determined by her responsibilities in managing the home, raising the children, and being Wayne's wife. And she loved it.

"When Wayne came home, I never had a lot of discipline for him to do. I took care of that myself," she said. "I didn't threaten Gary with, 'I'll tell your daddy.' I figured if I took care of the problem at the time, then when he came home it would be pleasant and there would be no disagreements. But now Wayne Rollins and I had disagreements, but not in front of the children. Because I don't believe in that — one correcting and the other taking the other side. Now I might give him a few words afterwards, but I didn't in front of the children."

When Wayne started to work more for himself and became his own boss, he recognized the dynamics this brought to his marriage. "One of the hard things I've had to learn is this," he said. "It's awfully hard to live a life here at the office where you're used to telling people what to do. Then you've got to

AUTOMOBILES AND RADIOS

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general, including Rollins Leasing Corporation, likewise were caught in the downward rush of rates. The Rollins overseas expansion floundered, the foreign venture was shut down, and whatever equipment could not be sold was shipped back to the United States.

Putting Wall Street on alert, Rollins, Inc. announced in late January 1983 that earnings for its second fiscal quarter were down 49 percent as revenues continued to sink. It was Randall's unpleasant duty to report the results — and to try and explain that they only mirrored the depression in the oil and gas industry and not the Rollins company as a whole. As the Rollins executives knew, however, it was a difficult perception to grasp.

As Rollins, Inc.'s 1983 fiscal year moved toward its close, the Rollins executives had tough decisions to make. Final figures from the oil and gas services operations showed the extent of the blow to the company by the world oil glut. Corporate revenues fell 16 percent and profits plummeted 89 percent.

In the oil and gas services division, revenues dropped more than \$98 million, a 46 percent decline, the result of a sharp decrease in drilling activity combined with price cuts.

In addition, the company absorbed losses of almost \$30 million, from nearly \$20 million in the oil business due to equipment asset declines, along with a one-time \$10 million loss from RPS for changing from leasing systems to

*On June 12, 1984, Randall, Wayne, and Gary watch as two new Rollins companies are listed on the New York Stock Exchange — Rollins Communications, Inc. (ROC), and RPC Energy Services, Inc. (RES).*



## THE GROWTH OF ROLLINS

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Cash for the stock would be generated internally, and the stock would be used for future acquisitions. The Rollins investment in Prudential would eventually be recognized as one of the company's best deals. And it was Wayne's hope that the buyback might also shore up the price of Rollins stock, which had been near a five-year low, trading at \$16 $\frac{7}{8}$  per share in late December 1981.

The company's strong performance, however, drew more accolades from Wall Street. One investment banking firm's report credited Rollins management with pursuing "a well-conceived and executed strategy to transform its business base from the cash-generating, mature pest control and broadcasting businesses to the faster growing oil and gas services and cable divisions." Those two divisions now accounted for 66 percent of the company's operating income.

\* By 1982, the company passed the \$500 million revenue mark, after twenty-two years of uninterrupted annual earnings and dividend increases. Revenues reached \$526 million, while earnings edged up slightly to \$46 million. But despite his achievements, Wayne never believed that he had the patent on success.

"The biggest mistake is ignoring the plans of others who are successful," he said. "People complicate business rather than simplify it. Basically, you develop the product or service, you sell it, collect the money and have enough between expenses and income to make a profit. I don't think I have the best way, but I think you have to have a good way and execute it."

His voice, his carefully chosen words, and his undisputed record of success — these three elements combined to make the career of Wayne Rollins look like one of tremendous ease. In reality, however, the company had encountered significant roadblocks along its successful journey: the SEC's involvement in corporations' use of bribes in foreign countries, a requirement of the outdoor advertisement business in Mexico that became a thorn in the company's side; the misdeeds of lawyers in the cable television application process; a smear on the integrity and service of Rollins Protective Services, which Wayne ultimately took to court to resolve.

And when the world's demand for oil fell victim to a production glut along with a prolonged recession, Wayne had to admit that the company's problems resulted from something he had always warned others about but failed in this case to do himself. As his oil and gas services business had grown explosively, Wayne acknowledged to a friend that he had failed to "look behind good news."

When the bottom fell out of oil prices in December 1982, Rollins was unprepared. Without anticipating the drop, the company had already ordered enough equipment and supplies to double its volume of business in oil and gas services overseas, with representatives already dispatched to the Far East. As prices for oil services plummeted, oil service companies bid low just to land orders. Many went broke, and many others owed so much that their lenders kept them afloat out of desperation. The oil trucking industry, and trucking in

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By the end of fiscal 1981, the oil and gas division outpaced the flagship Orkin in operating income — with \$31.7 million versus Orkin's \$28.8 million. The division's earnings increased 35 percent over the previous year and 90 percent above fiscal 1979. And a distinctive feature of Rollins oil services was the ability of Bob Cudd and his technicians to bring a well under control without destroying it, and to rework wells. An oil well, on average, had to be reworked five times during its producing life, and that was Cudd Pressure Control's lifeblood.

\* When Rollins, Inc. closed the books on its fiscal year June 30, 1980, it was the twentieth year of record sales and uninterrupted earnings growth by the company since the initial public offering of stock. Net earnings were \$35 million, almost 100 times the \$375,000 net profits in 1960. Revenues had increased 100 times from less than \$4 million to \$400 million.

The record placed Rollins, Inc. third among the nation's multi-industry companies in *Forbes* magazine's thirty-third annual "Report on American Industry." In profits and sales growth, Rollins ranked ahead of such giants as General Electric, American Brands, RCA, Bendix, Sperry, and Westinghouse. The company's five-year return on equity was 21.7 percent, and its five-year sales growth rate was 12.9 percent.

Especially gratifying to Gary Rollins was the strong recovery of earnings and the profit margins by Orkin after three years of decline. The day after the fiscal year ended, Rollins sold its building-maintenance subsidiary, Rollins Building Services Division, for \$5.3 million.

\* While the oil and gas field services grew, Rollins was beginning an aggressive expansion of its cable business from its Delaware and Connecticut base. During the 1981 fiscal year, Rollins cable television acquired Narragansett Cablevision Corporation for \$1.8 million, gaining rights to build a cable TV system in several Rhode Island towns.

And in fiscal year 1981, the performance of Rollins Protective Services added to the luster of the oil and gas services results. The division swung into the black with profits of \$1 million, versus a loss three times that amount the previous year. By the end of fiscal year 1982, Rollins Protective Services changed its approach to providing customers' security systems by selling systems outright as opposed to leasing the systems.

\* For the shareholders of Rollins, Inc. a tangible benefit of the record growth came in a two-for-one stock split on March 10, 1981, in addition to a 27 percent hike in the dividend to 56 cents annually.

After Christmas 1981, the company purchased back one million shares of its common stock from Prudential Insurance Company for \$16 $\frac{3}{4}$  per share, a total of \$16.3 million. Prudential had received the stock in 1964 as part of the financing package for the acquisition of Orkin. The stock buyback was the final part of the transaction — after Rollins retired half of its convertible debt for \$11.25 million in 1970, and the other half for an equal amount in 1971.

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## THE GROWTH OF ROLLINS

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It worked. Orkin's improving margins were part of the glowing picture painted by the Rollins enterprises during the 1979 fiscal year. Net income advanced 11 percent, matched by the growth rate in earnings per share, while revenues rose 17 percent, reaching \$346 million. Dividends were increased by 20 percent for the nineteenth year in a row.

\* In October 1979, the company's strong performance drew the attention of would-be suitors, and a rumor apparently triggered several overtures that Rollins was a possible acquisition candidate. The speculation cooled after Rollins, Inc. issued a statement declaring that the firm was not involved in discussions concerning a sale of the company. The principal result was an increase in the price of Rollins stock from the midteens to approximately twenty dollars per share.

\* By the end of the year, Wayne Rollins was looking to expand his oil and gas services. The acquisition candidate was Cudd Pressure Control, run by Bob Cudd, with two other partners.

Bob Cudd was a product of the Oklahoma and Texas oil fields, starting fresh out of high school as a roughneck drilling oil wells. In 1977, at the age of forty-seven, he struck out on his own with his own company, an "Indiana Jones" type who traveled all over the world controlling oil wells. He had been highly successful, and by 1979 the oil business was booming.

Cudd disliked "slick dealing kind of people," and the success of Orkin and the other Rollins businesses impressed the hardworking Oklahoman. He felt comfortable dealing with Wayne, Randall, and others. Wayne Rollins was like the people Bob knew back home. He hadn't talked with Wayne long before he knew that Wayne was "just a man that you can sit down and talk with," he said. "And he's gonna tell you the truth. He is solid as a rock. He talks in terms that anybody can understand."

Bob Cudd agreed to merge his business with Rollins, Inc. Wayne and Randall later went to Dallas, Texas, to close the deal, but on the day of the breakfast meeting, Bob was nowhere to be found. Finally, an inquiry with the desk clerk at the hotel produced the answer, which was classic Bob Cudd. "Oh, he left a message. About two o'clock this morning, he got a call. There's an oil well out of control about two or three hundred miles from here. He said when he got there he would call back and tell you the situation."

Eventually, the deal was completed.

\* The oil and gas services division of Rollins, Inc. had become the tail that wagged the dog in late 1979 as energy prices soared, doubling within the space of a year. Old wells that had been capped were now being reworked as rapidly as possible, precisely the service provided by the Patterson Companies. Wall Street analysts, who had earlier criticized the Rollins move into this line of business, now marveled at the incredible timing of the latest diversification.



*From left to right, James R. Hicks, Jr., James C. Roddey, Gary Rollins, and H. Tim Crow, all key members of the Rollins team in 1974*

“One of the things that I told them is that we work for a company, that how well the company did depended on how well they did, and how hard they worked. I promised them that if we all worked hard, they wouldn’t have to read in the newspaper about their company closing down and laying off thousands of people.

“I told them that we were blessed in that there are bugs and rodents throughout the country and they’re multiplying twenty-four hours a day. And the Japanese can’t import what we do. I think this commitment gave our employees a sense of security, that as long as we do our job and do it well, that we’re going to have a job.”

And through an example that echoed the “better than average” words of his father and his great-grandmother, Gary made some changes in the company. “The average calls per day for an Orkin employee pest control service was ten. We figured it should be fourteen. That was the first step. And then I looked at the entire company and established the seventy-fifth percentile for a standard of performance, establishing cost per vehicle, revenues per employee, profit margins, average prices, and all of those things. I think Randall and I came up with the idea. Our logic was that you don’t have to be the best — you just have to be at least as good as the seventy-fifth percentile.”

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## THE GROWTH OF ROLLINS

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With his family and humble beginnings deep in his thoughts, Wayne resolved to restore the old homeplace where he and John were born. It would be a memorial to their life with their parents, a time that now seemed remote. For in reality, Wayne and John had made the transition to another world, one filled with financial rewards, high-stakes real estate transactions, and multifaceted business deals.

To this world that existed far from Smith Chapel, Wayne and John returned after their mother's death. And true to his lifelong pattern of challenging his own accomplishments, and his very notions of success, Wayne was soon on the trail of acquisitions, transactions, and company spin-offs that would set the stage for something remarkable. Consider the following ten company highlights from 1977 to 1982:

\* In 1977, Rollins formed a lawn care division to provide fertilization, aeration, and other related lawn services to homes. It was an almost perfect fit with the other home services provided by the company. The basic premise was that a business could perform the lawn care work as cheaply as the homeowner could, freeing him to play golf or enjoy whatever recreation he liked. And to Rollins, Inc., lawn care even had an advantage over Orkin's pest control treatments: A lawn could be treated when no one was home.

\* During 1977, both Orkin and Rollins Outdoor continued to expand through acquisitions, the largest being the \$4.8 million purchase by the Outdoor Division of Landau Outdoor in Philadelphia.

\* In July 1978, a major restructuring of the Rollins high command resulted in a promotion for Gary Rollins, then vice president of Orkin operations. In the new corporate alignment, Gary became president of Orkin; William Alias, president of Rollins Protective Services; James C. Roddey, president of the media division; and Fred W. Rowley, president of both Rollins Building Services and Rollins Lawn Care.

After three years of directing field operations, Gary found himself back in a briar patch. Orkin's profit margins had deteriorated, and it was his job to fix the problem. He streamlined the business, reduced its excessive workforce, trimmed the oversized fleet of vehicles, and increased the charge for services that had become extremely underpriced.

When he met with middle-management people throughout the country, he told them, "We're going to have fewer people but better-paid people." The Orkin people knew it wasn't a facade when they saw productivity increase, pay ranges go up, and the merit increases improve. Gary was certain his earlier experiences as an Orkin employee stood him in good stead at this time, but the company cuts were still "a very bitter pill to swallow," he said.

And yet, Gary never tried to sugarcoat the company's changes. Instead, his words conveyed the company's future plans, and how the company's improvements would directly benefit the employees.

Analysts, he was asked what he would do differently from his father. Randall smiled. "Nothing, I hope."

As Rollins, Inc.'s stellar performance attracted strong interest on Wall Street, the flagship company of John Rollins' enterprises, RLC Corporation, broke a string of three straight quarters of losses and reported its best quarterly earnings in two years.

The elation of Wayne and John Rollins over their good fortune in business turned to sadness, however, in the spring of 1976. Their beloved mother, Claudia, died on April 13 after a long illness. Said Grace, "She was just a good person. She was a deeply spiritual person. I can say this with all sincerity: If Claudia Rollins missed heaven, there's no chance for me."

As Claudia's two sons sat in the little church at Smith Chapel for the funeral, they turned again to memories of her constant faith in them and their abilities. And even in his deep sorrow, Wayne felt the satisfaction of knowing that he and John had done their best, that they had been good sons in every sense of the word. And true to their mother's expectations, Wayne and John were never followers. Wayne and John Rollins were leaders.



*The RLC, Rollins Leasing Corporation, headed by Wayne's brother, John, goes onto the New York Stock Exchange. The gentlemen on the left and right are unidentified. The center three, left to right, are John Rollins, Sr., Henry B. Tippie, and John Rollins, Jr.*

"The company is in its best financial condition ever," Wayne reported to the company's shareholders. Having purchased 600,000 shares of Rollins common stock at depressed prices in June, the company could count a gain of \$4 million due to appreciation of the stock price after the shares were acquired.

For Wayne, this seemed an especially appropriate time to recognize his older son's contribution to the success of the company. He called Randall into his office. "I'm going to recommend to the board of directors that you be elected president of the company," Wayne said.

Randall's shock was written on his face. He had never heard his father say anything about retiring and had assumed his father would be president until retiring at some distant future date.

"I need to think about it," Randall answered. As he walked out of his father's office, the first thought that hit Randall was, "He's doing this for me and I want him to stay as long as he wants to." It was so unexpected. Randall

sat down and began writing a list of conditions, though he didn't call them that. Yet when he returned to his father's office and went over the list, Wayne conceded on every one of the points. As always when he had made up his mind, Wayne was very persuasive, and Randall felt better when he left the office this time, pleased with the confidence his father showed in him. The most important thing his father said, however, was that he wasn't leaving. "I'm not going off anywhere." Knowing this gave Randall all the assurance he needed that this move was not going to force his father to leave, and he was comfortable in accepting the position.

At the annual meeting of Rollins, Inc. shareholders on October 28, 1975, Randall Rollins was elected president and chief operating officer of the company. A few days later, appearing before the Atlanta Society of Financial

*The Board of Directors of Rollins, Inc., elected Randall president and chief operating officer on October 29, 1975.*

THE ATLANTA CONSTITUTION, Wed., Oct. 29, 1975

## Son Succeeds Father As Rollins President

The directors of Rollins Inc. Wednesday elected R. Randall Rollins president and chief operating officer of the Atlanta-based service company. He succeeds his father, O. Wayne Rollins, who will continue to serve as chairman of the board and chief executive officer.

Randall Rollins, 43, has served as senior executive vice president of Rollins Inc. since 1968. He has been with the company for 22 years. His father, one of the founders of the company, had served as president since 1953. O. Wayne Rollins, 63, was elected chairman and chief executive officer in 1965.

The election of a new president coincided with 'Rollins' annual stockholders meeting. At the meeting, Wilton Looney, board chairman and chief execu-



NEW PRESIDENT  
R. Randall Rollins



STILL CHAIRMAN  
O. Wayne Rollins

tive officer of Genuine Parts Co., was elected to the board of directors.

At their meeting, the board of directors declared

a regular quarterly dividend of 7.5 cents a share. It is payable on Dec. 10 to stockholders of record Nov. 10.

retired from Rollins, Inc. two years earlier, to take a leave from his new Texas businesses and assist in resolving problems at Rollins International.

Every two weeks, meetings were held in Atlanta. It was a Rollins family affair with Wayne, John, Randall, John Jr., and Henry Tippie in attendance. Reviewing, analyzing, and making suggestions, Wayne helped formulate a plan to restructure John's business. John Jr. was placed in charge of operations for the holding company and became the executor of the plan.

At times, the participants became quite vocal — angry, even — over their differences of opinion. But typical of the Rollins clan, it was all contained within the meetings. No one on the outside would ever know there had been even the slightest disagreement about anything. This almost unique quality, John Jr. felt, came from the tremendous respect and admiration that the younger generation had for their elders, and from a deep sense of loyalty to family. When a member of the family called, the others responded. That was the Rollins way. For young John, this was the credo instilled by his father and Uncle Wayne: "It's your family and your blood. That's the most important thing in the world. If another one needs help, no matter what that is, you respond."

John Jr. often told people if he were captured by foreign terrorists, he would call Randall. "I know Randall would get me out," he said. "I'm not sure how, but I know he would do it, and likewise. Whatever you've got to do, you've got to do it."

Wayne's advice and support were crucial in restoring Rollins International to a sound footing. "Uncle Wayne went on the line big time," was how John Jr. described his uncle's response.

"You could never break one without breaking the other," Randall explained about his father and his uncle's devotion to each other. "They would lend each other their last penny."

The concerted efforts of the family began to bear fruit and Rollins International, renamed RLC Corporation, started along the road to regaining profitability.

And the family that neither good luck nor bad could break was reminded again of their family pride when Ruthie and Gary announced the birth of their fourth child and second son on February 22, 1974. This baby would be the last grandchild for Grace and Wayne, and who could argue that his name was not especially appropriate? Orville Wayne Rollins II was born.

Despite a downturn in stock prices, Rollins, Inc. reported its fifteenth consecutive year of record earnings in 1975, a compound growth rate of 30 percent since the initial public offering of stock in 1960. And the national recession notwithstanding, Rollins earnings per share for the fiscal year climbed by 18 percent. Net earnings exceeded \$19 million on revenues of \$213 million.

*Orville Wayne Rollins II, named for his grandfather, and Gary and Ruthie's fourth child, was born February 22, 1974.*



didn't have a language barrier," he explained later. Though it might seem trivial, he had seen enough of these transactions to know that a cultural problem could add to difficulties. Second, the Rollins family owned enough of the stock in their company that Chuck figured they would keep a close watch on their business. Third, this would be the Rollins entry into oil; Patterson wouldn't have to fit into some existing division. "I felt like they were good people," Chuck said. "They knew what starting up a company was all about. They had come off the side of a mountain somewhere and had clawed their way through. It's rather important that someone has gone through that. I certainly had gone through it."

Wayne Rollins also liked what he saw in Chuck Patterson, a no-nonsense man who knew his business inside out. After all the preliminaries, it came down to "trading," as Wayne called it. It didn't take long.

"Now, I'll pay you what I think would be a fair price of ten million dollars," Wayne told Chuck the very first time the two sat in Wayne's office to negotiate the deal. In Wayne's mind, the business was worth that much and no more.

"Well," Chuck answered at once, "I think that's a fair price."

And that was about the extent of their negotiations. The deal was closed January 10, 1973. The new venture was named Patterson Services, Inc., an umbrella for the oil and gas services, and assigned to Randall Rollins, who could now demonstrate his management skills in a totally new kind of business.

By early 1974, a gasoline shortage caused by sharply higher prices set by the international oil cartel created long lines at gas stations in America. Oil companies reaped a windfall as the profits of the thirty largest firms increased by an average of 93 percent for the first half of the year, and Rollins, Inc.'s newly acquired Patterson Services saw its earnings rise sharply with this worldwide phenomenon.

The oil price escalation, however, could hurt a business that depended heavily on vehicles — as did all the other Rollins enterprises except broadcasting. Wayne moved very quickly to counter the potentially devastating blow. Bulk gasoline tanks were placed at large Orkin branches, and at the home office, tanks held up to 30,000 gallons of gasoline. The Orkin fleet of full-size American pickups were replaced with small Japanese-imported trucks. Despite the widespread opposition among the Orkin servicemen, the new efficient vehicles drastically cut the company's gasoline consumption.

Amid the domestic gasoline crisis, John W. Rollins was grappling with problems of his own in Rollins International, his flagship company that had run into the stormy waters of high energy costs and high interest rates. He had begun trimming down the company, disposing of several smaller, less profitable or losing operations. John had watched his Rollins International stock fall from a high of \$26 per share to \$4.

It was natural for John to turn to his older brother for counsel. One of the first contributions Wayne made was in helping persuade Henry Tippie, who had



*Patterson Services store in Lafayette, Louisiana, at the time of acquisition (1974)*

One of the Patterson operations, Patterson Truck Lines, transported, inspected, and stored huge quantities of pipe for oil and oil field service companies, domestic and foreign steel mills, oil field supply stores, and drilling contractors. Patterson's storage yards in Morgan City, Louisiana, were the largest of their kind in the world.

The company was run by Charles "Chuck" Patterson, son of the founder. Chuck joined the business in 1947 after graduating from the University of Texas with a degree in mechanical engineering. After his father died in 1952, Chuck ran the two operations — the truck line and a company called Patterson Mud and Chemical Company. "Mud" was the term for barite, a material ground to the consistency of face powder and used for well pressure control as a weight material when mixed with water. In 1955, Chuck Patterson had quit the mud business, and two years later he had started Patterson Rental Tools.

When Chuck Patterson was approached by a broker about possibly selling his company, he agreed to shop around for a merger as opposed to a sellout because he wanted to stay with the company. Chuck felt strongly about protecting the future of people who had given their all to his company.

Chuck immediately liked Rollins, Inc. for several reasons. First, Wayne Rollins and his family were southern both by location and heritage. "We

## THE GROWTH OF ROLLINS

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more issues to settle. Gary had been worrying about one of the remaining points since the session began twelve hours earlier. He and Jon went into the corridor outside the office to discuss strategy, and then went back to the negotiating table. And Jon said, "Well, we're down to Item Number Fourteen, and Gary is not willing to change that at all. So we might as well move on to Fifteen."

The negotiators on the other side of the table were so exhausted they offered no objection, and the point Gary had been dreading all night was conceded in his favor without a word.

When the marathon negotiating conference ended at 5:30 A.M., Dwoskin was sold for \$9 million, and Rollins said farewell to low-margin, economy-sensitive, inventory-laden businesses. After the sale, with relief and professional satisfaction, Gary Rollins returned to Orkin as vice president of operations under Earl Geiger.

Only after the Dwoskin sale did Gary dare ask his father this question: "Why did you put me in that job? Do you know how close I came to just wanting to throw in the towel, being overwhelmed with all the internal and external forces?"

"Well, for one thing," Wayne Rollins replied, "I thought you could do it. For another thing, I knew I could trust you and that I wouldn't get so mad that I would fire you."

As his younger son had wrestled with the challenges of something new at Dwoskin, Wayne Rollins had continued in his own search for new challenges, new avenues of growth. Despite his widely acclaimed success in broadcasting, outdoor advertising, and pest control, he still felt the need to prove something. The idea that some people would attribute his accomplishments to luck, to merely being in the right place at the right time, was constantly on his mind.

"I guess, to tell the truth, I always had a doubt in my mind," he confessed to a friend. "I got to wondering, really was it luck? How do you know whether this success will happen again? I felt that I needed to expand the business, but I also needed to prove that I could acquire and run something besides these businesses."

Wayne Rollins eyed the rapidly growing oil industry as such an opportunity. If he could make money in oil, there would be no better way of proving that his success was, as his mother had always said, the result of skill and pluck, not luck.

In 1973, Rollins entered the oil and gas services business with the purchase of the Patterson Companies of Houma, Louisiana. Patterson fit the Rollins concept of a service company, providing trucking and equipment rental to oil and gas companies and drilling contractors. A family business founded in 1945, Patterson operated in seven southern and Gulf Coast states, serving many offshore drilling installations that were also customers of Orkin and offering still another cross-selling opportunity.

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## AFTER ORKIN

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On the third visit to the chairman, Gary again explained Dwoskin's plight, why he had to have more money, and how much he needed.

Wayne listened politely and then said, "Son, let me tell you something. This is the last time. Don't come back anymore. You're not going to get any more money from Rollins. I don't care if you take it out of the inventory, if you take it out of the accounts receivable, or if you take it out of somebody's hide. I don't care. It's up to you, but you're not getting any more money."

It was tough medicine for Gary, and at first it made him angry. But he realized his father was right. The money from Rollins was almost like welfare, and the welfare had to stop. The business was going to have to stand on its own two feet.



*Gary inspects the company's growing computer operations. (about 1972)*

And so Gary earned his "Master's Degree" in management at Dwoskin. He and his team developed administrative procedures and systems for business, initiated management recruiting to replace inadequate employees, established controls, worked with suppliers, and organized the sales force. He confronted the company president over undisciplined spending, and emerged from the session in command of the business, bringing all major purchasing decisions under his control. From that point on, with Randall's ongoing counsel, Gary helped assemble a solid management team. By early 1975, the company was operating profitably.

Rollins, Inc. nonetheless had to face reality: A recession was threatening, which was definitely not good news to a wallpaper and fabric business; and major manufacturers had begun to take over the direct distribution of wallpaper, leaving independent distributors such as Dwoskin out in the cold. And as Wayne had always said, "It's just as important to know when to get out of a business as it is knowing when to get in."

Reading these signs early, Rollins, Inc. began looking for a buyer for the nation's largest wallpaper distributor. The prime candidate that emerged was a subsidiary of Reed Paper, Ltd., of Toronto, a division of the world's largest paper manufacturer. In the final stages of making a deal, Gary Rollins faced his first test in the negotiating arena. He and attorney Jon Golden, of Arnall, Golden & Gregory law firm in Atlanta, had to nail down the final terms for closing the sale.

It was a complicated deal. Some of the ticklish issues concerned the valuation of Dwoskin's huge inventory of goods, which was set at \$7 million by the company, and a fair price for the computer system installed by Rollins, Inc. and now working efficiently.

Wayne had dispatched Gary to meet with the Reed people at Jon Golden's office and close the deal. The negotiations began at 3:00 P.M. and dragged on into the night. By 3:30 A.M., both sides were weary, but there were still several

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serious control problems existed. Gary relentlessly pursued his objective of unscrambling Dwoskin's operating problems and putting the business on a solid fiscal footing. Quickly, he realized that Dwoskin's computer programs, once touted as being among the finest in the industry, "were just a disaster."

When the Dwoskin inventory and order-processing system at last began to function correctly, Gary realized that the company was selling significant orders to foreign customers — and then failing to collect for the shipments. Too, during all the other operating confusion, a theft ring was discovered in their major warehouse and it took an undercover agent to catch the thieves. The guilty parties were stealing the merchandise, and Dwoskin was paying to ship it. With 60,000 square feet of inventory, there was no way to know for certain if the order picker had a legitimate order; and with an accomplice in the shipping department, it was too easy to get the merchandise out. It didn't take long for the holes in the system to be plugged.

Cash flow shortages were a constant worry. Dwoskin couldn't pay its bills on time, and Gary turned to cash-rich Rollins, Inc. for funds, twice taking his requests to his father and receiving advances. Rollins was subsidizing Dwoskin's losses. Although he felt as if he had his hat in his hand when asking for funds, Gary could think of no other solution to his cash problems.

*By 1969, Rollins also owned Dwoskin, Inc., an Atlanta-based company that specialized in wall coverings and decorating.*



Jimmy Williams added this to his growing list of memorable stories, both profound and simple, from Wayne Rollins.

If anyone ever went one-on-one with Wayne Rollins and learned his techniques, it was Randall Rollins. Now, in a baptism by fire not unlike what Randall went through in learning the outdoor advertising and the media business, Gary was set to go one-on-one with his father, too. Indeed, Gary Wayne Rollins was about to learn an entire career's worth of Wayne Rollins techniques, all from the textbook called "Dwoskin."

The year was 1972, and Gary had been with Orkin for five years. For the last year, he had been the branch manager in Marietta, Georgia, the fifth-largest branch in the company and one whose profits and revenues had climbed about 30 percent since Gary took over.

Unexpectedly, Gary was summoned to his dad's office. "How would you like to go into Dwoskin?" Wayne asked.

Gary was startled. He liked what he was doing at Orkin and the progress of his branch. He had also heard that Dwoskin, which Rollins had purchased in 1969, was the nation's largest wholesale distributor of wallpaper and wall coverings, and was known to have had serious problems. But his father was very persuasive. Wayne was confident that Gary could do the job.

The Atlanta-based company, which would add more than \$9 million a year to Rollins' revenues, included a fifty-three-year-old contracting firm that provided painting and decorating; a newly created fabric division; and the Datafax division, which offered computer services to businesses.

The Dwoskin purchase price was for 40,000 shares of the company's convertible preferred stock, \$3.00 Series, convertible into common stock at a rate of 1.875 common shares for each preferred share, or a call price of \$125. The estimated value of the deal was \$5 million.

Accepting the new responsibility, Gary was elected a vice president of Rollins, Inc. and was named the general manager of Dwoskin, which now came within Randall's executive purview. For six months, Gary went through a crash course of sorts, identifying problems and developing plans for correction. He had to deal with the Dwoskin president, who had been retained after the purchase but whose management style differed greatly from the Rollins style. As Gary dug deeper, he constantly consulted with Randall and began trying to apply some of the successful management methods employed at Orkin. It was not easy. "Almost like trying to bail out a rowboat and there's a guy in the back with a brace and bit boring a hole," was how Gary later described it.

For one thing, Dwoskin represented a low-margin, inventory-intense, undisciplined business — something that the margin-minded, low capital investment, by-the-book businessmen at Orkin weren't used to. Assurances were given by the sellers that the inventory was well managed; however, as the operation began the transition to computerization, it became apparent that

## THE GROWTH OF ROLLINS

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Wayne allowed himself to become more involved with businessmen and leaders other than his brother John. He accepted an invitation to serve on the board of directors of the Trust Company of Georgia. Not long after that, he met James B. Williams, who was president of the Chamber of Commerce of Augusta and president of the local Trust Company of Georgia affiliates. Jimmy Williams' father had been the principal of the Lakeview school that Randall had attended as a child. Wayne was impressed by the young banker, and felt a kinship from their common roots in north Georgia. After joining the Trust Company Board, Wayne also agreed to become a member of the board of trustees at Young Harris College, where his Uncle Frank had studied.

Within a year after Wayne first joined the board of the Trust Company of Georgia, Jimmy Williams transferred to Atlanta as president of the Trust Company of Georgia Associates and as a member of the Trust Company Bank board of directors. On the board, Jimmy, and others like James Sibley of Atlanta's King & Spalding law firm, admired the sharp insight and wisdom of Wayne Rollins.

"I can remember Mr. Rollins saying to always look behind good news," said James Sibley, recalling that Wayne had been skeptical of highly touted financiers, including one super successful businessman whose feats had been widely publicized. Wayne Rollins had reservations: "The higher the monkey climbs up the pole, the more he shows his behind." In that particular case, the businessman later took a big fall, and was indicted for fraud.

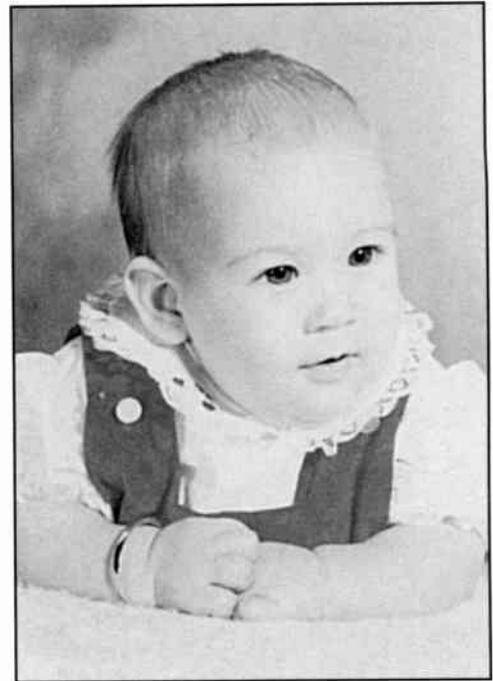
Said James B. Williams, "I liked to be with him so much that I'd drive and pick him up and take him to meetings. Anytime you talked to Mr. Rollins, you picked up something. And you might not even know you picked it up, but later on you think about it and use this. I guess the thing I've learned most from him is that you can be a plain sort of person, thinking in ordinary ways about complex things, and be successful. You don't need to have a printout on everything. He has helped me cut through all the fluff and get to the meat of a problem as much as anybody I've ever seen. He got right to the heart of the problem."

After a meeting of the Trust Company board of directors, Wayne once asked Jimmy Williams about the bank's performance. "We're doing all right," Jimmy replied. "But the stock won't go up."

"Well, Jimmy, how are your earnings?" Wayne asked.

"They're up."

"That's good," Wayne answered. "I've had it where my stock price was up, and my earnings were down. I've had it where my earnings were up, and my stock price was down. I liked it a lot better when my earnings were up and my stock price was down. It's like grinding corn at a gristmill. You just keep putting it in the top, and it will finally come out the bottom."



*Nancy Louise Rollins, the third of Gary and Ruthie's children, was born on July 13, 1971.*

house to telephone some friends in Chattanooga to talk about horses and plans for the coming Celebration, the walking horse championship event in Tennessee.

Within an hour, when Wayne and Grace were ready to return to Atlanta, Wayne found the lifeless form of his granddaughter lying on the floor with the telephone in her grandparents' house. A lightning bolt had struck the telephone line, which had no lightning arrester. All efforts to revive Rita failed. The family's grief was enormous for the young daughter who was beautiful and talented, spirited, and treasured. She was buried at Arlington Memorial Park in Atlanta. And for a long time, Wayne bore twin burdens of grief and guilt. He once confided to Earl Geiger that the tragedy would never have occurred had he not taken Rita Anne to Catoosa Springs that day. Eventually, he accepted the fact that he could not have prevented the accident and learned to forgive himself for the tragedy that forever changed the life of his oldest son's family.

In many ways, the family members began to heal as their focus returned to work and family. On July 13, 1971, Ruthie gave birth to her and Gary's third child and second daughter, Nancy Louise. And for the first time in his career,

*Horse trainer Wink Groover  
and Rita Anne (about 1969)*



## THE GROWTH OF ROLLINS

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network shows. For an investment of about \$5,000 in expenses for the trip, Orkin received hundreds of thousands of dollars in publicity.

\* In May 1972, Rollins acquired United Buying Service of New York, the leader in the consumer buying field with discount prices on everything from furniture to furs, cars, cameras, appliances, stereos, eyeglasses, and travel. With more than two million subscribers in the New York area, United Buying was ten times larger than its nearest competitor. Wayne predicted that the business should mesh extremely well with the Rollins customers, offering another opportunity for cross-selling.

\* There were substantial changes in the media division in 1972. Rollins Outdoor Advertising, which was experiencing strong growth, made several acquisitions: Alford Outdoor Advertising Company in Austin, Texas, for \$248,000, in June; Dixie Sign of Ocean City, Maryland, for \$105,000, in September; and ABS Advertising Company of Corpus Christi, Texas, for \$128,000, in December.

Rollins also divested some properties. WGEE-AM Radio in Indianapolis sold for \$345,000 in May. The sister station, WGEE-FM, had been sold the previous October for \$500,000. Still the Rollins broadcasting operations kept growing, with cable television becoming more important all the time. In 1973, the company began cable TV operations in three more Delaware towns.

And during the early 1970s, the Rollins family embraced not only their remarkable business success but several blessed events. Randall and Peggy welcomed their third daughter and sixth child, Amy Claudine, on January 20, 1970. Not long after Amy's birth, Wayne and Grace moved back into their remodeled home at 329 Blackland Road in northwest Atlanta, which had been completely redesigned and rebuilt. Wayne wanted it to have the look of "Mount Vernon," the DuPont mansion he had bought in Delaware. The remodeling created almost a completely new house, with a stately white-columned front overlooking prestigious Blackland Road. And there was a new swimming pool, a combination luxury and necessity that allowed Wayne a convenient place to exercise, strengthening his back muscles and preventing any recurrence of his old disc problem.

But not long after Grace and Wayne were settled in their new home, tremendous tragedy befell Peggy and Randall, and the entire Rollins family, on July 26, 1970. It happened at Catoosa Springs, where Wayne and Grace had gone to visit Claudia Rollins, Wayne's mother, who was there for summer vacation. They had taken Rita Anne with them, their oldest grandchild, who was just a month shy of her seventeenth birthday. The family had dinner at Claudia's house, and there was a violent thunderstorm about five o'clock that afternoon. During the storm, Rita Anne went next door to her grandparents'



*Amy Claudine Rollins, the last of Randall and Peggy's children, was born on January 20, 1970.*



*Orkin and Rollins received their first diplomatic assignment in 1972 when asked by the U.S. State Department to treat the American Embassy in Moscow, which was infested with roaches.*

to do this and what to use. It will not be satisfactory, and you'll still have the problem. But if you would like, we'll send over one of our entomologists, and he'll bring the materials and equipment. He'll train someone at the embassy on how to do this because it has to be done on a continuing basis to be effective."

A surprised embassy officer gratefully accepted the offer of assistance and explained that pesticides would need to be sent in advance so they could be cleared through Soviet customs. In the meantime, Tim asked the officer to capture some of the roaches and seal them in a bottle of alcohol, pack them well, and ship them to Orkin in Atlanta.

When the specimens arrived, they were German roaches, just as the Orkin entomologists had suspected.

Exterminating materials and equipment were shipped to the American Embassy in Moscow. Three weeks later, Orkin entomologist Glenn Burkhalter, the company's training director, left for Moscow. He found an extremely heavy infestation of both German and Oriental roaches in the American Embassy. For twelve days, he worked to "debug" the place and to train a Russian national employed by the embassy to make the necessary monthly follow-up treatments.

As Tim had predicted, the Moscow service call produced a publicity bonanza. The television networks, wire services, and newspapers from around the world carried news of the Orkin exterminating feat. On his return, Glenn Burkhalter appeared on the "Today" show, "What's My Line?" and other

## THE GROWTH OF ROLLINS

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\* In late 1969, Dvoskin was purchased and chosen to introduce to the domestic market the award-winning collection of vinyl wallcoverings by a British firm, I.C.I. Dvoskin also began installing specialty centers in retail stores to merchandise its wall coverings, floor coverings, and draperies. Further expansion of Dvoskin came with the acquisition of Marks Custom Draperies, Inc. and its affiliate, Carole Textile Company, based in Augusta, Georgia. The purchase was completed in exchange for 29,685 shares of common stock, valued at approximately \$985,000.

\* By the end of 1969, Rollins finally received FCC approval to begin operating its cable television system in Wilmington. The company also established WBES-FM in Charleston, West Virginia, as FM began to gain in popularity after languishing since the introduction of commercial radio broadcasting.

\* On August 2, 1970, Orkin retired the first half of its convertible debt to Prudential Insurance Company for \$11.25 million. Exactly one year and one day later, Rollins, Inc. retired the second half of Orkin's convertible debentures for another \$11.25 million, paying off the indebtedness without having it converted into Rollins stock ownership by Prudential. Reclaiming the Rollins stock had been a key goal of Wayne's when the company bought Orkin, and he was delighted.

\* In June 1971, eight years after the FCC denied Rollins a renewal of its license for WNJR Radio in Newark, the United States Supreme Court declined to hear the company's appeal. Rollins had lost its last hope of retaining the profitable station, but the loss was far from the devastating blow it appeared to be. Rollins still owned all the property, including sixteen acres of prime real estate on Garden State Parkway in the Newark suburb of Union, where the studio, with its equipment and two broadcasting towers, was located. To build equivalent facilities would be extremely costly for the new licensee.

The obvious solution was to lease all the studio, equipment, and transmission towers to the new owner. A lease was signed, and Rollins, Inc. would realize more profit from leasing the property than it had as owner of WNJR. A few years later, when the station moved to another location, the station property was sold for \$1.5 million, more than ten times the purchase price in 1953.

\* Early in 1972, the Orkin Exterminating Company branch office in Washington, D.C., received an unusual request. A letter arrived from the American Embassy in Moscow with a request for help in eliminating roaches that had taken over the embassy. The Washington Orkin branch office sent the request to the Atlanta headquarters, where Tim Crow, the public relations vice president, saw a golden opportunity. Said Tim to Earl Geiger, "If there was ever a publicity opportunity, it's here."

Tim telephoned the American Embassy in Moscow and talked with the administrative officer who had written the letter to Orkin. "For all practical purposes," Tim explained, "we can't tell you over the phone or in a letter how



*John and Wayne on August 12, 1968, the first day Rollins is listed as "ROL" on the New York Stock Exchange*

The company's growth continued as the shareholders received another stock dividend, a two-for-one split, plus a 20 percent increase in the dividend. The stock split was the third since 1961.

And when the books were closed for the fiscal year on April 30, 1969, Rollins, Inc.'s revenues hit \$106.3 million. For the first time, the company's revenues exceeded the \$100 million goal Wayne had set when he first talked with Lehman Brothers executives about taking Rollins Broadcasting public in 1960. Remarkably so, Wayne had worked and achieved this goal in only nine years.

Wayne, however, wasn't satisfied. Adhering to the business principles that had worked so well for him in the past, he and Rollins, Inc. were about to enter into a new era of diversification, one that would result in company revenues climbing from \$106 million to \$500 million in just thirteen years. At a glance, here are some milestones on the road that led to that historic company achievement:

\* At the annual meeting of shareholders in Atlanta on August 26, 1969, Rollins introduced the first affordable wireless security systems for burglar and fire alarms. Two years later, a new division called Rollins Protective Services (RPS) began marketing the use of monitored electronic security systems to homes and businesses.

## THE GROWTH OF ROLLINS

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By now, Wayne Rollins had also decided that it was time to reach for the objective he first outlined in 1960 when he caught the cab to Wall Street and began the process of taking his company public. On June 25, 1968, Rollins, Inc. applied to list 4,626,291 shares of Rollins common stock with the New York Stock Exchange. Of the outstanding stock, Wayne Rollins held 42.4 percent (1,698,220 shares) and John Rollins owned 12.6 percent (502,470 shares).

In mid-August 1968, the Rollins, Inc. listing was approved by the New York Stock Exchange. Wayne, accompanied by John, prepared to savor this historic moment in their business lives, as they traveled to New York on August 12, 1968.

Yet now that the prize was within his grasp, the recognition that Wayne had sought so long for his company seemed anticlimactic. No longer did the New York Stock Exchange represent the pinnacle of success. No longer did Wayne Rollins harbor the notion that the people on Wall Street were smarter than he was. Years later, reflecting on that day, he told a friend, "I found out that they were just people, too. The throne that I had placed them on just didn't exist."

In reality, his previous visits to the trading floor had made him disappointed in the entire process. The very idea that so much money could change hands by means of "those little scraps of paper" went against his sense of organization. "Just handing some fellow a paper," he would say, shaking his head in disbelief. "The most disorganized thing that I ever saw."

And yet, there was great pride on John and Wayne's faces on that August 12, when the electronic tape first rolled "ROL" on the Big Board.

Six weeks later, John was back in New York for the listing of Rollins Leasing Corporation on the American Stock Exchange.

And while he continued to expand his truck leasing business, John launched another enterprise, targeting the growing concern over pollution. Through a subsidiary, Rollins Leasing Corporation established Rollins-Purle with Purle Brothers Holding Ltd. of England, the world's largest industrial chemical waste collection and treatment company.

As the Rollins brothers marched steadily across the commercial landscape, Wayne encountered one of the worst setbacks of his career in November 1968. In a case going all the way back to 1963, the FCC refused to renew the Rollins license to operate WNJR, the highly profitable radio station in Newark, New Jersey, that served the prime New York market with all-black programming. The court case was based on claims that WNJR had engaged in improper advertising techniques; at one point, Rollins could have settled the case by paying a \$1,000 fine, but Wayne had declined because he always felt that the station had done nothing wrong. Now, Wayne decided to appeal the FCC's ruling, knowing that even if WNJR were lost, the effect on the earnings of Rollins, Inc., would be negligible.

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**DISPLAY  
388**

**DO NOT REMOVE THIS NUMBER**

Aug. 5—Mon. 8 AM—00151—Landl 2nd Fl.  
—TIMES—8 PROOFS

**ROLLINS, INC.**

Announces first day trading  
of its Common Stock,  
August 12 on the

**New York Stock Exchange**

Ticker Symbol

**ROL**

**Corporate Headquarters:  
Rollins Inc.  
2170 Piedmont Rd., N.E.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30324**

However, Orkin intended to claim its share of the rat control business — just as it continued to claim the lion's share of the nation's exterminating business. Six-month earnings at the end of October 1967 were up 23 percent from the previous year. Rollins' common stock split again, a five-for-four division, with an increase of 25 percent in the quarterly dividends. By January 1, 1968, Orkin had expanded from three regions to five, with operations in thirty-five states and the District of Columbia, Mexico, Guatemala, and Panama. The company had 8,000 employees and 5,000 vehicles.

Orkin's growth since its acquisition by Rollins must have been a source of pride to Otto Orkin, the Latvian immigrant who started the company from scratch at the age of fourteen. Yet by 1966, with his fortune from the sale of the business snarled in a trust fund dispute, Otto and his wife had been reduced to applying for welfare assistance. The next year a ruling by the Georgia Supreme Court had allowed the elderly founder of the nation's largest pest control company to receive \$4,000 a month from the trust.

On Sunday, February 11, 1968, almost four years after the sale of his business to Rollins, Otto Orkin died in a private hospital in Atlanta at the age of eighty-two. It was with a sense of profound regret and high regard for the man's impact on the industry and the company that the management and employees of Rollins, Inc. ran an advertisement in the Atlanta newspapers acknowledging his contribution to the company.

But early 1968 also brought Wayne and Grace an event of more delight than any business development, for this concerned family. It was the birth of their seventh grandchild, a daughter born to Gary and Ruthie on March 6 and named Ruth Ellen for her mother. The baby was the first of her generation of the family born in her grandparents' native Georgia.

And a baby's gurgle wasn't the only new voice heard that spring. John Cameron Swayze, arguably the country's most popular and effective television news personality, starred in the company's new full-color commercials introducing the Orkin "12" plan for termite control and the Orkinguard program of pest control protection. "It costs no more to have the best," advised Swayze in a commercial that proved highly successful in generating new orders.

The Rollins corporate structure experienced some changes, too. Randall Rollins was promoted to senior executive vice president, second only to his father in the company's management; Henry B. Tippie was named executive vice president—finance as well as secretary, treasurer, and director; Earl Geiger, executive vice president—Orkin; Tim Crow, vice president—public relations; and Russ Chambers, vice president—engineering. It was a lean, highly efficient corporate machine, consolidated further when Russ Chambers moved to Atlanta.

*Ruth Ellen Rollins, the second of Gary and Ruthie's children, was born on March 6, 1968.*



## THE GROWTH OF ROLLINS

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Wayne's simple strategy and business creed clearly worked. Since going public in 1960, the company's earnings after taxes had increased from \$358,553 to \$4.2 million; cash flow had increased from \$943,671 to \$11.3 million; and net worth had grown from \$1.5 million to a staggering \$16.2 million. And all of this was accomplished in just five years.

Amid the honors and recognition, however, Wayne had to say farewell to his second employee, Madalyn Copley. A founding member of the company, Mrs. Copley had risen from bookkeeper at WRAD, the first Rollins radio station in Radford, Virginia, to corporate secretary and vice president of Rollins, Inc. On January 25, 1967, when Wayne announced her retirement effective January 31, he noted that Mrs. Copley "has distinguished herself as one of the few women holding this high an office in a company as large as ours." Sadly, the illness that forced her retirement claimed her life a little more than four months later.

By the summer of 1967, Wayne decided to move his corporate headquarters from Wilmington to Atlanta, where Rollins, Inc. could operate out of Orkin's recently constructed, 120,000-square-foot building on Piedmont Road. The problem of commuting from Wilmington to Atlanta had become acute since the Orkin purchase. And as Wayne often said, "There is nothing as good for a business as the footsteps of the owner in the hall." The move took place on the July Fourth weekend. Russ Chambers, head of the engineering division, stayed in Wilmington, and later moved to Atlanta.

For Randall, the move came at a time of increasing corporate responsibility as the Rollins media operations continued to expand. In Atlanta, he acquired a new secretary, Linda Graham, who had been employed at Orkin since 1965. She was fascinated by the way that Randall and his father could, in conversation, map out plans in detail. And she remembered one particular day when father and son "built" their hangar at Peachtree-DeKalb Airport while standing on opposite sides of her office.

"I watched them," said Linda. "They moved doors, they relocated windows and walls. Mr. Rollins had a newspaper under his arm, Randall was leaning against the wall, and I'm sitting there like a Ping-Pong ball, watching first one describe a wall and then the other move it, realizing that each one knew what the other one was talking about even if I didn't."

By now, Wayne Rollins had slightly shifted his sights from termites and other insects to the most repulsive and, in some respects, the most dangerous of pests, the rat. His interest was kindled by the \$40 million Rat Control Bill enacted by Congress and aimed at fighting rats in urban slums. Wayne believed the principal benefit of the initial federal effort would be to develop public awareness. But he cautioned that money would not be enough to rid slums of rats. That job would fall to cities, landlords, and tenants. "It will be a matter of control," he told a journalist. "We will never be able to exterminate rats. They reproduce in thirty days."

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*Glen William, the first of Gary and Ruthie's four children, was born in 1966.*

During the spring, when termites were swarming, Gary and the rest of the Orkin army of sales and servicemen worked long hours, servicing existing customers and developing new clients. Like his father, Gary began to take everyday experiences and learn from them.

Like the time Gary found termites in a house near the airport. Based on consumer research, company policy dictated that the Orkin serviceman must include the husband when presenting a plan for treating termites. Though women bought pest control services for inside the house, it was the man who typically bought termite service. On this particular day, only the wife was at home, and she suggested that Gary go and see her husband, a disheveled-looking farmer who had a booth at the Farmers' Market. Gary explained to the farmer about the termites and quoted a price of \$350 to treat the house. The farmer, Gary thought, didn't look like he could afford the job.

In an instant, the man reached inside his faded denim overalls and pulled out the biggest wad of bills Gary had ever seen. When the farmer started shelling out bills to Gary, the young Orkin man was dumbfounded. "You don't have to pay me until the work is complete," he said.

The farmer looked Gary straight in the eye. "Well, are you gonna do what you said you were gonna do?" Yes, Gary replied. "And you're gonna supervise it and make sure that everything is right?" Again, yes. "Well, there's no need for me to hold onto this money. I might as well give it to you."

Gary accepted the money and with it two lessons that he never forgot. First, never judge a person by his appearance. Second, by being direct, the man had guaranteed Gary's personal interest in the job. Gary had committed to personally supervise the work, and that meant a number-one job.

By the spring of 1966, Rollins, Inc.'s revenues had increased 65 percent, and net income 140 percent, for the year that ended April 30, 1966. Leading the growth was Orkin, now the crown jewel of Rollins. In October 1966, *Forbes* magazine profiled Wayne, emphasizing his spectacular success with Orkin while acknowledging problems in keeping all the Orkin representatives on their toes. One incentive Wayne offered was a cash bonus for the employee who didn't lose a single customer in a month — reminiscent of the young man on his uncle's milk route who considered it crucial that he never lose a customer.

"If you believe in yourself, that's what makes it in the service business," said Wayne. "The product is your service. I hate to lose a customer, and I think you have to feel that way in the service business. You've got to really bleed when you lose a customer.

"And to really have a service business, it's got to start at the top. You have to be service-oriented. I take a service call or complaint ahead of every other call. Because if you have a customer and that customer has a complaint and you take care of it, you have a more loyal customer than one who never had a complaint. So you turn that into an asset."

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## THE GROWTH OF ROLLINS

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"I think Dad spent so much of mine and Gary's life teaching the fundamentals. Those fundamentals were that you shoot straight, you do what you say you're going to do, you work hard, and you make a profit. And if you're not making a profit you are not doing something right," said Randall. "We naturally came to believe that we owed it to him, to the company, to the employees, and to ourselves to do the best we can do."

In 1965, Gary's decision to work for Orkin was a deliberate one. "My playing time was over," as he put it. When his family bought Orkin, Gary had learned to appreciate something more than his father's extraordinary business skills. With a vision not unlike his father's, Gary could see that Orkin was his future, a career path in a family business that complemented but didn't compete with his older brother's interests and concentration. Here, he knew, was a part of the business where he could learn and make his own contributions. He liked the idea of working and learning the business from the ground up. When he returned to college in Chattanooga, he carried not only a full load of morning and evening classes but took a part-time job with Orkin in the afternoon. And with renewed interest, Gary watched carefully as his dad expanded the Rollins foreign operations by establishing Orkin International, Inc. in Panama, the base for entering pest control markets in Central America and Mexico.

Gary's personal life was as firmly established as his new professional one. He and Ruthie Magness were married on October 9, 1965, in Chattanooga, and together they celebrated Gary's college graduation in 1966. When they moved to Atlanta that summer, their new baby was with them, a blond miniature version of Gary who was born that spring and named Glen William. The new responsibility of a family gave Gary a renewed sense of purpose, and he began working full-time in termite sales for Orkin. The experience, he found, was invaluable later in his career. Said Gary, "One of the good things that I had was the credibility of being 'an Orkin man.'"

*Gary married Ruthie Magness on  
October 9, 1965.*





*The Rollins companies stretched even into Mexico, where this facility was located. Shown here, left to right: Eduardo O'Farrill Clemow, vice president of finance of Vendor; Ciro Hernandez Saenz, operations manager; Joe Young; O. Wayne Rollins; Francisco Hererias Seldner, general director of Vendor; R. Randall Rollins; Miguel Athie, sales manager of Vendor*

had cause to celebrate. Of sixty-three broadcasting stocks, Rollins' common stock was by far the best performer of 1964, with a 348 percent gain for the year.

Randall was now responsible for all the media — including broadcasting and outdoor advertising, in addition to the company's growing citrus operations. The media division now consisted of seven AM radio stations, three FM stations, and three television stations, with outdoor advertising operations in the United States and Mexico, in such cities as Mexico City, Monterrey, and Guadalajara.

Within the next several months, the thirty-three-year-old executive would deal with everything from formidable competition and opposition in the newly developing cable television industry, to expansion into additional foreign markets.

And whenever Randall was around his father, the conversation always turned to business. The older son soon realized that his father's management style was never to teach him the business per se. Rather, Wayne taught the business fundamentals through discussion and example.

## THE GROWTH OF ROLLINS

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*Wayne and the first Rollins jet,  
Lear 23 (about 1966)*

Randall was appointed executive vice president of Rollins, Inc. on January 25, 1965 — the same day Rollins Broadcasting shareholders met in Wilmington to officially approve the board of directors' vote to change the company name and to approve a three-for-one split of the common stock. The Rollins shareholders

\* Although another major acquisition was not contemplated soon, Rollins Broadcasting revealed plans for building a cable television system serving the Wilmington area. Cable TV, then in the experimental stage in several parts of the nation, offered another opportunity to cash in on a worthwhile service to customers; once the initial cable system was in place, new subscribers would bring in more revenues and profits without substantially increasing costs.

\* Rollins also sought FCC approval for cable television franchises for twenty-seven Connecticut cities as well as Plattsburgh, New York, and Charleston, West Virginia. Additionally, the company had applied for a UHF television channel assigned to Delaware and acquired an FM radio station in Norfolk — all part of the unabated push by Rollins for expansion of its media operations.

\* On May 1, 1965, Rollins acquired the Midwest's largest pest control business, Arwell, Inc., of Waukegan, Illinois, for \$3.14 million. This family-owned business operated in nine midwestern states, providing pest and termite control, together with grain fumigation services. A major portion of Arwell's business was commercial pest control. The acquisition not only expanded Orkin's territory into the Midwest but brought about a cross-pollination of expertise between residential and commercial operations. Now, Orkin operated in thirty-four states and the District of Columbia.

Wayne loved the hectic pace required to keep up with the expanding company. At Orkin, he kept close tabs on the operations, and reached three of his major objectives shortly after he bought the company: A standardized rate structure; a business plan to convert out-of-season termite renewals, which would put the business on a year-round profitability footing; and the newly created Orkin Acceptance Corporation to provide customer financing.

And so efficient was Wayne's media accounting and reporting system that he could obtain daily cost and profit data on each broadcasting property, even though he was now away from his Wilmington office most of the time.

Too, Wayne didn't necessarily worry when he was away. As the company grew, he learned to delegate responsibility, something that a man driven by perfection often found very hard to do. He made his choices carefully. In 1964, Wayne promoted two of his hard-driving media managers to the rank of vice president. Albert R. Lanphear became vice president—radio; Wayne always liked to say that Al was so fast and efficient that he could do in one hour what it would take most other people three or four hours to do. At the same time, George BarenBregge, the media division's consummate salesman, was promoted to vice president—television.

And fifteen years after the first Rollins radio station went on the air and seventeen years after the company's incorporation, Wayne had a new executive vice president: R. Randall Rollins. And in the field, he was grooming a new "Orkin Man" — Gary W. Rollins.

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## THE GROWTH OF ROLLINS

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Orkin gave Wayne Rollins entrée into a high-stakes level of trading and deal making that he had never before been privy to. And in buying Orkin and making it grow, the Rollins brothers earned a national reputation with financial institutions, banks, stock market analysts, and shareholders that placed them on a business plateau equal to the one shared by the country's most prominent business families.

And make no mistake: Wayne now had the money, the prestige, the experience, and the confidence to trade and deal for entire companies the way he once bought and sold radio stations.

The beauty of it all, of course, was that O. Wayne Rollins could still see his business horizon with the same clarity he had once used to visualize a career in radio. The companies he began to acquire were building blocks for Rollins, Inc., companies that enhanced the business opportunities for a service company. And with blocks both big and small, with his family and good people always by his side, Wayne Rollins began to expand Rollins, Inc.

The result would be nothing short of phenomenal. Rollins, Inc. would grow to be the nation's number-one service company. And in the twilight of his business career, Wayne Rollins would orchestrate a \$600 million business transaction that made the \$62.4 million purchase of Orkin pale in comparison.

For a man who loved to trade, it would be the ultimate deal.



The building blocks of the new Rollins, Inc. began to accumulate quickly after the Orkin purchase. And by all accounts, the company's evaluation naturally moved in one of two directions: The media business, represented by radio, television, and outdoor advertising; and the service industry, represented by Orkin and a rapidly growing list of companies that provided a wide range of indoor and outdoor services.

The fact that both of his sons achieved success in the family business was a tremendous source of pride for Wayne Rollins. "My biggest contribution, as I see it," he once said of his entire career, "is that I've been fortunate to have two sons who are interested in the business."

Here, at a glance, are some of the company building blocks that Wayne began to assemble for a company his sons would one day manage:

\* Just three months after the Orkin purchase, Rollins bought Dettelbach Pesticide Corporation, the major supplier of pesticides and insecticides to Orkin. Then, on January 2, 1965, Rollins acquired L. P. Martin Maintenance Corporation and its Floors subsidiaries, a provider of building maintenance in ten southern states. The purchase price was \$2 million. Renamed Rollins Services, the company provided janitorial service, guard service, carpet care, building management, and consulting services.



*Earl Geiger, left, and Orkin television spokesman John Cameron Swayze (about 1965)*

Wayne knew. Third, the introduction of additional services; already, a lawn treatment program was being tested in Florida as a possible new Orkin service. After all, Wayne now had over 700,000 new customers at his fingertips; he couldn't wait to develop new services to tap this ready-made market.

In the wake of the Orkin buyout, Wall Street enthusiastically embraced Wayne Rollins as a man with the Midas touch, a brilliant opportunist. The price of Rollins Broadcasting stock soared, hitting \$65 per share by the end of October 1964 — more than four and a half times the price six months earlier. On November 23, 1964, the price of a Rollins Broadcasting share on the American Stock Exchange climbed to \$76 (an increase that would continue until the stock reached a high of \$80¼ and closed at \$76¼ on December 31, 1964).

And on November 24, 1964, the Rollins board of directors approved a three-for-one split of the stock, another step applauded by Wall Street because the heretofore relatively small number of outstanding company shares had hampered more active trading. The board also proposed changing the company's name. No longer did the name "Rollins

Broadcasting" adequately describe this diversified operation. The Rollins companies now stretched from coast to coast with facilities in thirty-five states and Mexico, companies that offered radio and television, as well as outdoor advertising and pest control services second to none. In a tribute to the family that provided the daring and insight to make it happen, the new name would be simply "Rollins, Inc."

In the months and years ahead, it would become clear that Wayne Rollins' appetite for business expansion was not satisfied in the least by his Jonah-swallowing-the-whale feat. As it turned out, Orkin was the beginning of something bigger — not the end of something big enough.

## THE GROWTH OF ROLLINS

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And throughout the country, Wayne slowly won the loyalty of the Orkin people.

In Kansas City, Missouri, Walter A. Helms, the Midwest district manager who had been with Orkin since 1953, was quickly put at ease with his new employer. Here was a man, Helms thought, who was always a step ahead, who would listen, who possessed an unusual ability to communicate, assess people, and make good decisions.

In Columbia, South Carolina, Orkin route man Vincent Stevens immediately found common ground with Wayne's references to farming. Coming from a coal-mining family in West Virginia, Stevens related to his employer's background. And rather than feeling threatened by this unique businessman, he was inspired by his ability to reach every worker.

In Oklahoma City, Orkin District Manager James E. (Ed) Elkins, Jr., welcomed Wayne's businesslike approach and his desire to make the company grow by improving its operations.

And though John Wilson was really shocked when Rollins bought Orkin, this Orkin district sales manager from Tennessee was immediately impressed with Wayne's talent to assess abilities and his steadfast desire to promote from within the Orkin ranks.

Helms, Stevens, Elkins, Wilson . . . "Surround yourself with good people," Wayne Rollins always said, and so he did. As he had done with Tippie, Chambers, Lanphear, and BarrenBregge in his media business, Wayne would now do at Orkin. And true to his word to offer good employees plenty of opportunity, Wayne restructured Orkin's management — creating regions under vice presidents, with districts reporting within those regions. Helms, Stevens, Wilson, and Elkins would one day be vice presidents, while Elkins would ultimately become president.

For support and advice during his first weeks after the Orkin transition, Wayne turned repeatedly to Charles Skypek, the Orkin treasurer and controller who came with the company. But Wayne relied on few Orkin people more than he did Earl Geiger.

Throughout the negotiations to buy Orkin, Wayne had made it clear that he wanted Earl to remain with the company. Not only had he doubled Earl's salary, but he gave him options on 10,000 shares of stock. This, Earl knew, was the real test of his commitment that Orkin could grow to be a \$100 million company. He accepted the challenge. Not only was Earl at Wayne's side during the thirteen-week Orkin tour, but Wayne gave him a free hand in hiring.

While avoiding wholesale change within Orkin, Wayne quickly set in motion some of Rollins' proven marketing methods. Among proposals already under review? First, financing the customer's initial termite treatment; this \$150 to \$200 fee often turned customers away. Second, rate increases, which Wayne knew the industry's leading company could justify; "You pay more for quality,"

For nearly thirteen weeks after he purchased Orkin, Wayne criss-crossed the country, logging thousands of miles in the air and on the ground as he traveled to every Orkin district in twenty-nine states and the District of Columbia.

In breakfast, lunch, or dinner meetings with district and regional Orkin management, followed by sessions for the branch managers, Wayne stood before rooms filled with anxious new faces and outlined his goals: improved productivity, more aggressive selling, improved profit margins, do everything you say you will do and do it now, higher customer service expectations and results from management. As always, the goals were ambitious, but the words Wayne used to describe them were not. One by one, the faces of the anxious employees would relax as the men and women from Orkin began to absorb what this impeccably dressed executive from Georgia had to say, because their new boss didn't necessarily talk like the financial genius who had just pulled off one of the first leveraged buyouts to ever hit Wall Street. They quickly realized that the new boss was just as simple and direct as his "NOW" placard.

First, he explained his work ethic. "You purchase success with effort, the same way you purchase groceries with money. You have to pay the price. And the price in this case is effort." Then he outlined how to approach each day. "Take care of the little things. The big things will take care of themselves. Fifty percent of any job is getting started."

He described how new assignments shouldn't slow down existing work. "Don't stop a thing you're doing. Just sandwich it in."

And yet he urged more delegation of responsibility when necessary: "If you can't do it yourself, get somebody else to do it for you."

He offered assurances to those employees who had been skeptical of the Orkin sale. "We're glad to have you, and we'll work with you. Our philosophy will not be to make any big changes, but to add to the growth of the company."

And no doubt, Wayne used each and every stop on this thirteen-week blitz to tell a few of his favorite stories. "Let me tell you," Wayne would say, and the stories would begin. Like the ones about his grandmother and her eight water buckets, or the Ford executive who once told Wayne and John that they had stopped growing and started swelling. Or the stories of plowing each row faster than the last, and Wayne's belief that if you're better than average, success is guaranteed. And over and over, Wayne explained that nothing in business was more important to him than giving his employees job security and opportunity.

At each stop, Wayne did more than talk. He listened. From discussions with the Orkin employees, he heard in laymen's terms what his research and the McKinsey Orkin report had already confirmed: that in many instances the branches operated entirely differently from one another; that some managers were paid on a percentage of sales while others were not; that some managers ran private businesses in addition to their Orkin operations. He quickly confirmed that to operate efficiently, Orkin management needed to be standardized and streamlined, and devoted full-time to managing Orkin.

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# N OW."

As soon as Wayne Rollins took over as the new chief executive of Orkin, placards printed with this three-letter word began to appear in all of the Orkin offices.

"NOW."

From the beginning, Wayne's mission at Orkin was to accelerate the business's growth, provide more services to the existing pool of clients, and to expand the company. Under his direction, the "do it NOW" strategy applied to everything, from something as simple as returning a customer's phone call the same day it came in, to something as complicated as planning a new service for 700,000 customers. The message from the man who loved to work was clear: Work efficiently, work harder, work together, and do it "NOW." The three-letter word, in seemed, was shorthand for Wayne's belief that if you wait until you're ready, you'll never do anything.

"When Dad took over, Orkin was a large company in comparison to our little company, and everything in Orkin seemed to get done later; next week or next month or next year," remembered Randall. "And we were used to doing it now. Dad wanted it done now."

The philosophy may have surprised some Orkin employees, but it was right on target to those who knew Wayne best.

"There are two things in business that you cannot have. One is patience, and the other is understanding," said John Rollins. "If you have patience and understanding, the person comes in and tells you, 'Here's why I can't get it done. Here's why . . .' and he's proud of his excuse. Now Wayne didn't have much patience. If he gave someone an assignment, he followed it through and he wanted it done now. And if somebody was supposed to do it, they had to do it."

*Opposite page:  
Wayne traveled extensively for  
business and pleasure.*

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# AFTER ORKIN: THE GROWTH OF ROLLINS

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*Stock exchange August 12, 1968*



# CHAPTER IX

*You purchase  
success with effort,  
the same way you purchase  
groceries with money.*

— *O. Wayne Rollins*



## THE \$62.4 MILLION ORKIN DEAL

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been turned down for not having enough credit to buy a fifteen-dollar dinette set for his new two-room house in Smith Chapel. Even the pen he held in his hand stirred a flood of memories, deep and personal. In his mind's eye, he saw the pen that Eva Ruth Wiggins had given him at Ringgold High School, after his had been stolen. And Wayne always paid his debts. When the closing was over, Wayne sent the gold-plated Cross pen which he had used to finalize the Orkin deal to Eva Ruth. He wrote her a note, telling her about the event and thanking her for that gift of long ago.

In Atlanta, many businessmen looked with great skepticism on the Orkin buyout. Few people in the Georgia capital had ever heard of Wayne Rollins, and fewer still knew anything about him.

"The first time I ever heard of Wayne Rollins was when they came and bought Orkin. And I remember what they paid for it. And what they owed on it," said Wilton Looney, the chief executive officer of Genuine Parts Company, who would later call Wayne a friend and serve on the Rollins board. "I remember it shocked me, because I was a small country boy businessman who didn't believe in owing money. I said to myself, 'This is really something.' And Wayne did it in such a sound and concrete way that there wasn't any way he could lose."

In the investment community, some saw the Orkin deal as "an extraordinary, astute, clever, well-thought-out transaction," according to Justus Martin, chairman of the Robinson-Humphrey Company, the dominant and locally owned investment banking firm. Wayne Rollins "was without any question of a doubt the most extraordinary businessman I have ever known. He has the most incredible facility for understanding a deal."

And in the background, preparing to go back to college in Chattanooga and study business, Gary Rollins looked at his father for the first time through the eyes of a young man instead of the eyes of a child. He was at once both proud and awed by what he saw, by what he finally understood.

"I knew that Dad was a successful businessperson, when we had radio stations and he was doing those types of things," said Gary. "But I think the Orkin acquisition signaled to me that Dad was willing to bet it all on something that was major in the form of size, and major in the form of locations and number of employees. And also that he had the wherewithal to raise the money to be able to execute a transaction like that. He was willing to go outside of the media industry and get into something totally different. It was really a bold move.

"I realized that this was really a unique individual. I think the Orkin deal made me recognize how exceptional his business skills were, and how he had the courage and the willingness to continue to extend himself. And even with all this boldness, Dad pretty well understood what had to be done and he had the capabilities to do it and didn't need to rely on somebody else.



Rollins began the complex transaction by acquiring Kinro Corporation for 55,000 shares of Rollins Common Stock. Then, Kinro, the original company created solely as a vehicle for the transaction, actually borrowed the \$37.5 million from Prudential, with \$2.5 million convertible by the insurance company into 19 percent of Kinro equity. As its "equity kicker," Prudential was also granted an option to purchase 115,000 shares of Rollins stock at \$22 per share (at the time, Rollins stock was selling at \$53 per share).

For its investment, Rollins acquired 100 percent ownership of Kinro, which, in turn, held 100 percent of Orkin's stock. The deal allowed Rollins to actually acquire Orkin with an outlay of only \$10 million — and even that \$10 million was borrowed based on Rollins' assets.

Kinro, now a wholly owned subsidiary of Rollins, was liable for the remaining debt of \$50 million. Under this structure, the debt was not carried on the Rollins books, thus freeing the company's assets for more acquisitions. What's more, Rollins did not guarantee the underlying loan, and there was no great risk. Even if something had happened, Rollins had enough earning power to service its own debts.

Under the agreement, the Orkin family would be paid 45 percent of Kinro-Orkin's net income after taxes and depreciation annually until the debt was retired, but no payments would be due until 1968, when a lump sum would be paid for the preceding four years. The bottom line? This arrangement allowed Rollins to retain the use of \$10 million of relatively cheap money, another intriguing aspect of Wayne Rollins' financial acumen.

For Prudential, it was a profit windfall. Ray Charles, who handled the financing package for the company, called it the best deal Prudential had ever made. Ultimately, the company would reap not only the interest paid on the loan but a profit of \$35 million when Rollins bought back all of Prudential's

MARKET

# Comment

ALEX N. CAMPBELL, Financial Editor



## 1121 Public Firms Up Dividends During '64

More publicly held corporations reported increased dividend payments last months and in the first eight months of 1964 than in any comparative periods on record.

A total of 151 corporations boosted their dividend last month. This compares with 95 dividend increases posted in August, 1963, and 60 in August, 1962.

August marked the 29th consecutive months of year to year dividend increases beginning with April, 1962.

Moody's in tabulating the total record says that dividend increases for the 8 months of 1964 were made by 1121 companies—up from 757 in the same period of 1963.

ROLLINS BROADCASTING (American \$63) has been active because of a merger deal, which entails an unusual job of financing.

Rollins, which has gross revenues of around \$9.1 million, has purchased for \$62.4 million the assets and business of Orkin Exterminating Company.

Orkin is described as the world's largest pest control company with some 800 offices.

While this merger sort of seems like the mouse swallowing the lion, the deal was made with \$37.5 million loan from Prudential; \$2.5 million in stock convertible debt from Prudential; \$10 million capital contribution from Rollins (borrowed from Chase Manhattan Bank and Equitable Life Assurance Society of New York); \$10 million subordinated note payable to the Orkin sellers; and \$2.4 million paid to the sellers upon closing from Orkin's cash position.

The Broadcasting company owns KDAY in Los Angeles long with a number of other television and radio stations in other parts of the country.

## THE \$62.4 MILLION ORKIN DEAL

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awake, showered, and dressed. For hours, he sat alone in his room, replaying over and over in his mind each of the contract provisions still in dispute. He admitted to himself that the Orkin family just might back out of the deal. In his heart, he did not believe they would concede on all the disputed points.

At breakfast, John and Jack wanted to know if Wayne had changed his position on anything. They reviewed all the issues. "I favor just staying where we are," Wayne declared firmly.

"Some of these things, Wayne," John ventured, "you don't think we ought to think about changing some of them or doing something different?"

"No," Wayne answered. "I think we've been over this. All over it. These are basic things, and I think we've got to insist on them."

With that, the Rollins group left for the closing, scheduled at the First National Bank for ten o'clock Tuesday morning, September 1, 1964. Wayne was braced for another harangue from Allen Post. He was prepared for the negotiations to be postponed. But O. Wayne Rollins was *not* prepared for what actually happened.

All the parties gathered around a large conference table. Without a word of objection from Allen Post or the Orkin family, the formal signing of the documents began. Rollins Broadcasting was about to acquire Orkin for \$62.4 million.

Wayne's first reaction was surprise, then relief. He had been right all along. Post had given his performance, he'd lost, and that was that.

It was a gold-plated deal for Wayne Rollins and one of the biggest coups ever seen by Wall Street. Rollins Broadcasting's revenues for its fiscal year ending April 30, 1964, were \$9.1 million with net income of \$894,000. Orkin had revenues of \$37.3 million for its fiscal year ending October 31, 1963, and net profits of \$3 million.

As finally agreed upon, the \$62.4 million buyout was financed from the following sources: \$37.5 million senior debt from Prudential (over twenty years at 5¼ percent interest); \$2.5 million in stock convertible debt from Prudential; \$10 million capital contribution from Rollins, which was borrowed; \$10 million subordinated note payable to the Orkin sellers (over fifteen years at 4½ percent); and \$2.4 million paid to the sellers upon closing from Orkin's cash position.

Under this arrangement, Rollins borrowed a total of \$60 million and used the excess cash from Orkin to pay the remaining \$2.4 million of the \$62.4 million purchase price. To finance its own \$10 million capital contribution, Rollins borrowed a total of \$15.5 million from two financial institutions: \$4 million at 5¼ percent from Chase Manhattan, and \$11.5 million at 5¼ percent from Equitable Life Assurance Society of New York. After contributing \$10 million to buy Orkin, the remaining \$5.5 million in loans was used to pay off existing Rollins' indebtedness.

amused Wayne and the other Rollins representatives. Post, who had been a Rhodes Scholar, could have found work as a Shakespearean actor, Wayne thought. Post would get up on his desk, he would cry, he would get down on his knees, even lie on the floor to drive home a point for his clients.

On the final day before the September 1 closing, the negotiations became increasingly difficult. According to Post, there were at least eight items in the contract that “would ruin” the Orkins. Three came up more often than the others: how the accounts receivable would be handled; what liabilities the sellers would assume; and Rollins’ insistence on reserving the right to offset the deferred portion of the purchase price against any undisclosed expenses that emerged after the closing — a provision that stirred Allen Post into melodramatic anguish.

“Oh, my Lord! We can never do that!” he almost sobbed, holding his head between his knees. “We can’t do that! It’d ruin us! It’d absolutely ruin us!”

Wayne Rollins refused to budge. For one thing, the provisions of the contract were standard. From experience, he knew it was imperative that the offset in expenses be agreed upon; otherwise, Rollins could be left holding the bag with undisclosed expenses. As Wayne had learned in negotiating to buy radio stations, this was not an unusual caveat. And even in the middle of a \$62.4 million deal, he would remain the same determined, principled O. Wayne Rollins.

Lewis Cullman once said, “I’ve met every illustrious man in the United States and Mr. Rollins was the only man I’ve ever met who had a zoom lens mind.” Earl Geiger agreed. “He did have that ability. He could focus on the broadest concept or the smallest detail with equal clarity. ‘A zoom lens mind.’ That was the best description I’ve ever heard of his mental prowess.”

As the clock ticked toward ten o’clock that night, exactly twelve hours before the scheduled signing of the contract, Allen Post issued a final warning: “If you insist on these provisions,” he said, “we can never agree.”

And the meeting adjourned.

All the disputed clauses were still undecided.

“I wouldn’t give a nickel,” Wayne said to himself, “for our chance of closing tomorrow morning.”

On the way back to the hotel, Wayne thought over the unsettled issues one by one and asked himself, “Now, am I going to change them?” On each point, he decided, “No. I’m not going to change.” At the hotel, Wayne sounded out the others. John Rollins wondered if maybe they should concede on some of the points. “I think we ought to stick to our guns,” Wayne said. Jack Killoran agreed.

By midnight on the eve of the Orkin closing, Wayne was in bed. As always, he went to sleep immediately, despite the uncertainty about the most important acquisition he had ever tried to make. By 3 A.M., however, he was

compensated. Prudential argued that the compensation could be provided by making a part of the senior debt convertible into common stock.

Remarkably so, Wayne had already anticipated Prudential's request. Because he always did his homework, Wayne already knew that in similar situations, Prudential had obtained so-called equity kickers. He had anticipated Prudential's desire to have stock conversion privileges on part of the debt, but how much? Wayne insisted that the figure not go above 20 percent of the total common stock. Prudential, it seemed, would only settle for something more.

But Wayne drew the line on this point. No more than 20 percent. He knew that if outside investors owned more than 20 percent of any subsidiary, the parent company would lose the ability to consolidate for federal income tax purposes. And as he had shown repeatedly during his career, Wayne would walk away from any financial deal that required him to give up control of his company or placed limits on his future acquisitions. He was not about to concede on that point now.

In the midst of these negotiations — negotiations that would later be documented in a case study for Harvard Business School — a remarkably quirky snag remained in Atlanta. The Orkin family still had not agreed to sell the company to Rollins. It was the wily George Weymouth who tilted the balance in Rollins' favor by telephoning Perry Kaye at this critical point and applying the coup de grace.

After talking about the proposed sale for several minutes, George remarked rather offhandedly, "Perry, you know, I've been talking with some people about this deal, and they said you don't have any authority, that you can't sell it anyway."

That was just enough to spur Perry Kaye. "The hell I don't," he is said to have retorted. "We'll make a deal to sell it!"

By the end of August, the contract for the sale was being drawn up in Atlanta. Wayne was in meetings that ran all day and into the night at the Atlanta Cabana, the Citizens & Southern National Bank building, and the First National Bank building, where the attorneys for Orkin had their offices.

In some of the sessions, only Wayne and Henry Tippie represented Rollins. At other times, John Rollins and George Weymouth joined them, and occasionally representatives of George's outside accounting firm also attended. Wayne had only one attorney, Jack Killoran of Wilmington.

The Prudential Insurance Company had its attorneys present, as did Chase Manhattan Bank and Equitable Life, the institutions that would finance the acquisition. The Orkins relied on counsel from two law firms, or as Henry Tippie put it, "They had platoons of attorneys." On the Orkin side of the negotiating table were Perry Kaye and Sanford and Billy Orkin. Their legal representation was led by Allen Post, whose antics alternately amazed and

By all accounts, Wayne Rollins had no idea that he was about to negotiate such a historic deal. "Dad didn't know that buying Orkin was the first leveraged buyout," said Randall. "He was just making a deal."

Wayne Rollins absolutely felt, however, that he had prepared for this moment throughout his business career. As he and John built the Rollins companies, they had developed a simple banking strategy in which they borrowed money for longer periods of time than they needed it; then they were able to pay it back, twice as fast, a move that enhanced their financial standing and gave them the reputation as sound financial risks. "When they checked the references," Wayne said, "they found everything we had ever borrowed to be prepaid."

With the Orkin deal at stake, Wayne and John Rollins put their collective financial reputations on the line. "If one banker had coughed," Randall once said, "we would not have been able to have made the deal."

Looking back, Henry Tippie would point to other financial footnotes that contributed tremendously to Rollins' ability to buy Orkin. For instance, when Rollins wanted to buy the Philadelphia and Washington operations of General Outdoor Advertising, the New York bank working on the transaction papers "had so many restrictions in them that if they had been executed, it would have prohibited us from ever making the Orkin acquisition," said Henry. Instead of signing the papers and borrowing money from the New York bank, Wayne creatively borrowed over \$300,000 from Rollins Leasing Company to help finance the deal, and later paid it back. Said Henry, "I've often thought that if that had not taken place, the Orkin acquisition would have been impossible because of all the various provisions that the bank had. And it might have been an entirely different future regarding Rollins Broadcasting, Inc. and also the success that Wayne subsequently obtained."

In working out the Orkin deal, Wayne felt confident. Prudential Insurance Company, which had first been lured to the deal by Weymouth when the DuPonts were interested, stayed in the game. However, Prudential officials concluded early on that if they agreed to provide the \$40 million loan, their company should receive some incentive beyond the interest return; the elements of risk inherent in this type of investment, the experts agreed, should be

## MARKET BEAT

June 30, 1964

### Mighty Gulp for Rollins

**ASE 1964 Range: high 40%; low 14%. Shares: 958,371**  
Can a small radio-TV chain buy a giant exterminating company and find financial happiness?

A lot of stock traders apparently think so, because Rollins Broadcasting spurted 11 points last week when the chain announced it had bought Orkin Exterminating for \$62.4 million in cash.

A cash transaction of this size would ordinarily make even most big broadcasters gulp, but Georgia-born O. Rollins seems to have taken this all in stride.

In explaining why his small chain (seven radio, 3 TV stations with \$8 million annual revenues) was attempting to swallow Orkin (\$3 million net profit on \$37 million sales), he said the purchase . . . would complement our present business interests."

Since March 1, he has bought a major chunk of General Outdoor's advertising facilities in the U. S. and Mexico, added a cosmetics firm and started a large-scale citrus growing program in Florida.

Mr. Rollins in following out his concept of a service company has also forged a lucrative link between the various elements. One of the first broadcasters to aim specifically at the largely overlooked Negro radio audience, Rollins now has four full-time radio stations in areas with 30 per cent of the nation's 20 million Negro population.

Three of these stations are in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles, the biggest Negro markets. Purchase of Satin Soft Cosmetics last May for cash gave Rollins a company that makes special beauty aids for Negroes.

What will Orkin mean to Rollins profits? "We don't know yet, but we expect to make at least \$1.25 in fiscal '65" (ends April 30), says Mr. Rollins.

Estimates of Rollins' earnings with Orkin high-margin profit range between \$2.50 and \$3 a share, depending on costs of financing that \$62.4 million loan. Mr. Rollins says he hasn't figured that far ahead yet. —MOSHER

Too, Wayne argued that Rollins was “essentially a service company. With Orkin, we can apply advertising and merchandising operations to ensure specialized future growth.”

And in the time-honored, O. Wayne Rollins tradition, this country gentleman with a brain for business took the entire bug industry and boiled it down to this simple economic conclusion: “A housewife just isn’t going to put up with bugs. It’s way down on the list of things she’ll cut to save money. People want to protect their investment in a house from termites. They won’t cancel that. Pest control is a recession-proof business.”



**Atlanta, Georgia, September 1, 1964.** On Memorial Day, Wayne had made his first trip to Atlanta to see what he thought of Orkin. On Labor Day, he bought it. But there were times during that summer, Henry Tippie later recalled, when he thought “the deal could have fallen apart. I think that Wayne’s sense of humor, or on occasion a story of his, assisted in getting things back on track and allowed it to eventually move on down the pike to conclusion.”

Throughout the summer, the challenge of financing the \$62.4 million purchase loomed over the transaction. After all, in 1964, banks were primarily willing to lend money based on hard assets, which were not abundant in a service business. But Wayne Rollins did not go to Prudential and say, “Here is my media business. Here is my outdoor advertising business. Here are my land holdings.” Rather, Wayne argued that none of these assets were as important as the stream of earnings from Orkin. The debt in this transaction, Rollins proposed, should be financed based on the company’s earning stream and not on its fixed assets — a concept that was highly unusual in a financial community that had not yet regularly confronted this particular approach to doing business.

As the numbers were crunched, the true impact of this deal began to emerge. Rollins had structured a transaction in which most of the purchase price for Orkin would be paid for by borrowing money from others. Even the \$10 million that Rollins would put into the deal was borrowed. In financial terms, this deal represented “the high use of leverage to finance a purchase.” Hence the term “leveraged buyout.”

As the details of the Orkin agreement were debated, the business world came to view the financial transaction as the first documented leveraged buyout in the country. The deal, one magazine reported, “seemed to violate all the canons of the business world.” The press had a field day with the image of this \$9 million company buying a company generating \$37.3 million in revenues. “Mighty Gulp for Rollins,” reported one national newspaper. “Jonah Swallows the Whale,” said another. “Can a small radio-TV chain buy a giant exterminating company and find financial happiness?”

## THE \$62.4 MILLION ORKIN DEAL

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promptly, and made sure it didn't happen again.

"If you have a customer and that customer has a complaint and you take care of it, you have a more loyal customer than one who never had a complaint," Wayne said. "So you turn that into an asset."



*With Henry B. Tippie, left, and Earl F. Geiger, right, standing beside him, Wayne signs the check to purchase Orkin. (1964)*

## THE \$2.4 MILLION ORKIN DEAL

situation. The service industry, he knew, was all about pleasing the customer, a lesson he first learned during a summer's work on Uncle Marvin's milk route when the cow ate green onions and produced oniony milk. Wayne kept his unhappy milk customer from canceling because he answered his complaint



## THE \$62.4 MILLION ORKIN DEAL

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In their offices on Piedmont Road in Atlanta, Wayne was first introduced to Sanford Orkin, president of the company; Perry Kaye, vice president of operations; and William (Billy) Orkin, executive vice president. During the first several minutes of Wayne's visit, Otto Orkin was nowhere in sight. Rather, Perry Kaye, a slight man with a dour expression, sat behind a large, highly polished desk in a spacious office of the Orkin building. After a perfunctory handshake, he asked Wayne, "What kind of business are you in?"

"We're in the radio and television business," Wayne replied.

"That's a helluva business to be in," retorted Kaye.

Momentarily taken aback by this outburst, Wayne nevertheless kept cool outwardly, and continued until the meeting was interrupted by the appearance of Otto Orkin, a small, wiry, graying man with rimless glasses. Wayne thought that the son-in-law treated the company founder with disrespect, which made Wayne uncomfortable. But despite Kaye's manner, Wayne was impressed with Orkin as a business opportunity.

When he returned to Wilmington, Wayne reported his findings to George Weymouth, but expressed some reservations over the \$62.4 million price tag already set by the Orkin family. "That's just a lot of money," he told Weymouth. "And I don't know whether we can finance that amount or not."

Ever encouraging, Weymouth gave this advice: Study the company first, and then decide whether you want to pursue financing the deal. "And if you want to finance this transaction, I can assure you that will be possible."

Study it Wayne did. After reviewing the Orkin financial statements and its history of growth, Wayne liked what he saw. Compared with Rollins Broadcasting, Orkin was a giant: Orkin's sales of \$37.3 million for the previous fiscal year were four times Rollins' \$9.1 million, and the exterminating company's profits of \$3 million were more than three times the Rollins earnings. What appealed to Wayne Rollins was the rapid and consistent climb of Orkin sales and earnings (a 10 percent gain in revenue over the first half of the fiscal year, and 14 percent more than the same period a year ago); its strong pretax profit margin; and, perhaps most tantalizing, the scope of its operations. Orkin, after all, had more than 700,000 customers! With so many customers, losing an account would not hurt like the loss of a major advertiser on a radio or television station. Spreading the risk appealed to Wayne. And Orkin also offered a cash flow advantage: It billed in advance.

By the end of June, letters of intent were signed. The move not only gave Wayne complete access to Orkin's business records but sent a tremendous message — "We're serious" — to all the financial institutions who would be courted to pull the deal off. And for the next two months, Wayne traveled extensively between Wilmington and Atlanta, applying to the Orkin situation every skill he had ever learned in studying acquisitions: Ask the right questions,



**Atlanta, Georgia, May 30, 1964.** Despite his initial reservations, within several weeks Wayne flew to Atlanta, ready to take a closer look at the headquarters of this exterminating company.

The very challenge of the opportunity had prompted Wayne to keep an open mind. He couldn't help but wonder how would broadcasting and outdoor advertising fit in with a service company that specialized in exterminating? And how could Rollins, a company with \$9 million in sales, even consider buying a company like Orkin, which had \$37.3 million in sales?

George Weymouth, certainly, deserved credit for keeping Wayne interested. Since April, when he first planted "Orkin" in Wayne's consciousness, George had done his level best to keep the idea from dying. Without giving either side a clear agenda, he had even arranged for Earl Geiger, the Orkin vice president and general sales manager, to meet with Wayne in Wilmington at the Rollins Broadcasting offices. The two men instantly hit it off. And, again, Wayne came to the point. "I want to know all I can about Orkin," he told Earl, "as a possible acquisition."

For two hours, they talked. Earl answered every question Wayne had about the exterminating business, a business Earl knew well. After serving in the army during World War II, Earl, a native of Buffalo, New York, had signed on as a salesman with a small Manhattan exterminating company. He advanced to operations manager of the New York firm but became frustrated by his employer's lack of vision to increase sales and expand the company. He then moved to Orkin as branch manager in Atlanta and New Orleans. At Orkin, Earl was promoted to vice president of sales, the highest position for anyone outside the family. Still, his plans to expand the company were treated with indifference.

From his first meeting with Wayne, Earl knew that Wayne Rollins was entirely different from any businessman he had ever met. He listened. He valued Earl's knowledge and ideas. And Earl appreciated Wayne's singular ability to ask the unexpected question and "never accept any B.S."

Wayne, in turn, felt a similar admiration for Earl's ability and enthusiasm. Wayne recognized that Earl Geiger, like Russ Chambers or Henry Tippie, was the kind of man who could assist him in developing a sound evaluation of Orkin. And when their two-hour meeting ended, George Weymouth was pleased with the conclusion: Wayne wanted to look closer at Orkin, and meet the key players. And so on Memorial Day, following a plane ride to Atlanta, Wayne met the members of the Orkin family.

## THE \$62.4 MILLION ORKIN DEAL

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received for giving up the company he had started from scratch. However, it soon became obvious that the Orkin brothers and their brother-in-law Perry Kaye had no strong interest in owning and running the business. They wanted to raise more money, but they were unwilling to sell stock for less than the original price of \$24 per share. They were willing, however, to sell the company.

Word of their intent reached Wall Street. In late 1963, a New York investor named Lewis B. Cullman, who had already accumulated 5,500 Orkin shares, took a proposal to the Orkin family. Cullman, whose family fortune came from the Philip Morris tobacco empire, offered to buy Orkin for \$26 a share, \$6 above the market price at that time.

The Orkin family accepted, and Cullman began trying to put together a financing package for \$62.4 million. He first persuaded Prudential Insurance Company of America to invest \$52.4 million in the deal, but he needed someone to provide the remaining \$10 million in equity. To clear that hurdle, Cullman brought in George Weymouth and his connection to the DuPont family. From this emerged the Kinro Corporation, a new company organized solely as the vehicle to acquire Orkin (its name is a reverse combination of the two syllables in Orkin).

After months of hot and cold negotiations, a tentative agreement was reached for the sale, but the DuPont people became nervous. Who would operate Orkin, since the family wanted out? At this point, George Weymouth first mentioned the Orkin proposal to Wayne Rollins.

Wayne knew nothing about Orkin except the Orkin pickup trucks he had seen at the company's Chattanooga office. So, true to form, he went straight to the bottom line.

"What kind of price are we talking about?" Wayne asked.

"We're talking \$62.4 million," said George, a price that had been set in stone by earlier negotiations.

"No. I'm not interested," said Wayne. "I can already tell you that."



*Willy Norris, a service technician for Orkin. Under the direction of Rollins, Orkin would become a nationally recognized name in pest control and the dominant player in the industry. (about 1965)*

**Allentown, Pennsylvania, 1901.** Orkin Exterminating Company, which would one day be billed as the world's largest pest control company, began with a thirteen-year-old Latvian-born boy named Otto Orkin, who was determined to get rid of rats on his family's farm in Allentown in 1901. Otto, whose formal schooling ended after the fourth grade, killed rats for his family with commercial arsenic poisoning sweetened with sugar. Then he offered to exterminate rats for his Pennsylvania Dutch neighbors. "Who cares about rats?" some said. "We have cats."

Undeterred, Otto Orkin kept peddling rat poison: first in a one-pound can for a dollar, then in a two-pound can for three dollars, and then six pounds for fifteen dollars. In five years, he had saved \$25,000 and boarded a train for Richmond, Virginia. "Rats go south," he later explained. And he called himself "Otto the Rat Man."

Orkin opened up his first "branch" in Richmond, where he experimented with various poison combinations and traps to kill rats. Orkin's zeal for proficient chemical control of not only rats but a growing array of pests led him to develop pesticides scientifically, and eventually his company boasted a small army of entomologists, sanitarians, chemists, and termite specialists. As early as 1950, Orkin turned to heavy television advertising with a cartoon spray-can character, "Otto the Orkin Man." Sales doubled in five years. So effective were the commercials that hundreds of schoolchildren wrote fan letters or called the Orkin switchboard in attempts to talk with Otto the Orkin Man after seeing the commercial on TV. And *Fortune* magazine dubbed Otto Orkin's company "the General Motors of exterminating."

The fairy-tale-like saga of Otto Orkin's company turned into a near nightmare in 1960 when Otto and members of his family clashed in court. The conflict hit the news when Otto filed a lawsuit, charging that family members had conspired with a physician to have the company founder committed to a mental hospital and declared of unsound mind. Otto had been taken to Emory Hospital in Atlanta and then spirited by chartered airplane to Baltimore, where, his lawsuit contended, he was incarcerated in a locked ward of a hospital.

A lunacy commission appointed by a Fulton County, Georgia, court official decided that Orkin was of unsound mind and appointed his son Sanford as legal guardian. The ordeal ended with another commission ruling that Otto Orkin was sane, though it did not allow him to regain control of his company. Ultimately, he sold his interest in the business for more than \$5 million. And at age seventy-two, he married his former secretary, who was thirty-three years younger than he.

The following year Orkin's sons, Sanford and Billy, together with daughter Bernice and her husband Perry Kaye, sold 360,000 shares of Orkin stock, or 15 percent of the shares outstanding. This initial public offering sold for \$24 per share, a total of almost \$9 million — nearly double the settlement Otto had

## THE \$62.4 MILLION ORKIN DEAL

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No, he didn't want more money. And as he talked, Wayne understood. At home during that entire rainy, dreary weekend, alone with his invalid wife, the owner had begun to think that he would have nowhere to go, no reason to visit his office every day if he sold the broadcast stations and the newspaper. There was no budging the seller.

Wayne was a bit depressed himself as he and George Weymouth returned to the airport for the flight back to Wilmington. The whole thing reminded Wayne that "if you wait until you're ready, you'll never do anything."

Waiting was costly because a deal could die a sudden death when "seller's remorse" set in before closing. Ironically, and even harder for Wayne to accept, the Dallas media properties later sold for more than \$200 million — almost ten times the price Wayne had negotiated.

George Weymouth was also disappointed. Not only was he friends with Wayne, but a substantial commission had just gone down the drain. But aboard the airplane returning to Wilmington, George brought up another proposition.

"Wayne," George began earnestly, "I'd like to show you another deal, for Orkin Exterminating Company. Are you familiar with it?"



*Otto Orkin launched his pest control business in Allentown, Pennsylvania, in 1901.*

not only agreed to sell his Dallas-based radio station and a television station, but the well-respected *Dallas Times Herald* as well.

Flanked by their attorneys, the two men had negotiated a price of \$29 million for the properties, all of which were profitable; of that amount, the acquired company would have approximately \$10 million in cash, making this an extremely easy deal to finance. The details of the sale had been worked out, with everyone agreeing that the seller could keep his Cadillac and his office in the downtown *Times Herald* building for as long as he wanted. Everything had been written in a memorandum, read aloud, and agreed to all around the table.

The seller leaned forward. "Well, let's get on with it," he said. "Let's get it done. Let's get the papers drawn up."

It was almost two o'clock. Wayne's lawyer said it was too late in the day to close the acquisition. "We'd never get finished now," he said. "Why don't we just wait till Monday? I'll be back here Monday, and we'll get right down to it and get the papers all drawn up and signed."

The elderly gentleman persisted. "Why don't you just go ahead and work on it now and work on it tomorrow, and we can get it signed?"

Before Wayne could say anything, the seller's attorney spoke up endorsing the delay, and to Wayne's chagrin the delay was agreed upon. The transaction would be closed on Monday. "We'll see you Monday then," Wayne told the seller as the meeting ended. On the way to the airport, he read the forecast: rain all weekend.

Early Monday morning Wayne received a call from Dallas. It was the owner of the media company. "I'm not going to sell," came the voice over the telephone.

Wayne felt sick. He began trying to persuade the owner, but the response was the same. "I'm just not going to sell."

Wayne telephoned his lawyer and told him what had happened. The attorney was still optimistic. "Oh, he'll change," he assured Wayne. "You'll be able to get him."

Wayne immediately called George T. Weymouth, a close personal friend and financial broker who had brought the Dallas sale to Wayne. President of a small investment banking firm based in Wilmington called Laird & Company, Weymouth was a canny and adroit deal maker with a myriad of profitable transactions to his credit. His business connections were vast, due not only to his own professional accomplishments but also to his marriage into the well-respected DuPont family of Delaware. Now Wayne hoped that George's considerable talents would help salvage the acquisition if they met face-to-face with the seller.

When they arrived in Dallas and sought to persuade the elderly gentleman to go through with the sale, he remained adamant. He didn't want to sell now.

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a money-back guarantee. Then the stores began shipping the merchandise back because the product had quality problems. Rollins soon closed Satin Soft, and Wayne was more determined than ever to be more cautious about future acquisitions. "I would rather miss three deals," Wayne often said, "than make one bad one."

By 1964, Wayne and Grace had moved their legal residence to Fort Pierce, Florida, where they had extensive property holdings and tax advantages as Florida citizens. Grace spent a lot of time in Florida, while Wayne traveled. That spring, he decided that the vast Florida acreage owned by Rollins Broadcasting could support a citrus grove on 560 acres in Okeechobee County, in response to growing consumer demand for citrus fruit.

In the second semester of his sophomore year, Gary left college in Tennessee. In a scenario not unlike the one that unfolded when Randall dropped out of college, Wayne made sure his younger son went to work. He quickly dispatched Gary to Florida to learn about citrus production, help out at the Florida farming operations, and work on some apartments the family owned nearby. With an eye on the Rollins orange grove, Gary enrolled at St. Lucie Junior College for a course in citrus management.

"I did some growing up," Gary remembered. "And Dad was determined that this wasn't going to be a vacation."

In the spring and summer of 1964, Wayne did more than monitor his younger son's time. He was, in fact, preparing to negotiate a deal that would ultimately determine Gary's business future. In history books and business journals, key dates and places would stand out as turning points in this remarkable business transaction, a deal that would forever be compared to "Jonah swallowing the whale." And appropriately enough, this tale of improbable proportions actually begins with the one that got away.



*Gary W. Rollins as a teenager*



**Dallas, Texas. April 1964.** Sitting across a conference table from the seller, Wayne Rollins wanted to smile. But he restrained himself, careful not to appear overanxious or too pleased with the details of the deal that he and his lawyer had just negotiated for Rollins Broadcasting. The elderly gentleman sitting in front of him, a man whose age-lined face showed no sign of joy, had

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it's within twenty percent as good as mine. I'll let him do it his way. It gives him confidence, and he'll work harder to do it his way. He'll work to prove to me he's right. If I have him do it my way, he may work to prove his way is better than mine."

As the business grew, people like Russ, Henry, and Tim grew with it. And Wayne's ability to surround himself with good people included both of his sons. As a teenager, Randall Rollins had certainly wondered why his own way was never better than his father's. But the more he participated in the Rollins business and outdoor advertising in particular, the more he came to value his dad's wisdom, experience, and his way of doing things.

"I don't think Dad changed. I changed," said Randall. "He was always — without exception — right. He was *just right*. He thought about things. If you asked a question, he would wait a while before answering you. It would be a good, reasonable answer. And when he gave you an answer, it was right."

From a distance, perhaps, Gary saw even further into his dad's and Randall's situation, offering a perspective that made the picture whole. "I think Dad changed a lot, too," he later said, when asked about the relationship between his father and his older brother. "I think Dad came to better understand Randall's abilities and the fact that Randall wasn't going to be exactly like him and vice versa. I think with the first child, you want to make them in your image. Then, you mellow out a little and you're able to say, 'Gee, this is not going to work like that.' And this is exactly how Randall and Dad got reconciled. They both came to understand one another from a realistic point of view, and not an emotional point of view."

Randall's role in the company had expanded by 1964, through the recent acquisition of two new outdoor advertising concerns. In November 1963, Rollins had acquired a General Outdoor Advertising subsidiary in Mexico for \$500,000, with plants and offices in Mexico City, Guadalajara, Monterrey, and throughout Mexico. In a matter of weeks, Rollins had purchased General Outdoor's business in the Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., and the Delmarva Peninsula areas. This \$6 million acquisition added thirty-seven advertising markets; two were major markets that offered a population of 6.5 million people and an effective buying power exceeding \$16 billion a year. This made Rollins Outdoor one of the largest outdoor advertising companies in the United States.

Another new business opportunity arose in early 1964, an idea created through the highly successful Rollins Broadcasting penetration of the black radio market. One of the major sponsors on black-oriented radio stations was a cosmetics manufacturer, producer of the popular Pink Ice, touted as a sure cure for wrinkles. The son of the cosmetic company's founder had developed this product and a line of African-American cosmetics under the brand name of Satin Soft.

Satin Soft became the newest Rollins acquisition, but resulted in a venture that Wayne was not particularly proud of. Pink Ice was oversold to drugstores with

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of humor were needed in various transitions, to break the tension. And another item that added to his stature was his excellent reputation in financial circles. And that has to be earned. You don't walk in the front door and say, 'My name is Wayne Rollins, and I've got a good character, integrity, and I come well recommended.' You build a record based on your experience, and that's how you really attain credibility, character, and integrity."

Wayne looked for the same qualities in his employees, and often rewarded those who demonstrated exceptional talent and dedication. Rollins vice president Albert R. Lanphear had moved up from general manager of WNJR radio in Newark to a newly created national sales office in 1957 and later to vice president of radio operations. He was known for his skills in managing people and his capacity for working much faster than others. George BarenBregge had been vice president and general manager of WPTZ-TV in Plattsburgh before moving up to vice president in charge of television operations for the company in 1957. He was a top-notch salesman and, like Lanphear, a hard-driving manager. John R. Wilson was a supersalesman who had joined Rollins in 1958 at the national sales office in New York and was now in Chicago leading Midwest sales. Like others in the company, John greatly admired Wayne Rollins because he was easy to approach, straightforward, and a man of his word. No matter what the issue, John always left a meeting with Wayne Rollins feeling assured, his self-confidence elevated.

"I've always felt a responsibility to the employees," said Wayne. "My idea is you're supposed to give that person a job, and then you're supposed to supervise him so that you get the very best he has in him — not half of what he has, but the very best. That way, you make him a person who can provide better for his family, education, and general living, and I think you have that responsibility as his supervisor."

From the time he first met his new boss at WAMS in Wilmington and throughout his career as Rollins public relations manager, Tim Crow recalled seeing Wayne Rollins work his magic with people. "He probably is the prime motivator that you could ever hope to meet. He can get people to do things they never even imagined they could do. He had a way of getting you to do it and making you like it. Top to bottom, he could motivate people like I've never seen. I'm not talking about artificial motivation. I'm not talking about a pep rally. I'm just talking about sitting down. He could explain it in such a way you could just see yourself doing it, and know that you could succeed doing it. You'd walk out of his office knowing that you could do just exactly what he had asked you to do. He just had that gift. It was just simple, plain vanilla, straightforward. Powerful!"

Too, Wayne always led by example. He worked hard, and he never asked more of his employees than he did of himself. But he learned to compromise, to a point. Said Wayne, "I'll take the other person's way instead of mine if I think

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signal fell through, Wayne never lacked faith in Russ's ability to correct the problem. Indeed, Wayne's confidence in Russ to get the job done was the most important factor in their relationship, as far as Russ was concerned. It wasn't long before Russ moved KDAY from Santa Monica to Los Angeles and constructed a new station with six new towers. And he devised a transmitting system that minimized interference with the Hermosillo station and tripled KDAY's audience coverage.

"I think, as a philosophy, that Wayne and I looked at difficult jobs as something that was an advantage to us because other people either didn't or couldn't or wouldn't take the risk of doing it," said Russ. "And I don't think I ever failed Rollins on getting those difficult jobs done. The more important thing to me is when everyone else would say, 'This can't be done,' and Wayne would stick with me. He would ignore everybody else and he would take the position that if Russ said it can be done, it can be done."

Henry Tippie once described the characteristics that made Wayne Rollins unique. "First of all, he was very astute. He had an outstanding memory, a very quick mind, and he could ask very penetrating questions. He was extremely quick to learn, and coupled with that was his excellent sense of humor and his ability to tell a story. And many times, that ability to tell a story and that sense

*Randall (left) and Wayne Rollins (right) with Russ Chambers while at a meeting in Lake Charles, Louisiana, in the early 1980s*





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ith his business and financial success well in hand, Wayne's confidence soared. Gone was the young WRAD radio entrepreneur who had nervously waited for his first station to go on the air. In his place was a businessman who rarely, if ever, doubted his decisions.

"After I sign a deal, I never go into second thoughts. I never lose sleep," said Wayne. "I don't lose much sleep to start with. I go to sleep immediately when I go to bed. Now the more I have on my mind, the earlier I wake up."

The success of his career so far was grounded in business axioms that Wayne had learned from the time he was a little boy: Prepare and learn to work, compete against the average, never waste time or effort, look behind good news, and take advantage of good opportunities as they come along.

And as his media and billboard advertising business grew, Wayne Rollins added another business rule to his list: Surround yourself with good people.

"If you're going to build a business as well as you'd like, you ought to surround yourself with people who, on particular things, are smarter than you are," said Wayne. "And I don't hesitate. That doesn't bother me a bit."

By 1964, Wayne had surrounded himself with excellent people like Russ Chambers, Henry Tippie, Tim Crow, Jim Roddey, Albert R. Lanphear, George BarenBregge, and John R. Wilson.

Since meeting Wayne in 1952, Russ Chambers had highly valued his judgment, wisdom, and confidence, particularly in 1963 when Russ found himself negotiating with a station in Hermosillo, Mexico. The station was on the same frequency as the newest Rollins station, KDAY; if KDAY expanded its broadcast coverage as Wayne planned, it would encounter interference with the Mexican station. When the company's plan for the Mexican station to redirect its radio

*Opposite page: Wayne and John, aboard the company jet (about 1967)*

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*O. Wayne Rollins finalizing the Orkin deal (September 1964)*



# CHAPTER VIII

*I think the Orkin deal is really  
when it sunk in to me  
that my father was more than  
a successful business person.  
I realized that he was extraordinary.*

— Gary W. Rollins

## EXPANDING AND GROWING

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But before he did so, Wayne had a favor to ask of Curl Hobbs, the farmer who managed his Delaware farm. One day he summoned Curl and told him to fix up a back porch on the farm house. Curl thought his employer wanted the porch screened in, so he could have breakfast and look out over the farm.

"No," Wayne said, "I want you to weatherboard it." He told Curl where to place two windows. And he emphasized that he wanted a tin roof. "Don't put any ceiling in it," Wayne directed.

Then after a pause, he said, "I guess you think this is rather odd."

"I certainly do," Curl replied.

"Well, I'll tell you what I want it for," Wayne explained. "I want to come down here on the weekend and hear the rain hit that roof, like it did in the house where I was raised in Catoosa County."

Wayne Rollins, you see, might have found the ticket out of Catoosa County, but he always went back. Back to the three-room house where he grew up, a house with a tin roof and a kitchen made out of an old store that didn't have a ceiling. Back to the ridge overlooking Smith Chapel church and the little community of Tunnel Hill, his heart always filled with nothing but gratitude for the people and the land that gave him a sense of place, a sense of belonging.

To that land and those people, Wayne Rollins often returned, even if he was sitting on a porch in Delaware, listening to the sound of rain on a tin roof.

A stroke of marketing and promotional genius gained Rollins widespread news media coverage early in 1963. Continental Broadcasting, the Rollins black radio network, announced the results of a survey of black product preference. The five markets covered in the survey were New York–New Jersey, Los Angeles, Chicago, Norfolk, and Indianapolis. From this study, advertisers learned that targeting black consumers sharply increased their sales. For Rollins Broadcasting and its black-targeted stations, the survey produced media awareness of this marketing potential that couldn't be bought.

Due in part to this new advertising industry exposure, Rollins was invited to speak on March 21, 1963, before the New York Society of Security Analysts. It was the opportunity of a lifetime, and Wayne didn't waste a moment discussing anything but Rollins Broadcasting, Inc. And when he closed, Wayne spoke with pride of the company's financial position. "Our cash flow in two years would equal our entire debt," he said. "But since this debt is financed on an interest rate of some three to four percent, we do not wish to use our cash flow to retire this debt. We would prefer to spend it to grow our business. I can say that we have always repaid all bank loans and our lines of credit are open."

When the analysts walked away from Wayne's presentation, they carried but one picture of Rollins in their minds: a strong, well-managed company with excellent growth prospects, adding to the growing recognition of Rollins Broadcasting by Wall Street.

Less than two months later, recognition of another kind came to John Rollins. On May 15, 1963, in a ceremony at the Waldorf Astoria in New York, the coveted Horatio Alger Award was presented to him, placing this gregarious Georgia-born supersalesman among such illustrious figures as Dwight Eisenhower, Billy Graham, and Bob Hope as recipients of the same award. The award, created by the American Schools and Colleges Association to inspire young people to seize their opportunities, took note of John's humble roots and his ability to be successful at any kind of job from an early age.

Crediting hard work and persistence for his success, John quipped, "The things that I am most proud of I did before I realized they were impossible." As the two brothers always knew, "impossible" was not a word to be found in their vocabulary.

Without question, radio had been Wayne Rollins' ticket out of Catoosa County and a business venture he no longer had the physical strength to endure. Without question, radio would be his ticket into the world of cable television, broadcasting history books, and a business much larger than anything the two brothers had ever even dreamed of.

The man who once said he "didn't know one thing about radio" wasn't finished yet. The fifty-year-old businessman had set the stage for yet another business transaction, one that would challenge the very notion of what a business deal was all about.

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*Timothy Curtis Rollins,  
Randall and Peggy's  
fifth child, was born on  
October 14, 1962.*

As Gary settled into college life at Chattanooga, Randall was back in the hospital waiting room for expectant fathers. On October 14, 1962, Peggy gave birth to her third son, Timothy Curtis Rollins. And it wouldn't be long before Randall and Peggy would have a new house big enough for their five children.

It all started when Wayne learned of the auction of a huge DuPont mansion in Greenville, Delaware, near Wilmington. He and Grace toured the place, a replica of Mount Vernon, even down to the cherry trees. Grace did not care for the house, but Wayne had made up his mind. He bought the two-story mansion with thirteen rooms and an Olympic-size swimming pool for \$125,000 in 1962.

As soon as the transaction was closed, he hurried home to tell Grace. "Well," responded an unimpressed Grace, "I'm not going to move into that big house. Just two of us? We don't have a bit of reason in the world to live in that big house. We've got a nice home here."

And Grace stood her ground. She wasn't moving. Wayne thought a while. Why not turn the big house over to Randall, who had a large family and could make good use of the place? Randall accepted gratefully.

The home would need certain renovations, such as extra partitions to provide more bedroom space for the children. The Mount Vernon grounds also needed maintenance and landscaping. It was here that Jim Roddey, recently transferred from Texas to Wilmington, was called on to supervise some of the work at the mansion. And Roddey made a big mistake, he later admitted: He misjudged Wayne Rollins' love of dogwood trees, and had his workers cut down a fifty-year-old dogwood instead of the dead tree they were supposed to cut.

A few days later, Roddey and Randall were walking from the train station to the Rollins offices, when they heard the unmistakable voice of Wayne Rollins booming out over the parking lot. "The idiots cut down my tree!" Roddey turned to see Wayne standing in the bed of a truck and "cradling the cut branches of his dogwood in his arms like a baby."

Roddey never forgot that potentially career-limiting experience. After all, Roddey had been transferred to Wilmington to help start up a new Rollins Outdoor business in Delaware. The national advertisers asked Rollins to come into the market and clean it up; Rollins tried to buy out a local owner, but he refused to sell, so they decided to build their own plant. Bringing in Texas crews and employing the blitz approach used with great success in Texas, Rollins began leasing sites and erecting boards. The new business opened in August 1962, with about four hundred billboards, compared with some six hundred owned by the competing firm. Wayne was so impressed with the effort that he eventually named Roddey president of the company's media division — though he teased Roddey that he would have done so sooner if Roddey hadn't cut down his dogwood.

“All these things are in the Sears catalog,” Wayne explained. “You don’t have to buy at Sears, but at least you will learn about what price you ought to be paying.”

Roddey found a Sears catalog, which he used as Wayne had suggested. Roddey came to understand that all the managers kept Sears catalogs for the same reason. Roddey was deeply impressed with the common sense and the insight of Wayne Rollins. And the “Sears catalog” dialogue was added to the growing list of “Wayne Rollins” stories that would become legendary in the Rollins corporation.

In the spring of 1962, romance was in the air for young Gary Rollins, a senior in high school and still as blond and handsome as the little boy who played on the beach in Rehoboth, but now a towering six-foot-two. It was time for the May dance at Mount Pleasant High, and Gary didn’t have a date yet. As it turned out, another senior named Ruth Ellen Magness needed a tall date because she wanted to wear her high spiked heels, then in vogue. “What about Gary Rollins?” one of her friends suggested. “He’s six-two.”

Word traveled through the grapevine to Gary, and he invited Ruthie. They were smitten with each other from the start and began going steady. That fall, they would both be off to college — Ruthie to the University of Delaware and Gary to the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. But these two did not lose touch.

As preparations were made for Gary to go to college, Grace began to feel the empty nest symptoms. Gary’s trunk had been sent by train to Chattanooga, and he planned to fly down that week to begin classes. Grace lay across a bed, thinking that the time had come to give up her younger son, the son she had raised virtually alone while Wayne took care of the business. How could she give him up? The little fella who had lived with her in a hotel in Radford, her beach buddy and fellow stray cat lover in Rehoboth, the baby who loved to be held and rocked in a rocking chair . . . Grace was still crying when Wayne came in.

“Grace, stop that,” he admonished. “We should be so proud that he can go to school, that we are financially able to send him.”

The telephone rang. It was the emergency room at Wilmington Hospital. Gary had been in an automobile accident but fortunately was not seriously hurt. Wayne and Grace rushed to the hospital to find Gary covered with bruises and abrasions. He looked terrible, only one shoe on, his ears full of black dirt and grime. He had been thrown from the front seat of a Volkswagen after rolling over several times, when a tire had blown out about a half mile from his home. Grace hugged him, tight. He was all right. She, in turn, was so grateful that her baby was safe that she put aside all other feelings and wished her son well in college.



*Gary W. Rollins and Ruthie Magness  
(1963)*

On the billboards, Randall posted signs advertising major products; unknown to the local competitor, all the ads were gratis. When the local company president saw what had happened, he was ready to sell. Instead of the original \$90,000 offer, he finally settled for \$36,000.

From his baptism by fire, Randall had quickly grasped an understanding of how the outdoor advertising business operated. He literally knew where every nut and bolt went, what it took to make a sign, and what it cost. Obviously, he also knew how to negotiate.

Randall was given charge of the outdoor advertising business with the title of vice president of Rollins Outdoor Advertising, Inc. He applied himself to the task of rebuilding Tribble's profitability with redoubled efforts.

One of the first steps taken by Rollins was to increase its rates — not a modest increase but a jump of 38 percent, “an absolute disaster,” in Roddey's view. How could the company keep any of its clients? Yet only a few clients rebelled, and the Rollins strategy paid off handsomely in profit margins. Much of the income was plowed back into Tribble for upgrading equipment and further expansion. Within two years, the number of billboards increased by a thousand.

Jim Roddey liked the Rollins style. Before the acquisition, Tribble had spent almost nothing on improvements. Used nails were pulled from billboards and brought in for straightening in mechanical straighteners. Scrap paper from signage was used for memo pads. Old wooden ladders were used. Under Randall Rollins' direction, Tribble's operations were modernized. The company got its first aluminum ladders, and Roddey received his first visit from Wayne Rollins.

“Where's your Sears, Roebuck catalog?” Wayne asked Roddey, the new manager of the Corpus Christi plant.

“I don't have a Sears catalog,” Roddey replied.

“Well, you need one.”

“Why?” Roddey was puzzled. “I don't buy much from Sears.”

“That's not the point. Do you think you might ever have an occasion to buy some rope?”

“Yes, sir.”

“How much is rope a foot?”

“I don't know.”

“You mean if I charged you a dollar a foot, you'd pay it, or if it was ten cents a foot, you'd pay it?”

“I guess I would,” Roddey admitted.

“Do you ever have an occasion to buy any buckets?”

“Yes, I probably would.”

“How much are buckets?”

“I don't know.”

lost or damaged; only 12 of the 700 signs maintained by the Victoria plant were even left standing.

It was a massive blow for the newest Rollins business, and the company carried no insurance on the property. Wayne Rollins decided this was the time to throw Randall into the briar patch. He turned the entire matter over to his son, something that would in time deeply impress Randall.

By the time the wind stopped blowing, Randall was on the ground in Texas, surveying the damage. He met with Helen Tribble Mays and her executives to determine the proper strategy for getting the plant rebuilt and maintaining the revenue. It was obvious, after two meetings, that Randall's approach was far different from the Tribble approach. Randall wanted to gather up the usable parts and put the billboards back together, keeping costs to a minimum; the Tribble group wanted to rebuild everything with new, all-steel uprights, so expensive an approach that it would mean financial ruin for the business. Randall proceeded to direct the rebuilding of the boards and plants. Of equal importance, he and two Tribble employees, James Roddey and George Redford, made numerous telephone calls to the company's advertisers, telling them of the problems from the hurricane and asking for their understanding and help.

The advertisers cooperated. They kept paying their bills as if their advertising was up on the billboards. Slowly, the business was nursed back to life, as Randall drove from billboard to billboard, taking photographs and classifying the various kinds of problems from the storm. And as he struggled to come to grips with the hurricane damage, he discovered that Helen Tribble Mays wasn't helping, to say the least, and that the employees seemed reluctant to cooperate. She told them to just ignore Randall. "His dad had to give him something to do, and that's the reason he's down here. Don't pay any attention to him."

After many long conversations and meetings, Randall knew their differences could not be resolved and told Helen so. Shortly, Wayne Rollins flew to Texas and terminated Helen. Randall returned to his work restoring the storm-damaged signage, still going day and night seven days a week. Jim Roddey, the Tribble manager at Victoria, called Randall's rebuilding blitz "the Texas Relief Plan." And within two months, Randall, Jim Roddey, George Redford, and his crews had the company back in operation.

When some advertisers asked Rollins to enter the Laredo, Texas, billboard market to "clean it up," Randall used his blitz technique again to "help" negotiate the acquisition of a small company there. Randall offered \$90,000, but the owner held out for \$100,000. Randall went to work.

First, Randall leased billboard locations throughout the city, using a dummy corporation to avoid tipping off the local company. In temperatures reaching 100 degrees and hotter, his "blitz" crews erected seventy-five signs in a week. Because of the heat, they worked two shifts, from 4 A.M. to 10 A.M. and from 4 P.M. to 8 P.M.

## EXPANDING AND GROWING

Wayne was intrigued, and within a short time, he was headed for San Antonio, Texas, to negotiate the possible acquisition of Tribble Outdoor Advertising Company. He met with Helen Tribble Mays, president of the company that was founded in 1902 and now operated with 3,500 billboards in one hundred Texas cities.

Wayne, as usual, had done his homework before the trip, and he broke the entire business down to simple arithmetic. A poster board cost \$350 to build and could rent for \$60 a month. Wayne looked at that return and thought, "If I were building houses, it would cost me at least three thousand, and I might rent it for sixty dollars a month." Billboards were a much better deal.

After a strenuous trip, Wayne checked into the hotel in San Antonio and had breakfast with the broker before Helen Tribble Mays arrived. Then they went to the Tribble Outdoor offices and plant where the posters were prepared for posting and some of the painted bulletins were painted. Within a short time, the deal was completed: Rollins paid \$3.2 million for Tribble. And on the strength of his new public company, Wayne was able to borrow the necessary funds from his Delaware bank — with no endorsement.

Helen Tribble Mays wanted to remain with the company her father had founded, and Wayne was agreeable, especially since he had no experience in outdoor advertising. She continued as vice president and operating manager. Randall was assigned to learn the business by reading everything he could find and visiting other outdoor plant operators.

In September, a hurricane leveled the Tribble plants at Victoria and Corpus Christi, and severely damaged billboards in San Antonio, Austin, and many small towns in Texas. One-third of the company's 3,500 billboards were

*In 1961, Wayne entered the outdoor advertising business, which Randall soon managed.*



forcing him to join a union, a view that was preached passionately in the South but was not necessarily popular in the North.

Just then, John arrived, and a union official quoted what Wayne had just said. "I feel exactly the same way," John retorted, not about to concede an inch on a principle ingrained in his and Wayne's very natures. Besides, he wasn't about to contradict Wayne.

That reply, Wayne figured, cost John the election. The unions passed the word, "We don't want Rollins." John lost by a margin of 6,880 votes, and some of his supporters began demanding a recount of the vote, wondering if anything suspicious had occurred at the polls. John would have no part of it. "I don't want a recount," he said. "To hell with it." And while he would never again run for public office, John was thereafter a favorite son in the Republican Party, friends with national and local political figures alike.

Despite the disappointments of political fortune, the Rollins business enterprises continued to maintain their high rate of growth. On February 14, 1961, Rollins Broadcasting, Inc. began trading on the American Stock Exchange. Wayne and John joined in the traditional trip to the exchange floor for the opening transaction, beaming as "ROL" flashed on the board for the first time. It was done. Another step had been taken toward the ultimate goal of listing Rollins on the Big Board, the New York Stock Exchange.

In the summer of 1961, Randall and Peggy welcomed their fourth child. On July 12, Robert Wayne Rollins was born, named after Peggy's brother, Robert Hastings, and the baby's grandfather, O. Wayne Rollins. And within days of his birth, the Rollins corporate family also had another addition that would shortly keep Randall extremely busy.

This new venture began with a visit from a broadcast broker named Allen Kander, who was one of Wayne's favorites. An older man, Kander would call Wayne first and ask for a fifteen-minute appointment, then hop on a train from New York or Washington, make his way to Wayne's office and within his requested fifteen minutes deliver his message about a promising new venture. His trademark was a black homburg hat, and he wore it snugly atop his head when he greeted Wayne in the summer of 1961. There was a company in Texas that Wayne should consider, Kander said. It was a billboard company, and it was now on the market because the owner had died, leaving the business to two daughters who wanted to sell.

Outdoor advertising, Kander assured his friend, would be an excellent fit with the broadcasting business. Moreover, the billboard business was quite profitable.



*Robert Wayne Rollins,  
the fourth child of  
Randall and Peggy, was  
born on July 12, 1961.*

With such ongoing improvements and increased coverage, Russ Chambers' expertise continued to have a dramatic impact on the company's growth.

As the offering prospectus showed, these pending applications reflected the unique ability of Wayne Rollins to take broadcast properties and dramatically improve their earnings performance. And as always, he did so through improved management and cost controls, increased signal power, and expanded coverage or redefined market niches to produce higher advertising rates and higher profits.

With the public offering completed, Wayne took a weekend off to visit Catoosa Springs, where his mother was spending the summer. It was always pleasant there, and he had time to think. Owning a public company was somehow different, Wayne knew, and he found the words to explain the difference: "When you become a public company, you have to make up your mind that for the other shareholders who don't have an attachment to it, it's just a business with them. That's the reason they put their money in it, and you're the one managing it. You have to come to the conclusion, 'To do my job, I'm supposed to do the best *business* job, not sentimental job.'"

He continued. "You never get married to a car or a business. There's just as much to knowing when to get out as there is to when to get in."

Wayne, in fact, would prove this principle over and over in his business career. The Georgetown station, WJWL, for instance, was a good example. Rollins Broadcasting divested its third station in early 1961, a step necessitated by the acquisition of WCHS in Charleston, West Virginia (the FCC enforced a multiple ownership rule limiting the number of stations). The selling price? Exactly \$365,000, three times the cost of construction a decade earlier.

Returning to Wilmington, Wayne threw himself into John's campaign, relying heavily on radio advertising, supplemented by some television and billboards.

In the campaign that year, one of the stickiest major issues was the right to work, with labor unions predictably opposed to the concept. When a group of union people came to John's campaign office, he was out, and they confronted Wayne.

"What's his view on right to work?" one of them asked.

"I don't know what his view is on that," Wayne answered.

"Well," the union boss persisted, "what's your view?"

Instead of saying, "I'm not running," which he thought about later, Wayne stepped into the trap, undoubtedly set because the union leaders knew where Wayne stood.

"I feel strongly enough about it that I wouldn't compromise my views of a man's right to work to be governor!" Wayne declared with an edge to his voice. It was clear he had no time for the idea of denying a man such a basic right and

"We'll get another investment banker," Manheim explained. "We'll turn everything over to that company and let them bring you public. We'll still be in the wings."

The underwriting was turned over to F. Eberstadt & Company, a small Wall Street securities house, with the participation of eleven other firms, including Francis I. duPont & Company and Laird, Bissell & Meeds, both of which would come to play significant roles in the growth of Rollins Broadcasting.

As Labor Day neared, Wayne had one eye on his brother's campaign and the other on his company's public offering. Both jelled in September.

On September 1, 1960, John Rollins won the Republican nomination for governor of Delaware, and the campaign geared up against a strong Democratic opponent. The Rollins brothers would have a tough fight on their hands.

On September 13, 1960, Rollins Broadcasting went public with an offering of 110,000 shares of common stock at eight dollars per share. The offering sold out immediately in the over-the-counter (OTC) market, but over the next two months fell two points before recovering.

Actually, only 99,500 shares were sold to the public. Eberstadt & Company purchased 9,000 shares, Henry Tippie and Russ Chambers each bought 1,500 beforehand; and Randall purchased 1,000 shares beforehand. After the initial price slide, Henry was among the Rollins officers who bought more of the stock at the lower prices. "I figured it could have some future possibilities," Henry told friends later.

At the time of the initial public offering, Rollins Broadcasting, Inc., with 157 employees, owned and operated six AM radio stations, one short of the limit imposed by the Multiple Ownership Rule of the Federal Communications Commission. On the list of stations were WJWL in Georgetown, Delaware; WRAP in Norfolk, Virginia; WAMS in Wilmington, Delaware; WNJR in Newark, New Jersey; WBEE in Harvey, Illinois; and WGEE in Indianapolis, Indiana. (Rollins had sold WFAI in 1953 for \$125,000; WRAD in 1955 for \$130,000; and KATZ in 1959 for \$600,000.) Three of its existing stations, WAMS, WNJR, and WGEE, were regional channels with transmitting power of 5,000 watts.

The company's three television stations were WPTZ-TV in Plattsburgh, New York; WEAR-TV in Pensacola, Florida; and WCHS-TV in Charleston, West Virginia. Subject to FCC approval, construction of a new tower on Whiteface Mountain near Plattsburgh would expand the station's coverage by 27,000 square miles.

Rollins was also awaiting FCC action on applications to increase WBEE's transmitting power from 1,000 watts to 50,000, enlarging coverage by 46 percent, or almost two million people. Similarly, an application to boost WJWL's power from 1,000 to 5,000 watts would expand the coverage by 47 percent.

## EXPANDING AND GROWING

After Wayne returned to Wilmington from the Wall Street visit, and in anticipation of the public offering, the Rollins board of directors split the company's common stock one thousand to one for an authorized total capital stock of one million shares with par value of one dollar per share.

Word came from Lehman Brothers: The firm would accept Rollins Broadcasting, Inc. for its initial public offering. In July 1960, the company filed a registration statement with the Securities and Exchange Commission, the prelude to the offering of stock to the public.

Shortly before the scheduled September date of the stock offering, Frank Manheim called while on a trip to Europe. There was a problem with the Rollins offering, he said. Another Lehman Brothers client, RCA, owned NBC and objected to the firm's representing Rollins, a competing broadcast company. It was considered a conflict of interest for Lehman.

*This graph demonstrates that if 100 shares of Rollins stock had been purchased for \$800 on September 13, 1960, when the company went public, those shares as of January 1, 1994, would have been worth \$158,963.*

Activity or Y/E Date	*	ROLLINS, INC.				ROLLINS COMMUNICATIONS, INC.				RPS, INC.				All Companies Combined		
		No. Shares	Price Per Share	Total Value	Appreciation \$ %	No. Shares	Price Per Share	Total Value	Appreciation \$ %	No. Shares	Price Per Share	Total Value	Appreciation \$ %	Total Value	Appreciation \$ %	
31Dec60		100	8.000	800										800		
31Dec61		100	11.500	1,150	350	43.8								1,150	350	43.8
31Dec62		100	14.325	1,433	283	24.6								1,433	283	24.6
31Dec63		100	16.325	1,633	200	14.0								1,633	200	14.0
31Dec64		100	76.250	7,625	5,993	367.1								7,625	5,993	367.1
26Jan65	A	300														
31Dec65		300	44.250	13,275	13,275	174.1								13,275	13,275	174.1
31Dec66		300	23.250	6,975	(6,300)	-47.5								6,975	(6,300)	-47.5
31Dec67		300	45.500	13,650	6,675	95.7								13,650	6,675	95.7
25Jan68	B	375														
31Dec68		375	76.625	28,734	28,734	210.5								28,734	28,734	210.5
03Feb69	C	750														
31Dec69		750	38.000	28,500	28,500	99.2								28,500	28,500	99.2
31Dec70		750	27.000	20,250	(8,250)	-28.9								20,250	(8,250)	-28.9
31Dec71		750	48.875	36,656	16,406	81.0								36,656	16,406	81.0
24Mar72	D	1125														
31Dec72		1125	36.750	41,344	41,344	112.8								41,344	41,344	112.8
31Dec73		1125	17.500	19,688	(21,656)	-52.4								19,688	(21,656)	-52.4
31Dec74		1125	10.875	12,234	(7,453)	-37.9								12,234	(7,453)	-37.9
31Dec75		1125	20.750	23,344	11,109	90.8								23,344	11,109	90.8
31Dec76		1125	24.250	27,281	3,938	16.9								27,281	3,938	16.9
31Dec77		1125	19.625	22,078	(5,203)	-19.1								22,078	(5,203)	-19.1
31Dec78		1125	18.250	20,531	(1,547)	-7.0								20,531	(1,547)	-7.0
31Dec79		1125	28.125	31,641	11,109	54.1								31,641	11,109	54.1
31Dec80		1125	36.000	40,500	8,859	28.0								40,500	8,859	28.0
10Mar81	E	2250														
31Dec81		2250	17.500	39,375	39,375	97.2								39,375	39,375	97.2
31Dec82		2250	15.000	33,750	(5,625)	-14.3								33,750	(5,625)	-14.3
31Dec83		2250	19.000	42,750	9,000	26.7								42,750	9,000	26.7
01Jul84	F	2250	8.000	18,000			1350	15.325	20,689					43,751	1,001	2.3
31Dec84		2250	9.500	21,375	3,375	18.8	1350	17.120	23,112	2,423	11.7	1350	3.875	5,231	169	3.3
31Dec85		2250	13.625	30,656	9,281	43.4	1350	28.870	38,975	15,863	68.6	1350	3.500	4,725	(506)	-9.7
12Nov86	G	2250					1350	41.000	55,350	16,376	42.0	1350				
31Dec86		2250	16.750	37,688	7,031	22.9			55,350			1350	2.375	3,206	(1,519)	-32.1
31Dec87		2250	15.250	34,313	(3,375)	-9.0			55,350			1350	4.625	6,244	3,038	94.7
31Dec88		2250	17.750	39,938	5,625	16.4			55,350			1350	6.250	8,438	2,194	35.1
31Dec89		2250	18.375	41,344	1,406	3.5			55,350			1350	6.500	8,775	338	4.0
31Dec90		2250	21.250	47,813	6,469	15.6			55,350			1350	8.625	11,644	2,869	32.7
31Dec91		2250	28.625	64,406	16,594	34.7			55,350			1350	8.500	11,475	(169)	-1.4
10Dec92	H	1125														
31Dec92		3375	24.500	82,688	18,281	28.4			55,350			1350	6.625	8,944	(2,531)	-22.1
31Dec93		3375	27.250	91,969	9,281	11.2			55,350			1350	8.625	11,644	2,700	30.2

\*Notes: All dates represent year end, except for activity as noted. A=3/1 stock split, resulting in 200 additional shares. B=5/4 stock split, resulting in 75 additional shares. C=2/1 stock split, resulting in 375 additional shares. D=3/2 stock split, resulting in 375 additional shares. E=2/1 stock split, resulting in 1125 additional shares. F=7/1/84 spun off RCI and RPS from ROL. G=1\*/12/86 tendered RCI to Heritage at \$41/share. H=3/2 stock split, resulting in 1125 additional shares.

**CONCLUSION: If you purchased 100 shares 9/13/60 when the company went public, as of 12/31/93, your \$800 investment would have grown to \$158,963, not including cash dividends, an appreciation of 18.614% annualized.**

we don't take any company doing less than twenty-five million dollars revenue to start with?"

"No, I didn't know that," Wayne replied.

"How big do you think you can grow this company?" Manheim asked.

"I think I can grow it to a hundred million dollars!" Wayne answered without the slightest hesitation.

"Do you really believe that? Now you've got four million in sales. Do you really believe you can do a hundred million?" Manheim's tone made it clear he was having a hard time believing this.

"I sure do," Wayne confirmed.

"How do you think you'll do it?"

Wayne went over the details of his plans for growing the business by twenty-five times its present size. "I think we've got the knowledge now. We know how to run television stations to make money. We know how to run radio stations profitably. We know how to program a radio station to minorities where it is profitable."

Manheim paused. What about this programming for the Negro market? Wayne described his niche market and specialization approach that had been so successful with black listeners in Norfolk, New York, Chicago, and Indianapolis. In 1960, even before its purchase of the Los Angeles station, Rollins Broadcasting estimated that its four stations reached 20 percent of the black population, almost four million people, with music, news, and special interest programs.

"I had rather have a black station in the black than a white station in the red," he told Manheim.

"That's something coming from someone from the South," Manheim remarked.

"Well, that's the way I feel about it," Wayne Rollins replied. A master of detail and nuance, Wayne went on to explain how the company could acquire other TV stations and turn them around, using the same techniques that had produced dramatic results at other losing stations. "I think our margins show we know how to make a profit," he argued, simply yet forcefully, never showing a moment's hesitation in confidence.

Like the southern storyteller he would always be, Wayne was never more in command than when he had a good listener. With his remarkable memory and ability to separate the important from the unimportant, Wayne could sense that he was on the verge of victory in this Wall Street game of artful persuasion. He was about to win over complete strangers and launch a new phase of business that would enable the company to grow far beyond his dream of \$100 million.

Manheim was absolutely convinced. "I believe you can do it," he told Wayne. "I'm going to break precedent. I'll recommend to the partners that we make this exception and take you public."

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"Well, we don't get the money then," Wayne concluded.

"Wayne," the banker explained in a conciliatory tone, "if Rollins was a public company, it would be different. We'd consider it. But as a private company without you endorsing the note, we just don't lend that kind of money."

Frustrated and disappointed, Wayne had to call the WSFA stockholder and cancel the deal. When the station sold almost immediately afterward for an additional \$200,000, Wayne was even more upset. And he began thinking seriously about taking Rollins Broadcasting public.

Discussing the idea with John and Henry Tippie, Wayne saw other strong reasons for having a company whose stock was publicly traded. First, the employees would benefit far more from owning stock in a publicly held company than in a private one. Second, with the growth of his and John's wealth, it was time to think about the advantages of publicly traded stock for estate-planning purposes.

Neither Wayne nor any of his associates knew anyone in the investment banking community, though Henry Tippie had recently read a *Fortune* article about Lehman Brothers and Wayne had once met a Lehman Brothers broker named Gordon Calder during a business deal.

But for someone who started a radio empire when he knew nothing about radio, the fact that he knew no one on Wall Street didn't even faze Wayne Rollins. In the spring of 1960, when Wayne felt the stage was set for taking Rollins Broadcasting public, he said simply, "I'll go up to New York, and I'll go down to Wall Street, and I'll talk to them about going public."

Which is exactly what he did. He took a train to New York and climbed inside a taxi waiting outside Pennsylvania Station. "Wall Street," Wayne said. "Take me to Wall Street." As fate would have it, the taxi driver pulled up in front of Number One Wall Street, and when Wayne stepped out of the cab and looked up at the imposing building, the sign read Lehman Brothers.

Wayne had no idea that this was one of the top eight investment bankers in the world when he stepped into the building, made his way to the Lehman Brothers office and found himself in a large room filled with polished executive desks, with a Lehman Brothers partner behind each one. As Wayne stood there, momentarily uncertain, Gordon Calder spotted Wayne and was on his feet immediately with a greeting. Calder introduced Wayne to the partners, and Frank Manheim, a senior partner, invited Wayne to lunch.

With an attentive audience before him, Wayne seized the opportunity to tell them about Rollins Broadcasting. And when he had finished, the financial executives sitting around the table peppered him with questions about the small but remarkably successful business that this astute, slow-talking gentleman wanted to take public.

Afterward, Manheim took Wayne into an office. "You only did about four million revenue last year," Manheim began. "Did you know that we have a rule

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Randall's family actually gave Randall and Gary many opportunities to do things together, despite their thirteen-year age difference. Said Gary, "One of the things I always appreciated about Randall was the quality of the time that we spent together. Randall would take me hunting or we would fix a boat together or build a treehouse together for his kids. And Randall always made me feel good about that. I wasn't required to help my older brother build a treehouse. He made me feel important and I had fun doing it."

Like the Rollins family, Rollins Broadcasting and Rollins Leasing Corporation (RLC) continued to grow. John branched out into daily auto rentals, with Los Angeles selected as the first of twenty-five major markets targeted for the new venture. By now, RLC was one of the nation's largest fleet leasing companies, adding to its size with two acquisitions in Los Angeles and Michigan in early 1957.

Even with his busy business agenda, John continued to enjoy politics, and in 1959, he decided to seek the Republican nomination for governor of Delaware in the 1960 election. Again, Wayne was John's campaign manager, but he never let politics interfere with business. For in 1959, Wayne found himself juggling the demands of everyday business, a political campaign, and a new and important step for Rollins Broadcasting — one that resulted, ironically, because Wayne failed to make a deal.

In the spring of 1959, Wayne heard that WSFA-TV in Montgomery, Alabama, was for sale, a golden opportunity to add another profit-maker to the Rollins family of high performers. After a meeting in Montgomery, the WSFA majority stockholder agreed to sell the television station for two million dollars. With the skyrocketing growth of television profits, strong stations in even smaller markets such as Montgomery were selling at a premium. From his analysis of the station and the market, Wayne knew this was a solid deal.

Back in Wilmington, Wayne met with his banker, the president of the bank where the Rollins company had done business for more than a decade. Wayne explained the proposed purchase and why it was an excellent investment.

"I'll lend you the money," the banker said. "But you'll have to endorse the note personally."

This angered Wayne. His company now had substantial properties for collateral, and he resented the idea of having to give his personal guarantee any longer.

"Well, I'm not going to personally endorse it," he replied.

"You'll have to endorse it, and your wife will have to endorse it," the banker went on.

That was really too much. "I never have asked her to endorse any paper, and I'm not going to start now!" Wayne said heatedly.

"Well," the banker replied, getting a little irritated himself, "we're not going to let you have the money. You either fit the pattern, or you don't get the money. And you don't fit the pattern."

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*Pamela Renee Rollins,  
Randall and Peggy's  
third child, was born  
February 14, 1957.*

A regular schedule seemed like an excellent idea to Grace, a tremendous improvement over Wayne's long hours. Wouldn't it be nice for Wayne to come home earlier like all the DuPont executives? Grace remarked several times, to no avail. Finally, one evening when he came home after eight o'clock, Grace let Wayne know she was upset about waiting on him for dinner.

"If you had come in at the right time, we had a nice dinner," she said as they sat down to eat at the kitchen table. "It's all ruined now."

"Let's make a deal," Wayne responded. "If I have enough sense to know when to go to work in the morning, I have enough sense to know when to come home at night. When I get home, I guarantee you that I'll never say a word about the food. I'll eat it just as I would have if I'd been here at six o'clock. I won't ever say a word about the food, and you don't ever say a word about when I come home."

They agreed, and never again was there any discussion about Wayne's work schedule. There were still differences between Wayne and Grace — "I could party all night," Grace said, while Wayne preferred a quiet night at home — but they were devoted to each

other and their marriage. As Wayne always said, "For me to be successful in my mind, I would have to have had a successful marriage." And he did.

And though Wayne now traveled extensively and was regularly away from home, Gary never felt the lack of a parent.

"Mother had a big influence on me when I was growing up," Gary recalled. "Mother was very capable and was a good disciplinarian and a good manager while Dad was away. And to be honest with you, maybe I just felt like that's the way it was supposed to be. I was growing up in Wilmington when most of the people worked for DuPont, so I was in a community that was very mobile and there was a lot of traveling. The fathers in the household were not home every night, and I never felt like that was a handicap. And when Dad was there, he was certainly interested in what I was doing."

No one ever doubted Wayne's devotion to his family. As important as every business transaction was to Wayne, he always stressed that his family was the most precious asset he could imagine. And he was delighted when he was called upon to help name Peggy and Randall's third child, who was born on February 14, 1957. Peggy couldn't decide between Pam and Renee, and asked her father-in-law what he thought of the choices.

"If she's a chubby baby, she should be Pam," he replied. "If she's a skinny baby, she should be Renee." The baby was named Pamela Renee. And because she was chubby, was called Pam.



*Wayne and John with  
their mother, Claudia*



her phone call. However, there was no guarantee as to what was on Claudia's mind.

"I hear you're going to fire somebody," Claudia Rollins began one day in a phone call to John, who was in the middle of an important business meeting.

"You know, Mother, I love you better than anything in the world," John replied, "but would you please let me run my business?"

Claudia Rollins interrupted. "Listen, young man, I'm not going to have it. I'm going to tell you what you're going to do, and if you don't listen, I'll march myself in your office and box your jaws in front of everybody there."

John was thoroughly chastened. "Yes, ma'am. Yes, ma'am," he said, a grin breaking over his face. "You tell me, and I'll do it."

Moving to Wilmington also presented an unusual challenge for Wayne and Grace. Their long, white brick ranch house was in the middle of a neighborhood of DuPont employees, all of whom arrived home about five o'clock.

*Opposite page:  
Mount Vernon, the Delaware  
home Wayne purchased in  
1962, became the home for  
Randall and Peggy.  
(about 1962)*

Two lawsuits resulted from the three flying boats. Although John refunded the deposit to the Pan Am pilots, they sued. And an old man who lived near the Walnut Ridge airport sent Rollins Broadcasting a bill for several thousand dollars, claiming that he had watched the downed airplane around the clock for six months. When the company refused to pay, he brought suit to collect. And even though his complaint was thrown out of court, Rollins spent time and money on litigation.

Another sour postwar venture involved the purchase of three railroad carloads of television sets amid fear that another war would mean the rationing of cobalt used in the sets. John and Wayne opened stores in Richmond, Norfolk, and Newport News, Virginia, and hired a woman to sell the merchandise.

But the shortage of cobalt never occurred, so sales were not spectacular. And, too, the store manager deposited all the money from the sales into her own bank account. Wayne and John lost about thirty thousand dollars before discovering what happened. Since they could not recover the money by sending the woman to jail, they decided not to press charges against her.

In September 1956, all the Rollins business enterprises moved from Rehoboth to Wilmington, Delaware. The broadcast operations under Wayne's direction moved into the building where radio station WAMS leased its offices and studios, 414 French Street. The fleet leasing operations were located at 14th and Union.

Both Wayne and Randall moved their families to Wilmington when the business moved its headquarters. As he settled Grace and Gary into a spacious new house, Wayne was especially proud of the basement, which had three large rooms with a fireplace and a bath, and room enough for a pool table for Gary and his friends to enjoy. Claudia Rollins liked the new house when she arrived for her first visit. "Mother," Wayne told her, "After you rest a while, I'll have to show you the basement. It is really something. We even have a pool table down there."

Wayne's mother stared in disbelief. "You mean you have a pool table in your house? You know very well I won't be going down there to look at a pool table."

Since their days in Catoosa County, Claudia had associated pool tables with the evil of liquor and laziness, all based on rumors of a small store owner who had a pool table and supposedly sold liquor to young people. During the ten years that Wayne and Grace lived in the house, Claudia never went into the basement.

Claudia Rollins always reminded her sons of the importance of family. "Keep the family together," she would say. "You have to work on a family to make it successful just as you work on a job." Her role in the family was always secure, and she never hesitated to exert her influence when she felt it necessary. As long as she was alive, either son would interrupt a business meeting to take



*Richard Randall Rollins, Jr.,  
Randall and Peggy's second  
child, was born on  
November 13, 1954.*

"I'm not for putting any more money in it. I'm for closing it down. We don't have any future that I can see because if we bid on these things competitively, we're not set up to produce them profitably. We just can't be competitive and ever make a profit."

John disagreed. "I'm not for closing it down. I think it has a good future and will make a good profit. It's just a matter of time till we break through." He paused, then went on. "I tell you what I'll do, Wayne. If you don't want in, I'll just buy you out."

"No," Wayne replied. "I won't do that, John." Then he explained. "I'll just give you my half."

"Oh." John was taken aback. "You wouldn't do that, would you?"

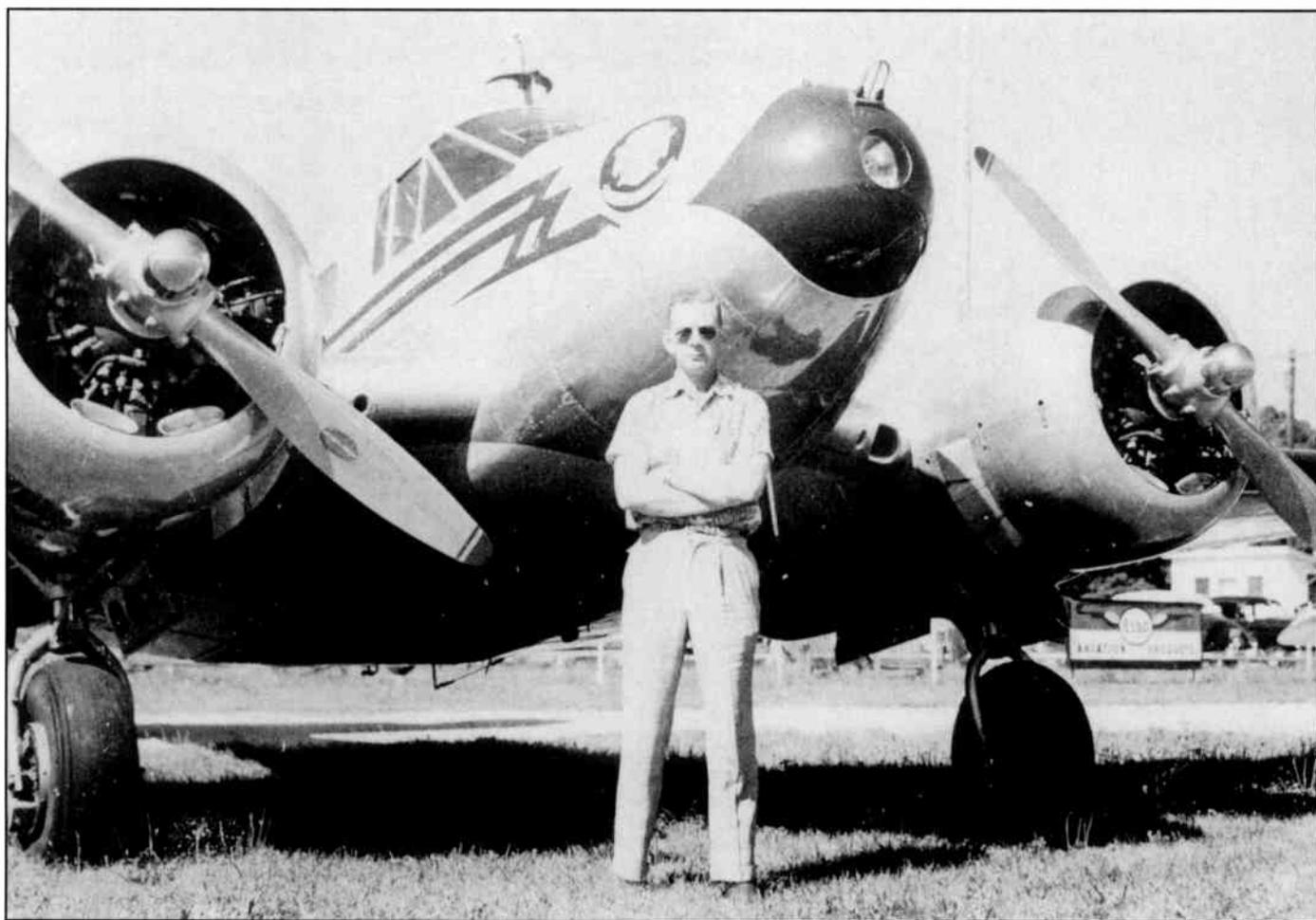
"Yes," Wayne answered. "Just get the papers and I'll sign you over my half."

By then, Wayne estimated, the company had lost between \$200,000 and \$300,000. After Wayne bailed out, John ran the company until he lost another \$300,000, and then he shut down. "Every decision I ever made by myself, I regretted it to beat hell," said John.

The Rollins brothers had other deals that fell short of their expectations, including one that literally crash-landed, involving three World War II PBY Flying Boats. Characteristically optimistic, John anticipated profits of \$100,000 to \$200,000 from the sale of these war surplus amphibious aircraft. Characteristically skeptical, Wayne asked, "Who are you going to sell them to? What are you going to do with them? What about the insurance?"

Problems quickly materialized. First, the airplanes would not fly. Then when they finally flew, Wayne and John had to find a place to store and park them after they landed. They leased a small airport at Walnut Ridge, Arkansas, about the only place they could find that would accept the ungainly craft for storage until the sales were arranged.

As the first of the three PBYs approached the Walnut Ridge airport, it developed trouble and crash-landed in a field nearby; the insurance policy paid off, prompting Wayne to say it was the only one of the airplanes that he and John actually made money on. The second airplane made it to Arkansas and was sold to a publisher, who converted the large craft into a flying hunting lodge equipped with bunks and a galley. A group of Pan Am pilots took an option for thirty days on the third craft and paid John a \$500 deposit. When the deadline came and went without further word from the pilots, John accepted an offer from a man willing to pay cash for the PBY, which by then had been ferried to Philadelphia. The purchaser handed over a certified check for \$25,000 and took off in the aircraft — and crashed into the Delaware River.



had to carry out was informing Ed Chamberlain's wife and four children of the tragedy. Grace went with him to the Chamberlain home to offer what consolation she could. Wayne saw to it that a fund was set up for the education of the children and for the family's living expenses.

Randall was discharged from the Coast Guard in 1954. He threw himself into work with John at Rollins Leasing with a new incentive in his quest for a rewarding career. On November 13, 1954, a son was born to Randall and Peggy. They named him Richard Randall, Junior. With his family growing, Randall found himself drawn to new independent business ventures and soon opened a used car lot and a service station.

John continued to demonstrate the golden touch. He traveled an estimated 250,000 miles a year as he focused his energies on his highly successful leasing operations, and sold his original Ford dealership in Lewes in 1955.

One enterprise had not performed up to par, however. It was Rollins Electronics Corporation, the company that John had formed to produce electronic equipment. Despite good sales, the company had not been profitable. At a Monday morning meeting in late 1955, Wayne expressed his reservations.

*Edmund G. Chamberlain,  
a pilot for the Rollins' families  
and businesses (about 1953)*



*Wayne and Grace's first grandchild, Rita Anne, was born September 1, 1953.*

The baby was born that night, September 1, 1953, a daughter named Rita Anne, the first in what would eventually be a family of six children for Randall and Peggy. By seven the next morning, Wayne and Grace and Gary were at the hospital to see the baby before Wayne had to leave on a business trip. It was hard to tell who was the proudest, the beaming grandparents or nine-year-old Gary.

Grace, hobbling with the badly sprained ankle, left Peggy's room and went to see the family doctor. He looked at her ankle and said, "Well, Grace, you're going to have to use a stick. You're just going to have to use a cane."

That was unacceptable to Grace. "I will not become Grandmother one day and start using a cane the same day," she declared.

Less than a month after the first grandchild was born, tragedy struck close to home. Russ Chambers had received word that his father had died in Nashville, Tennessee; the Rollins' pilot, Ed Chamberlain, agreed to fly Russ to Washington for a flight to Tennessee. The two men took off from Rehoboth in a Cessna 195, with Russ sitting in the copilot's seat of the small four-

passenger airplane.

Nearing Washington National Airport, the aircraft was cleared for landing. But as the Cessna descended over the Potomac and prepared to touch down, smoke suddenly billowed from underneath the instrument panel and the cabin began to fill with smoke.

Because he felt that if he tried to land on the runway he would endanger other commercial aircraft passengers ready for takeoff, Ed Chamberlain turned his aircraft toward the river channel. "Russ, try to keep the door open," he said, knowing it would be impossible to open if the plane submerged in the river. Russ jammed his suitcase in the door and stood behind his seat, holding the suitcase.

The airplane plunged into the water and sank at a 45-degree angle, with the door facing downward. The two men tried vainly to push open the door against the pressure of the water. They tried to knock out a window, but could not. With only two inches of air left above the water in the cabin, Russ held his breath, went down into the water, and somehow managed to push open the door. He made it to the surface, and a few minutes later, while he was struggling to stay afloat, rescuers aboard an Air Force boat hauled him in. The rescuers had to restrain Russ from diving back into the water in an attempt to find Ed Chamberlain. The pilot's body was recovered later.

From a hospital, Russ called Wayne Rollins, who had heard that Ed had drowned. It was a terrible shock, and one of the most difficult duties Wayne ever

## FROM RADIO TO WALL STREET

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Port Chicago, California; Freeport, Texas; and back to Cape May. Finally, he was transferred to Lewes, Delaware.

Back in Lewes, the romance between Randall and Peggy quickly grew serious, and they soon made plans to marry. First, though, Randall thought his little brother should meet the bride-to-be. Gary, who was eight, went with Randall to meet Peggy and also met her sister Pat.

Driving back to Rehoboth, Randall asked Gary, "Well, what did you think?"

Gary had a quick comeback. "Well, I really like Pat."

Breaking into laughter, Randall said, "Then I picked the wrong one!"

On January 3, 1953, he and Peggy were married in the parsonage of the Bethel Methodist Church in Lewes, where her family had always worshiped. After the ceremony, Randall took Peggy on a honeymoon in a new car that Uncle John had loaned his nephew. He wanted to show her Catoosa Springs and the place where he had grown up. When they arrived at the springs, Randall's parents were there, spending the night on their way to Florida for a winter vacation. The next day Wayne and Grace continued on their trip, while the newlyweds toured the farms, saw the old homeplace, and visited with relatives on each side of the Rollins and Crum families. As they returned to Lewes, Peggy and Randall talked of what they would do when he got out of the Coast Guard in another twelve months.

As the summer of 1953 slipped past, Randall, who moved to Lewes Beach and was an engineman third-class in the Coast Guard, and Peggy, now pregnant, moved from Lewes to a little five-room house at Lewes Beach. Grace helped Peggy with the move and suffered a sprained ankle when she hoisted a large box of books and started to step off the porch.



*Randall married Peggy Hastings on January 3, 1953.*

With all the tenacity they usually showed when preparing for an acquisition, John and Wayne did their homework. When John hit the campaign trail and the rallies, he knew that only 25 percent of the people of Delaware had graduated from college. They were farmers, not fraternity brothers. And at the first stop on the campaign trail after the editorial appeared, John read it to the crowd before he began his remarks.

“I want to tell you. This guy’s telling the truth. This is all very truthful, and my opponent is really a high-class fellow. And I don’t know anything about fraternities. If you want someone to represent you with the fraternities, I don’t have any knowledge of it.

“Now, I know how to plow a mule. I know how to dig a ditch. I know how to do those things. But when it comes to fraternities and those things, I don’t know. And I would like to. I admire my opponent. And I admire his education. I’d like to have it. But my father was an invalid when my brother and I were growing up. And we just didn’t have those opportunities. We had to go to night school and we had to have correspondence courses.”

By then it was plain that the crowd was with John. And while his speech was driven by the necessity of the political moment, his words were heartfelt. They were true. And neither Rollins brother was ashamed to admit it.

“I think the biggest problem that happens to some people who have been poor and become rich is that they forget their childhood. I think many of them want to,” Wayne often said. “And you know, the thing I can’t understand is that some of the people I run into are ashamed of it. And I’m proud of it, and I can’t see why the difference. I think every bit of that contributed to every success that I had.”

On November 2, 1952, John Rollins was elected lieutenant governor of Delaware in the Eisenhower presidential landslide. “I figure that editorial elected me,” John reminded Wayne. Amazingly, John outpolled Eisenhower in the black precincts. And one of the first things John Rollins did was to institute a policy of doing no business with the state while he was in office, a move that proved to be quite costly to the Rollins’ interests.

During this time, Randall served in the Coast Guard, stationed in Cape May, New Jersey; New Orleans; Freeport, Texas; Treasure Island and

*Randall and Gary, after Randall enlisted in the United States Coast Guard (1952)*





In January 1951, after several unsuccessful attempts to join the U.S. Navy (twice vetoed by his father), Randall enlisted in the Coast Guard. He went to Cape May, New Jersey, for fourteen weeks of basic training before being sent to New Orleans. From there, he went to an island base off Freeport, Texas, as the Korean War intensified. His parents breathed easier with their son still on American soil.

Back at home, Randall's Uncle John was lured into politics to run as the 1952 Republican candidate for lieutenant governor of Delaware. His new political ambitions would have absolutely thrilled his grandpa John Rollins, who had been active in politics, and as a Republican, ran successfully for office in Catoosa County. Wayne didn't care much for politics, but he supported John 100 percent and agreed to be his campaign manager. Wayne would rely heavily on radio, billboards, newspapers, and, to a lesser extent, television. On the stump, John's formidable powers of speech served him well, as did his instinct for the memorable phrase.

The Democratic candidate, whom John knew and liked as a friend, had a fine background, a fact that was brought to the voting public's attention by a newspaper editorial. The editorial asked, "Why would you vote for John Rollins when you have a chance to get this wonderful man?" The piece went on to laud the candidate as a University of Virginia Law School graduate and a member of a prestigious fraternity.

*Wayne Rollins and Ed Chamberlain and the Beechcraft Bonanza (about 1952)*

## EXPANDING AND GROWING

of the business, though she was always happy to help if she could. When the Georgetown station opened in 1951, Grace planted bulbs and flowers outside the WJWL office and swept the floors to help ensure success for the new venture.

Grace was delighted when Rollins Broadcasting, together with several companies organized by John, moved its offices from Lewes to Rehoboth in 1951. Additionally, John created the Rollins Electronics Corporation and opened a plant in Lewes to produce electrical assemblies and parts, such as coils, for automobiles. By now, John and Wayne traveled extensively during every work week, and found that air travel was the most efficient means of transportation. They had acquired a Beechcraft Bonanza airplane and hired a pilot named Edmund G. Chamberlain to operate and maintain the airplane and to fly them to destinations daily to coordinate various operations.

With three Rollins Broadcasting radio stations up and running, Wayne and Grace were truly amazed at the income they were making from not only radio but their other investments. It was the first time in their lives that they hadn't worried about money. Said Wayne, "I thought at the time we had three radio stations, I could stop right now because I'm making more money than I'll spend." And for Christmas that year, Wayne bought Grace something he had promised on their wedding day she would one day have: a brilliant, impressive diamond with a glitter that matched the sparkle in her eyes.

*This was the second plant of the electronics division of Rollins Corporation created by John Rollins, Sr., in Lewes, Delaware.*





*Wayne and Grace enjoy a day  
at the beach. (about 1955)*



that was growing 57 percent faster than the white population. And with revenues fast approaching nearly \$6 million at the beginning of 1963, Rollins Broadcasting had demonstrated that the black audience was a market well worth targeting.

The acquisition of KDAY allowed Wayne to take a deep breath and realize that he had accomplished the goals he set for himself in the world of radio. Looking back on it, he clearly understood the magnitude of what he had done since the day he lay flat on his back, reading a Chattanooga newspaper article about radio. But he was never boastful about his accomplishments, never one to exaggerate the success he had achieved. After all, Wayne Rollins always said that his success was the result of hard work, and hard work the result of his desire to be better than the average.

“I believe that you buy success with effort, just like you buy groceries with money,” he said, humble and sincere. “I continued to work, and my luck continued to be good. I have found if you are willing to work, many people are willing to help you. And I do not believe that there is any such thing as a *self-made man*. A lot of good, dedicated people helped me.”



While Wayne and John were building their businesses, Grace took care of the home, Gary grew up, and Randall worked and started a family of his own.

When the family first moved to Delaware in 1951, Wayne and Grace lived in John's guest house in Lewes. But they soon moved to Rehoboth, and Grace fell in love with this Atlantic coast beach town and the frame house they bought on Cullen Street, just two blocks from the ocean. Grace spent her summer days on the beach with other mothers, watching their young children, dressed in shorts or bathing suits, spending more time in the water than out. Gary was deeply tanned and his hair was bleached almost white from the sun, wind, and salt water.

Together, mother and son learned how to go clamming, the sharp edges of the clamshells often cutting Grace's bare feet and prompting Wayne to wonder why she didn't wear shoes. “You can't wear shoes when you clam,” Grace would reply mischievously.

Gary enrolled in elementary school and settled into his classes. After working to help build the Radford radio station, then working at the radio station and for Radford Ford, Randall moved to Lewes, Delaware, and went to work for his Uncle John, who assigned him every task imaginable — from shop cleaner to car undercoating specialist to nighttime wrecker service. In his spare time, Randall enjoyed tinkering with cars and boats, and he was definitely interested in dating — particularly a pretty eighteen-year-old high school senior, Margaret “Peggy” Hastings. With an eye always on her family, Grace stayed out

## FROM RADIO TO WALL STREET

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On the day of the scheduled flight to Los Angeles, the weather turned forbidding. Along the East Coast, airports were socked in. Nothing was flying out of Washington.

It would take more than foul weather to stop Wayne Rollins. With Russ Chambers in tow, he drove to the Philadelphia airport. They checked their luggage to Los Angeles, but as they waited to board, all flights were canceled.

Determined to reach Los Angeles, Wayne got back in his car and drove to Baltimore. Rain and fog blanketed the highway en route and the terminal when they arrived, but the airport was still open. Wayne and Russ caught the last flight to Los Angeles.

When they arrived, they had no luggage. But Wayne kept his appointment with the owner of KDAY, who himself had flown in from his home in Hawaii. KDAY met or exceeded all of Wayne's expectations. And thanks to the advance work, Wayne was prepared to make an offer. He immediately proposed to purchase the station.

The owner was caught off guard. "I'm sorry, but I can't entertain your offer because someone came here two weeks ago to look at the station and wanted to think about it. I said I would give him whatever time, three weeks, a month, or whatever, to do that," he said.

Wayne refused to be put off. "Well, that doesn't make a lot of sense to me," he replied. "We've done all our homework, and we knew all we needed to know when we came out here to look at the station. We came out here to buy it." He paused to let that sink in. "So why would you want to wait on someone who may or may not want to buy it when we're prepared to make you an offer?"

Wayne could be persuasive, and in this situation he had the advantage. The owner knew it, and he decided to take the offer in hand rather than wait for one that might never materialize. Rollins acquired KDAY for \$850,000 in May 1962.

The magnitude of this move, not entirely apparent to industry observers at the time of the purchase, began to emerge when KDAY's programming was switched to all-black within a few days after the change of ownership. And just as quickly, Russ went to work to find a better site for the transmitter, not only to expand KDAY's coverage into southern California but to also change KDAY from daytime only to a full-time broadcasting operation.

With the KDAY acquisition, Rollins Broadcasting, Inc. became the only broadcaster other than CBS and ABC with radio outlets in the nation's three largest markets. Indeed, these stations, serving one-fourth or more of the nation's black population, were part of Rollins' own radio network for the black consumer, incorporated under the name of Continental Broadcasting.

By the time KDAY joined the Rollins network, the size of Rollins' Continental Broadcasting market was estimated at \$20 billion a year. Wayne Rollins viewed it as the largest untapped market in the United States and one

first presidential campaign debate ever televised. Participants in that first TV debate were Democratic nominees Hubert H. Humphrey and John F. Kennedy, the young senator from Massachusetts who went on to win his party's nomination and the presidency in November 1960. The entire program was originated and produced by the station through the influence of Governor Cecil H. Underwood.

**KDAY, Los Angeles, California — May 1962. 1580-AM frequency with 50,000 watts daytime; upgraded to full-time with 10,000 watts at night.**

From among the scores of acquisition candidates he had reviewed, Wayne was attracted to KDAY. A 50,000-watt radio station — far stronger than its local competitors and one of the most powerful stations in the country — KDAY would complete an extremely important link in Wayne's broadcasting network serving black consumers. KDAY had the ability to reach a third of the country's entire black consumer market.

The possibility tantalized Wayne and he called on his staff to dig up everything they could on KDAY before he met with the station owner. Tim Crow was among a handful of people who worked all weekend preparing the material for Wayne and Russ Chambers. Initiating negotiations by telephone, Wayne felt an urgency that only competition could create. Indeed, a group from Nashville was also seeking to acquire the coveted California station.



**KDAY**

*With the KDAY acquisition in Los Angeles, Rollins Broadcasting became the only broadcaster other than CBS and ABC with radio outlets in the nation's three largest markets.*





The transaction was part of the Rollins plan to expand in areas with the greatest potential growth in order to achieve maximum profit levels.

In the West Virginia Democratic presidential primary that year, WCHS-TV pulled off a major coup and what would be a first in broadcasting history — the



*In the 1960 West Virginia Democratic presidential primary, the Rollins-owned WCHS-TV broadcast the first presidential campaign debate ever televised, between Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, left, and Senator John F. Kennedy, right.*

Wayne told the local newspaper the West Virginia station was chosen for acquisition after careful study of numerous areas. "We concluded that this section has as promising a future as anyplace in the United States," he said, citing the rapid growth of the area's giant chemical and metallurgical complexes.

## FROM RADIO TO WALL STREET

When WEAR-TV was put on the market, Wayne accompanied his broker to Pensacola, where he met with Mel Wheeler. As manager of the station, Wheeler also held 25 percent of the stock in the television company. The first thing Mel Wheeler asked Wayne was, "Where are you from in Georgia?"

"Ringgold," Wayne replied.

"I'm from Cartersville," Wheeler said.

Wayne confessed he wasn't really from Ringgold but from out in the country near there. As he was talking, the station's majority stockholder, contractor Charles Smith, came in. He said he was from Atlanta and had paved the first street in Ringgold.

The Georgia-born men talked for a long time, never even mentioning the television station. Finally, Wayne said he was tired and that it was his bedtime. The meeting ended for the evening.

The next morning at breakfast, Charles Smith and Mel Wheeler, who together owned 75 percent of the stock in the station, all but closed the deal. Said Smith, "You know what? I like this fellow here. He seems to be our kind of folks. I think we ought to just sell the station to him."

Rollins purchased the station for \$1.5 million. Immediately, Wayne built a new transmitting tower midway between Pensacola and Mobile, Alabama, increasing the station's power and expanding the coverage by 70 percent. The station therefore became a dual-city operation. Advertising rates jumped 25 percent, and Rollins had created another profitable station.

When the fiscal year ended for Rollins Broadcasting on April 30, 1959, Wayne was pleased. Over the last year, the company had achieved a 35 percent increase in net profits and a 40 percent rise in revenues that totaled \$2,673,000. And, as Wayne knew, he wasn't finished.

**WCHS-AM and -FM radio and WCHS-TV, Charleston, West Virginia — November 1960. WCHS-AM, 580 frequency with 1,000 watts, daytime and nighttime, upgraded to 5,000 watts; WCHS-FM, 100,000 watts; WCHS-TV, Channel 8, first a CBS, and then an ABC, affiliate, 316,000 watts.**

To purchase its first dual radio and television station properties within an existing dual-city broadcast market, Rollins Broadcasting agreed to pay \$2.598 million for WCHS AM-FM radio and TV stations in Charleston, West Virginia. Both Charleston and Huntington, West Virginia, were served by the broadcasting stations.



*WCHS-TV, in Charleston, West Virginia, was first a CBS, and then an ABC, network affiliate for Rollins Broadcasting, Inc.*



“Well, if they’re all that good, I guess you don’t mind guaranteeing them?” Wayne asked.

“No,” the other man replied. “I don’t mind guaranteeing them. We’ll guarantee them.”

And at the final closing, twelve months after the initial agreement, about half the guaranteed receivables were turned back to the previous owners. Rollins had been unable to collect them and, due to Wayne’s insight, therefore reduced the final settlement by that amount.

In another brilliant stroke, Wayne acquired new call letters for the first Rollins television station. The call letters for WPTZ-TV, a popular station in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, became available. Eager to have well-known call letters, Wayne filed for the WPTZ call letters, got them, and renamed the television station in Plattsburgh, New York. With that and other changes, the station proved to be one of the top Rollins success stories.



**WGEE, formerly WNIR, Indianapolis, Indiana — December 1956. 1590-AM frequency with 5,000 watts, daytime.**

Rollins Broadcasting again expanded with the acquisition of radio station WNIR in Indianapolis, Indiana. New facilities were built on Raymond Street for approximately \$150,000; its call letters were changed to WGEE and its daytime programming redirected to the black community. Country and Western music was later added as Rollins Broadcasting continued its march into major markets. WGEE-FM was added in May 1964, with the frequency of 103.3.



**KATZ, St. Louis, Missouri — June 1957. 1600-AM frequency with 1,000 watts, full-time.**

Purchased for \$110,000 in the summer of 1957, what seemed a very attractive property lost some of its luster when Wayne discovered that the powerful *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* had pushed through city ordinances requiring radio broadcasters to give detailed descriptions of anything advertised on the air. This made for some cumbersome commercials. Still, with the usual Rollins renovations and increase in transmitting power, the station became another financial winner.



**WEAR-TV, Pensacola, Florida — June 1959. Channel 3, 52,500 watts, upgraded to 100,000 watts, ABC affiliate, full-time.**

The purchase of WEAR-TV was a testament to Wayne Rollins’ personal charm and skills.

equipment, ordinarily not a major item. Arriving in Chicago, Wayne insisted on reading the leases before closing. "I want to see what we're assuming," he said. What he saw was that McArthur had assumed a lease of \$500,000 for all the facilities, and in addition wanted another \$500,000 to sell. The real price of this deal was approximately one million dollars.

"That's the way I'm selling them," McArthur asserted.

"That's not the way we're buying them," Wayne replied.

The meeting ended abruptly, though cordially. Wayne felt that McArthur had misrepresented the deal and that the trip to Chicago had been a wild goose chase. His broker obviously wanted to salvage something if he could. "Wayne, I've got something else I want to talk to you about," he said. "Would you be interested in a TV station up in Plattsburgh, New York?"

Going from Yankton, South Dakota, to Plattsburgh, New York, was quite a shift of gears, and not only in geography. It was a considerable jump, Wayne thought, to go from profitable radio stations to a television station that had never made a profit. But who loved a challenge more than Wayne Rollins?

Plattsburgh, Wayne learned, was a town of less than twenty thousand people located approximately fifty miles south of Montreal, Canada, and across Lake Champlain from Burlington, Vermont. The television networks had no outlet in Montreal; buying Plattsburgh would essentially be buying the huge Montreal market plus northern New York State and Vermont. The only other station in the area was in Burlington.

The Plattsburgh television station, WIRI-TV, was owned by a group of individuals who had lost money on the venture and wanted out. Right away, Wayne thought the TV station's facilities were very unusual: The studios and offices were located upstairs over an automobile dealership, while the transmitter sat a distance away on Terry Mountain, rising some four thousand feet high. Wayne looked over the situation and decided a new transmitter and tower would be needed. If the price was right, Plattsburgh could be the Rollins' entrée into television, without losing money.

The price was \$165,750. For a 100,000-watt full-time station, Wayne considered that a very, very low price. "If we can just take it and improve it, we can make it into a good station," said Wayne.

Negotiating the deal in early 1956, Wayne met with some of the station's owners. When the subject of accounts receivable came up, Wayne, as always, had done his homework. "How good are these accounts receivable?" he asked. Wayne knew that many of the accounts were over a year old, and he knew that they wouldn't all be collected.

"They're just as good as gold. I'd just as soon have them as gold," said one of the owners.

Dead silence greeted this announcement. "Does anyone have any comments?" Wayne asked. No one said a word. Wayne looked over at Tim Crow, the operations manager of the station. "How about you, Tim? What do you think about it?"

Tim grinned. "I think it's just great because I've been working sixty hours a week. So I'm going to love it!"

That broke up the crowd with laughter and smoothed the transition to the Rollins way of doing business. And two years later, Tim would become the first and only public relations spokesman for Rollins Broadcasting, Inc.



**WBEE**  
*formerly*  
**WCFS**

**WBEE, formerly WCFS, Chicago, Illinois — December 1955. 1570-AM frequency with 250 watts, upgraded to 1,000 watts, day-time only.**

In his desire to capture yet another major radio market with his black-programming concept, Wayne targeted Chicago. With frequencies increasingly difficult to obtain, the only way he could find to enter the market was to acquire a suburban station, WCFS in Markham, Illinois, in December 1955. The station was moved to Harvey, Illinois, where a new transmitter and station were built for approximately \$150,000, and programmed for the black community. The call letters were changed to WBEE, and the station was a success, due to the black programming and the national advertisers who were eager to capture shares of that market. With the acquisition of WBEE, Rollins Broadcasting now held an increasingly strong influence in terms of black listeners in New York, Chicago, and Norfolk.

Before he could claim a dominant position in this specialized market, Wayne Rollins knew he had to fill one more major link in his broadcasting chain: the West Coast. It would take several years for that dream to be realized, and something else came first.



**WIRI-TV**  
*changed to*  
**WPTZ-TV**

**WIRI-TV, changed to WPTZ-TV, Plattsburgh, New York — March 1956. Channel 5 with 20,000 watts, upgraded to 100,000 watts, full-time.**

Quite unexpectedly, television came into the picture for Rollins Broadcasting. It happened almost by accident when Wayne was moving forward with plans to purchase a radio station in Yankton, South Dakota, which covered a large farming area and reminded Wayne of WJWL's farm audience in Delaware.

A broker arranged the deal and accompanied Wayne to Chicago for the closing in the offices of John D. McArthur, owner of White Cross Insurance Company. In working on the South Dakota acquisition, Wayne's broker said the price would be \$500,000 and assumption of the leases for the property and

Next, an aggressive new sales team went after national advertisers. In a little more than six months, the station went from zero to fourteen national advertisers. As *Variety* reported, WNJR was “on the ‘must-buy’ list of several agencies for Negro market campaigns.”

Within the first year, the station not only moved into the black, it paid for itself. The Rollins formula for black-programmed radio and niche marketing had proven itself in the nation’s largest market. WNJR became the most profitable of all the Rollins stations. Wayne, while not given to superlatives, knew exactly when to use one.

“Tremendous,” he said.

**WCAV, changed to WRAP, Norfolk, Virginia — July 1954. 850-AM frequency with 5,000 watts in the daytime and 1,000 watts at night.**

Wayne constantly sought ways to upgrade or expand the stations that Rollins Broadcasting acquired. In Norfolk, WCAV was for sale, a station that would increase the transmitting power of WRAP by fivefold. Rollins purchased the station for \$100,000 in mid-1954. And with a change of call letters, it became the new WRAP. The old WRAP frequency of 1050, with 1,000 watts of power, was sold for \$55,000 to a broadcaster who reprogrammed it as a general-interest station.



**WCAV**  
*changed to*  
**WRAP**

**WAMS, Wilmington, Delaware — July 1954. 1380-AM frequency with 250 watts, upgraded to 5,000 watts in the daytime and 1,000 watts at night, full-time. (A sister FM station, which was off the air, was purchased at the same time and then sold by Rollins.)**

Within a few days of the Norfolk transition, Wayne paid \$110,000 for radio station WAMS in Wilmington, Delaware, another revenue-deficit operation.

Following his successful formula, Wayne changed almost everything: contemporary programming became rock 'n' roll (Top 40). And as elsewhere, the station went from losses to profits, and WAMS would soon have more listeners than all other radio stations in Wilmington combined.

The staff at WAMS had an unsettling introduction to the Wayne Rollins work ethic. After the transaction was completed, Wayne summoned the staff to a meeting. About fifteen people assembled to hear their new employer.

“The first thing I’m going to do is to move all of you from a forty-hour week to a forty-two hour week,” Wayne declared. “Your pay will stay the same. I’m not going to change that. It will be restructured so you’ll be paid for forty hours and so much overtime for the extra hours. But it will all come out the same as it was before.”



**WAMS**

Henry said he would take the position at the reduced salary, with the proviso that he would be considered for higher pay if his association with the company worked out satisfactorily. It did.

“Wayne was certainly a super negotiator, as history shows,” said Henry. “Also, his word was certainly more valuable than probably all the papers that you could have. What you do in business, of course, is build a reputation of integrity and character. Wayne certainly did that.”

**WNJR, Newark, New Jersey — November 1953. 1430-AM frequency with 5,000 watts, full time.**

Nearly a year after Rollins purchased WRAP, Wayne Rollins found the opportunity he needed to break into the New York market. Radio station WNJR in Newark, New Jersey, was on the block. Owned by the *Newark News*, WNJR had been on the air about six years and had lost approximately one million dollars. It had never made a profit, and, as with the Norfolk station, these losses would now help Rollins Broadcasting pay for this station.

This, Wayne knew, would be the acid test. “Sure,” he said to himself, “we’re doing all right in Radford. We’re doing all right in Fayetteville, Georgetown, and Norfolk. But we are limited in the number of people we can reach. If we’re ever going to get into the bigger money, we’ve got to go where there are more people. It’s just a matter of how many people we sell.”

Rollins Broadcasting purchased WNJR for \$145,000 (including valuable real estate), with plans to change WNJR to all-black programming and duplicate the Norfolk success on a grander scale. When Wayne talked with other broadcast people in New York, they were very skeptical of his idea. In fact, when word of the deal got out, some New York businessmen proposed that Wayne sell them blocks of time on WNJR and air programming aimed at a variety of ethnic groups. No deal, Wayne said. WNJR would be programmed solely for the black community.

Outright opposition to the sale came from seventeen WNJR employees, who filed a petition with the FCC and complained that Rollins Broadcasting planned to slash the staff to less than half its size and to target its programming to the black populace. In reply, Wayne said the company would operate the new station according to federal rules and regulations.

One of the very first steps Wayne took was to move the Newark-based studios and offices to the transmitter facility at Union, New Jersey, which had ample space and accessible parking. He consolidated the staff, always looking to combine jobs and control expenses. The result was a two-thirds reduction of expenses at WNJR.



**WNJR**

was growing because the potential of black people in the Tidewater area was immeasurable. Wayne Rollins realized that to ignore that fact, even slightly, would be passing up the needs of people with a great potential. He recognized the fact that black people were not only important in the American mainstream, but an important and integral part of American society.”

In Norfolk, “Let’s go down to WRAP” became a familiar phrase in the black community. As much a social service agency as a radio station, the list of services offered at WRAP was mind-boggling. People went to WRAP for self-improvement classes, fashion shows, tax information, sewing classes, to register for evening classes at Norfolk State University, Girl Scout meetings, and reading lessons. The station became a virtual clearinghouse for agencies and citizens of the black community and the surrounding area. “Educators, artists, musicians, medical authorities, artisans, and experts in every walk of life came to WRAP to teach and give of their services for the betterment of the quality of life,” Leola Dyson wrote. “Wayne Rollins wanted WRAP to identify with the community and the community to identify with WRAP. That happened.”

WRAP also produced an enviable level of revenues and profits. What Wayne first determined proved correct: Advertisers were hungry to reach the black buyers’ market. His station filled a void, and its success filled Wayne’s imagination — and his future plans — with visions of black-programmed radio stations in the nation’s largest and most prestigious markets.

As their business expanded, Wayne and John knew they had to have an experienced controller, and they weren’t pleased with the one they had.

“Everything that’s done for this fellow, we have to do it,” Wayne told John about their controller in early 1953, suggesting they hire another one. “The next time we get a fellow, I’m going to test him. If he doesn’t ask, ‘How do you get to Rehoboth?’ or ‘Can you meet me in Washington?’ that will be the test, and he’ll be hired.”

Responding to an advertisement placed by Rollins for a controller, Henry Tippie found Rollins Broadcasting on his own — literally. In January 1953, Henry made his way to an interview in Rehoboth without asking for directions. Therefore, he passed the first test. The second test came during his interview with Wayne and John in the Moore Building, when the discussion turned to compensation. Wayne talked about the opportunity to grow with the business. He wanted to know if Henry would be willing to take the job for five dollars a week less than what he was earning. Henry countered that he did not want to take a cut. Still Wayne would not budge.

“I’ve always thought that I had to have a person who *wanted* to come to work with me, who really wanted to come in and saw an opportunity,” Wayne said. “If the person was just changing jobs, that wouldn’t be the person I wanted. The way I tested that was dangerous and very unusual. I offered them less money than they were making. They had to really want it to take it.”

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## EXPANDING AND GROWING

competing station. Blacks saw WRAP as their voice, and the station soon became the focus of black community activities.

The star who led the dizzying climb up the ratings ladder was Leola Dyson, a young black woman who for many years had her own program called, naturally, "The Leola Dyson Program." The show sold out with national advertising, which poured in to WRAP from companies eager to reach the station's large, loyal audience. Leola Dyson's show was mostly talk with some music, and all the leading figures in the black community were involved. Special promotions included an annual "Homemakers Council," which within a few years attracted as many as six thousand people to the Norfolk civic center. Politicians from Washington joined local leaders in attending WRAP events. The WRAP Homemakers Show, hosted by Leola Dyson, ultimately attracted an audience exceeding one hundred thousand listeners every week.

"Big ones, little ones, and those in between — the Tidewater community made its way to WRAP," Leola Dyson later wrote Wayne Rollins. "They came to a place with the open door to be greeted by a lady with open arms. A lady like themselves. The black community had heretofore been ignored in media programming, and the need to be included in mainstream community services

*For many years, Leola Dyson had her own WRAP radio program. (about 1956)*



country, the other consultants knew that I had studied it real well, and they would immediately file applications on top of it," said Russ. "They knew that I had studied how to amend the frequency, and that the opportunity was there even if they hadn't figured it out."

**WRAP, Norfolk, Virginia — October 1952. 1050-AM frequency with 500 watts upgraded to 1,000 watts, daytime.**

One of seven radio stations in a city of almost a quarter-million people, WRAP had been on the air for three years and was virtually at the bottom of the ratings. The owner of this general-audience station told Wayne he had lost money on the station ever since it opened.

This, oddly enough, clinched the deal for Wayne. While the asking price for the station was a relatively low \$90,000, Wayne was even more excited about the station's losses, which totaled more than \$200,000. Under the existing tax laws, the station's losses would be applied against the profits earned by the other Rollins Broadcasting stations. When all the figures were added up, the purchase of WRAP virtually paid for itself. The cost of the station was nearly equal to the tax savings that it offered Rollins Broadcasting.

It was a sweet deal. "We are in the market without it costing anything for the facility," Wayne told John. "Now we've got to decide, 'What are we going to do with that station?'"

Wayne soon had his answer. Thirty-five percent of Norfolk's population was black, at least 85,000 people whose interests were not being served by the seven radio stations on the air. No black music was available on the radio, and very few black radio personalities — a broadcast situation that existed not only in Norfolk but around the country. The Norfolk black audience did have one well-known disc jockey named Jack Holmes, who was on the air from ten to midnight every night on another station. When Wayne checked on the advertising during Holmes' show, he discovered that the Holmes show was sold out, even though it aired late at night.

This meant but one thing to Wayne, whose instincts were correct. "There are advertisers out there that want to get to the African American market and have no way to do it." In Wayne's view, it made no sense for broadcasters to ignore such a large segment of the population. The black audience, he realized, represented a perfect opportunity for his next niche-marketing plan.

WRAP became one of the first major radio stations ever programmed entirely for a black audience, and it was an overwhelming success. Within two years, the station rode its all-black rhythm-and-blues format and public service activities from the bottom to the top of the ratings. On-air personalities were black, beginning with Holmes, the popular disc jockey hired away from a



**WRAP**

From the outset, advertising sales exceeded Wayne's most optimistic expectations. Companies producing chicken feed, medicine, and other poultry-related products quickly realized the value of this captive audience, and WJWL had no local broadcast competition. Within a short time, the station even sold national commercial spots, which commanded higher rates than were charged to local companies.

In little over a month, WJWL turned a profit. Much of the commercial time was presold by Norman Glenn, whom Wayne considered not only a tremendous salesman but a master sales trainer. In the fall of 1951, the station's AM dial went on the air with 1,000 watts and daylight-to-dark coverage.

Soon, Wayne added another radio expert to his growing staff — G. Russell Chambers. The engineer first met Wayne at the Radford station in 1952 while working with Gates Radio Company, a supplier of broadcasting equipment. Wayne thought very highly of Russ's engineering abilities, and after their first meeting he often called Russ on the telephone for advice.

More often than not, these calls were placed when Wayne got up at five o'clock in the morning, or by the time he arrived at the office by seven in the morning. It didn't seem to bother Wayne that Russ lived in Colorado Springs, where there was a two-hour time difference from the East Coast. Russ later joked that he finally took a job as director of engineering for Wayne in 1952 just so that he could put an end to those early morning calls and get some sleep.

Russ Chambers, according to those who knew and worked with him, was a genius. "Russ was the key to what Mr. Rollins wanted to accomplish," remembered H. Tim Crow, a radio station operations manager who would join the Rollins Broadcasting family in Wilmington in 1954. "Mr. Rollins always wanted to know, 'How can we buy or build a property that will do more than the other person who had it?' And Russ did that over and over again. He took one-thousand-watt stations, from an engineering standpoint, and increased them to five thousand watts to enlarge the scope — the broadcast signal — to enlarge the audience makeup. And that was a very tricky proposition. You had to get FCC approval, and you had to look at your engineering changes with a view to the signal's impact on the contiguous markets and contiguous stations. You had to find ways to get on another frequency or to relocate your tower so that you could increase your power without interfering with the other stations in the area. And Russ would do that, over and over."

Russ Chambers remembers, modestly, that increasing the power of radio stations required that "you know what you're doing." And within the broadcasting industry, Russ Chambers' unique and highly successful abilities became widely known. "Every time I would file an application anywhere in the



McDaniel helped design the facility and the broadcasting controls, ever-conscious of making it efficient in terms of personnel and operation.

With a population of about two thousand, Georgetown hadn't on the surface looked like a great market. Initially, the brothers had thought of the station as a conduit to advertise John's Ford dealership in Lewes, only twelve miles away. But true to Wayne's extensive research efforts, he knew the station could do much more. Sussex County happened to produce more chickens than any other county in the nation. The per capita income ranked Sussex at the very top of all farm counties in the entire United States. As he had done with college students in Radford and military personnel in Fayetteville, Wayne quickly found his "niche" in southern Delaware. Namely, chicken farmers.

WJWL specialized in agricultural programming — news and advertising related to broilers and poultry growers. "Live, on WJWL," listeners could hear the daily broiler auction in Georgetown, important information for chicken growers. When WJWL went on the air June 23, 1951, so did the Sussex County Chicken Auction! For about three hours, five afternoons a week, the singsong chant of a chicken auctioneer filled the airwaves from WJWL, broadcast live from the auction.

*Rollins Broadcasting capitalized on another "niche" market on WJWL in Delaware — chicken farmers and agricultural programming. (1953)*

“No,” came the reply.

“Well,” Wayne answered, “that’s all we have from the previous station. Everything else has been changed. We changed the programming. We changed the music. We don’t have a person on the air that the previous owner had. We’ve upgraded everything. So if you dislike the station, it would have to be 1230 because that’s the only thing we kept!”

The strategy worked, and so did Wayne’s niche marketing. WFAI’s programming was aimed at the military personnel at Fort Bragg. To tie the station more closely to the army base, Wayne even hired some of the soldiers to work as disc jockeys. National sponsors, especially the tobacco companies, eagerly signed on for commercial spots. WFAI slowly edged into the black, but its growth was far from the robust rate achieved by WRAD. What WFAI needed was a network affiliation, Wayne decided. A competing Fayetteville station had just announced it was going to become the CBS affiliate, but Wayne decided there was still a possibility of nabbing the prize for WFAI.

His ace in the hole was a connection with a Philadelphia insurance agent, who sold all the insurance to the Rollins businesses. Coincidentally, he was a next-door neighbor of Bill Paley’s father, who had bought the CBS network and turned it over to his son. To make a long story short, Wayne talked to his insurance agent about a CBS affiliation for his Fayetteville station, the agent spoke to the senior Paley, the father spoke to the son, and young Bill Paley authorized the CBS affiliation for WFAI.

The reversal by CBS produced total consternation at the rival station, which had already run a full-page ad in the Fayetteville paper trumpeting its soon-to-be status as the CBS affiliate. But WFAI’s newfound friend, the elder Mr. Paley, stubbornly stuck to his guns. The station gained prestige overnight, which improved its position in the market.

**WJWL, Georgetown, Delaware — June 1951. 900-AM frequency with 1,000 watts later upgraded to 5,000 watts, daytime. WJWL-FM started in fall 1953, 3,000 watts.**

Three years after the application was filed, the FCC at last approved the radio license application for Georgetown, the third station for Rollins Broadcasting. Construction of the new station offered a different kind of challenge than WRAD; the Georgetown tower would have to rise 450 feet (200 feet higher than the Radford tower) in order to beam its signal across the flat Delaware terrain.

Located on the Old Georgetown Highway, WJWL would be a daytime station, on the air from sunup to sundown. By the time it was completed, this Rollins station cost \$95,600, almost twice what WRAD had cost. Again, Mac



**WJWL**

automobile dealerships but developing car and truck leasing as well. In 1953, the *New York Times* reported: "One of the pioneers in the fleet leasing business is John W. Rollins, head of Rollins Fleet Leasing of Rehoboth, Delaware, whose company trades under the slogan, 'Troubles Cease When You Lease.'"

Wayne concentrated his efforts on the growing Rollins Broadcasting operations, which included a national radio sales office in New York and Chicago. And just how close a tab Wayne Rollins kept on his burgeoning radio empire became clear in 1963, when he outlined the following scenario for the New York Society of Security Analysts:

"We believe our company is in a unique position with our close cost control methods. I would know, for instance, if I were in Wilmington today, how much business we did yesterday in each of our ten radio and television stations. I would know how this business compared with the same day last week and the same day a year ago. I would also know how this compares with our previously projected budget for this day.

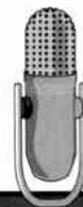
"It is said that there is nothing so out-of-date as yesterday's newspaper. Actually, we believe there is nothing of less value than yesterday's broadcast time. Unlike a newspaper, you can't even wrap anything up in it. It is not sufficient for us, therefore, just to operate in such a way as to know how we are doing only at the end of each quarter. Too much time will have elapsed that can never be recovered."

After moving his family from Radford to Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, Wayne constantly traveled from one radio station to another, keeping track of the performance of each one. And Wayne's unique approach to building a media empire, at once both simple and complex, is best told through a profile of each station's history. This saga begins on a Christmas Eve, nearly seven months after WRAD went on the air, not long after Wayne and John received word that a radio station was for sale in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

**WFAI, Fayetteville, North Carolina — Christmas Eve, 1950.  
1230-AM frequency with 250 watts, full-time.**

Wayne and John purchased this radio station for \$32,000, which they considered a bargain for a station that served the largest military establishment in the world at Fort Bragg, one that offered a picture-perfect opportunity for Wayne's "niche" marketing.

Due to the somewhat shaky financial ground the station had been on, Wayne had to come up with a creative approach to sell advertising. For a while, he even went with each of his three sales representatives when they made their calls. When potential advertisers complained about the sorry reputation of the station and its previous owner, Wayne asked if they had anything against the frequency — 1230.



**WFAI**



*Wayne and John inside one of the radio stations owned and operated by Rollins Broadcasting*

In October 1962, the highly respected financial weekly newspaper, *Barron's*, reviewed Rollins Broadcasting as "a leading independent radio and television broadcaster." Crediting the Rollins strategy of targeting the increasingly important black consumer market, *Barron's* cited major new advertisers added in the past fiscal year: Lever Brothers, Procter & Gamble, Columbia Pictures, Humble Oil & Refining, Armstrong Cork, and American Tobacco. Moreover, the company that began with a telephone call from Georgia to Delaware was now listed on the American Stock Exchange.

And when Wayne Rollins addressed the New York Society of Security Analysts on March 21, 1963, he reported revenues of \$5.9 million for the fiscal year ending January 31, 1963 — nearly double the \$3.1 million in revenues the company reported just two years before in 1961.

Without a doubt, the Rollins brothers had achieved remarkable professional and personal success in the business world, an achievement that seemed all the more incredible when financial analysts realized that not one penny of their wealth was inherited.

They had both become millionaires, a milestone that neither had actually set out to accomplish as they plowed the fields of Catoosa County, but one

that both had achieved by the mid-1950s. In an article called "How I Made a Million," John Rollins said it took "bare knuckles and a hundred percent effort, nothing less. They've been both the push and the pull in my thirty-six years."

Said Wayne: "I believe that most successes come by a person taking advantage of the opportunities, one by one, as they come along. I don't think it's a gamble when a person has a continuous record of good judgment. It's preparation."

And in their journey from ordinary to extraordinary, the Rollins brothers did not settle for doing extraordinarily well in just one business venture. Oh, no. From 1950 to 1963, Wayne and John Rollins pushed the outer edges of the proverbial business envelope in different directions: radio, television and outdoor advertising, automobile dealerships and leasing, land acquisitions, and cattle breeding.

Though they worked together on nearly every acquisition and business decision, each brother naturally developed his own area of expertise. John became known as the "Merchant of Transportation," not only expanding his

## FROM RADIO TO WALL STREET

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He made stations profitable in a year or sooner, depending on their size and the extent of their revenue or losses when he acquired them.

He achieved success in small and big markets alike, a benchmark that prompted Wayne's "bumblebee" remark in 1953 when he first entered the New York market despite those who advised him not to do it.

His ability to buy stations with excellent potential for growth and profits was a direct result of Rollins Broadcasting's decision to devote 40 percent of its time to operations and 60 percent to market research activities; as a result, Wayne became a master not only at finding good markets but avoiding the bad ones.

And he rewrote niche-marketing textbooks when he became the first in radio broadcasting to tailor programming to specific community audiences — from college students in Radford to chicken farmers in Georgetown to black audiences on both coasts.

*Although John and Wayne consulted each other on nearly every business decision and acquisition, John developed an expertise in automobile dealerships and car and truck leasing while Wayne became known as a leader in broadcasting.*



# W

hen Wayne Rollins ventured outside his traditional small radio markets to buy his first large station, many industry experts advised against the move. But Wayne didn't listen.

"I'm like the bumblebee," said Wayne, an example so simple it must have astonished industry observers. "He isn't supposed to be able to fly, but doesn't know it and flies anyway."

From the moment he first decided to build a future in radio, Wayne never envisioned just one station. His plan, no matter how vague in the beginning, always included what he called "building blocks." If "you went into radio," he reasoned, "you either improved that station or added another station, and then you added another one and another one. You build just like building blocks."

Which is exactly the strategy that Rollins Broadcasting followed. From 1950 to 1963, Rollins purchased ten radio stations and three television stations in locations all over the country — an exciting roller-coaster ride of acquisitions and success stories that resulted in something unique for the entire industry. Indeed, this "building blocks" approach by a man who compared himself to a bumblebee would leave all naysayers virtually speechless. In 1962, when Wayne purchased the Los Angeles-based KDAY radio station, Rollins Broadcasting became the only broadcaster other than the CBS and ABC networks with radio outlets serving New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago, the nation's three largest markets.

And as Claudia Rollins would tell anyone who listened, it wasn't just luck.

In each broadcast area, Wayne Rollins combined his insights into market specialization with his uncanny ability to employ exceptional people, squeeze profits out of the very tightest bottom line, and maintain a level of efficiency in staffing and programming that was second to none.

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# EXPANDING AND GROWING, FROM RADIO TO WALL STREET

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*Rollins Broadcasting was listed on the American Stock Exchange on February 14, 1961. From left to right, John Rollins, Rollins employee Madalyn Copley, American Stock Exchange president Edward McCormick, Wayne Rollins, and Henry Tippie*



# CHAPTER VII

*What you do in business,  
of course, is build a reputation  
of integrity and character.  
Wayne certainly did this.*

— *Henry B. Tippie*



be understanding enough to know that your wife's home is her kingdom, and she's running the field there. And when you come through the gate, that doesn't change her authority one bit the way she looks at it."

Grace continued, "You know what? I think my mother gave me some good advice when we were first married and started out. She said, 'Grace, you go with him wherever he wants to go and don't worry about the house. You go with him. If you don't, some other woman will.' And Wayne always said, 'Your mother was wise.' Because he wanted me with him all the time.

"Wayne always said there had to be a successful wife behind every successful man. I don't know what my success was, but we always stayed together."

Wayne never doubted the key elements of Grace's success. As he once said, "There's never been anyone who stayed out of my business any more than my wife. And I don't think there's ever been anyone who contributed more to my success than she has."

And by the end of 1950, with his wife, brother, and family by his side, Wayne was preparing for success that would take him far beyond the airwaves around Radford, success that would expand his one radio station into an independent media empire.

*Opposite page: Gary Rollins (about 1951)*

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## THE GROWTH OF ROLLINS

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outright sales. Net earnings for the year were only \$5.3 million — representing the first year since the company started in 1948 that earnings had fallen.

For Wayne, the situation merited a close examination of the company. Was it time, he wondered, to divide the company and spin off parts of it as separate entities? Would this solve the problem of one division pulling down the others, as the company has just experienced? And if executed, would this approach appease Wall Street and reluctant investors, who had begun to shy away from anything resembling a conglomerate in American companies?

“We had a problem with analysts understanding our business when we were in oil, communications, and exterminating,” Wayne explained. “We were involved in so many things that no one wanted to follow us. The analysts had to learn too many industries to effectively follow the company.”

Before Christmas in 1983, the Rollins executives decided the time was right to divide the company and spin off to the shareholders two new companies: Rollins Communications, Inc. would consist of the media properties; RPC Energy Services, Inc. would be composed of the oil and gas services operations. Orkin and the protective services division would continue under the banner of Rollins, Inc.

The restructuring was approved by the board of directors in December 1983. Announcing the action, Randall Rollins said the board believed “the aggregate value of the individual businesses exceeds the value placed upon Rollins, Inc. as a whole by the equity markets.” With approval needed from the Internal Revenue Service and several other regulatory agencies, it would be six months before the spin-off occurred.

In late February 1984, the two sons of Wayne Rollins accepted new positions with Rollins, Inc. Randall, fifty-two, was elected to the newly created office of senior vice chairman. Gary, thirty-nine, was elected president and chief operating officer. Wayne remained as chairman of the board and chief executive officer.

On June 12, 1984, father and sons went to New York for a ceremony at the New York Stock Exchange as the two new companies were immediately listed on the Big Board: Rollins Communications, Inc. (ROC), and RPC Energy Services, Inc. (RES). It was an unusual sight even for the NYSE, and marked the first time three Georgia companies with common ownership had been listed simultaneously on the Big Board. When the stock market closed on June 30, 1984, Rollins, Inc.’s price per share was \$19½; Rollins Communications was \$15½, and RPC Energy Services was \$3½.

Back in Atlanta after their trip to Wall Street, Wayne and his sons appeared before a meeting of securities analysts to talk about the three Rollins companies, the first of a series of such meetings with analysts around the country.

“We’re not in trouble,” said Wayne, who felt good about the change and took the opportunity to rib Randall and Gary. “I just want to give these

companies and my boys a chance to have their share of the spotlight. But don't start celebrating yet. I plan to stick around and see that you maintain the company's good record!"

"I will never retire," he declared later. "Everyone needs a job to force them to get up every day and to have something to look forward to each day. If you retire and have nothing to look forward to, you will soon be miserable and bored."

Rollins Communications, Inc. now owned four cable systems serving thirty-one towns or cities in Delaware, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts, making the company one of the industry's largest providers. The company had television stations in Plattsburgh, New York; Pensacola, Florida; and Charleston, West Virginia. Its six radio stations were located in the Los Angeles and Chicago markets; Wilmington, Delaware; Charleston, West Virginia; and Norfolk, Virginia. (In March 1985, the company acquired another television station, KAUT-TV in Oklahoma City, which was the thirty-sixth-largest television market in the nation.)

And in 1984, Rollins, Inc., under Gary's command, made its first major acquisition in several years. The company purchased the home security division of Warner Amex Cable Communications, Inc., a subsidiary of Warner

*Left to right: Randall Rollins, Richard Hubbell, O. Wayne Rollins, Linda H. Graham, Gary Rollins, Harrison Jones, and Mike Higgins the day the company was divided into three separate corporations: Rollins Communications, Inc., RPC Energy Services, Inc., and Rollins, Inc. (1984)*



# The new Rollins companies

**B** SECTION

Thursday, June 21, 1984

## 2 longtime units now on their own

By Beverly Y. Hall  
Staff Writer

For more than 20 years, Rollins Inc. has been a national service company with diverse interests ranging from exterminating household pests to developing cable television technology. Today, Rollins Inc. is pulling some of its irons out of the fire.

The Atlanta-based company has restructured itself through spinoffs of its media operations and its oil and gas service company.

Rollins Communications Inc. and RPC Energy Services Inc. will start active trading of 14.6 million shares each on the New York Stock Exchange at the end of this month. This listing on the exchange marks the first time that two commonly-owned, Georgia spun off companies have been listed simultaneously on the Big Board.

"We're not in trouble, I just want to give these companies and my boys a chance to have their share of the spotlight," founder and chairman of the parent company, O. Wayne Rollins, told securities analysts Tuesday.

"A farm boy like me who grew up with an outdoor toilet gets real comfortable riding in a jet, and I want to see these boys do that," the senior Rollins joked, referring to his sons who will head the new companies.

"But don't start celebrating yet, I plan to stick around and see that you maintain my good record," he said, teasing his sons.

"We've been thinking about these spinoffs for at least two years now, and we've finally been able to give the companies the visibility they deserve," said Rollins, known affectionately as "Grandfather Rollins."

"The Rollins family is deeply committed with their personal assets, and this move would create more flexibility for everyone. It's a case where the Rollins parts are worth more than the whole," said Leon Brochens, analyst for Robinson Humphrey/American Express Inc. The Rollins family owns nearly half of Rollins Inc.'s 24.3 million outstanding shares.

O. Wayne Rollins founded his communications company in 1949 with \$25,000 in capital. The communications business later took a back seat to its pest control services. Since then, the company's assets have grown to \$500 million, he said.

Rollins purchased the Orkin subsidiary in 1964 for \$62.4 million, at a time Rollins' revenues were only \$9 million. The leveraged buy out captured the interest of Wall Street when institutional lending agencies put up the bulk of the purchase price based on the Rollins' potential earnings, a company official said.



NICK ARROYO/Staff

Gary Rollins (left), Rollins Inc. president; Richard Hubbell, Rollins Communications executive VP; Rollins Inc. Chairman O. Wayne Rollins (seated); R. Randall Rollins, chairman of RPC

"We have been and will always be a cash flow company because you need money to build and expand," Rollins said. "We're starting our companies with \$100 million in assets and a cash flow in excess of \$20 million each," he said of the spun off companies.

For the parent company, Orkin Exterminating Co. Inc., will continue to be its largest service, according to Gary W. Rollins, who becomes its president and chief operating officer.

Orkin, with 300 branches in 38 states, is larger than its next 20 competitors combined, according to Rollins Inc. Vice President H. Tim Crow.

Rollins Protective Services Co., which specializes in residential security, will continue to operate as a subsidiary under the parent company.

Rollins Inc.		
For nine months ended March 31		
(thousands of dollars)		
	1984	1983
Revenues	\$186,273	\$173,049
Net income	\$5,474	\$6,321
Assets	\$106,186	\$121,784

Rollins Communications		
For nine months ended March 31		
(thousands of dollars)		
	1984	1983
Revenues	\$67,304	\$59,983
Net income	\$7,704	\$9,044
Assets	\$105,339	\$88,255

RPC Energy Services Inc.		
For nine months ended March 31		
(thousands of dollars)		
	1984	1983
Revenue	\$64,202	\$97,809
Net income (loss)	(\$4,941)	(\$3,201)
Assets	\$114,148	\$155,672

When the company split into three corporations, the story made newspaper headlines. (1984)

Communications. For \$5 million, Rollins obtained 16,000 new customers in Ohio, Texas, and Missouri, bringing to forty-three the number of markets served by the company.

By March 1985, the brilliance of the Rollins spin-off move was reflected in the growth of the Rollins, Inc. stock by more than 28 percent, to \$24.55 per share in less than a year. Rollins Communications' stock was now at \$20 per share, an increase of 29 percent from its offering price of \$15½ per share. RPC Energy Services rose 9.5 percent to \$4.25, up from \$3.88 per share for its launch date of the previous summer. Overall, the shareholders had benefited tremendously.

In its first year as a separate company, Rollins Communications achieved an increase of 17 percent in revenues to hit \$100 million, while the operating profit margin reached a sparkling 26 percent, and net profits jumped 21 percent. This performance was rewarded by Wall Street as the price of Rollins Communications' stock more than doubled during the year. Leading the surging growth was cable television.

Rollins, Inc. boosted its revenues by 7 percent to \$280.6 million, with a net income of \$37.5 million. During the year, Orkin made another acquisition: the pest control subsidiary of the Bekins Company in the Los Angeles area, which further expanded Orkin's presence in the southern California market.

RPC Energy Services, slashing costs to counter the oil industry depression, cut its loss for the year by 45 percent from the disastrous 1984 fiscal year as revenues increased 9 percent to almost \$95 million.

*A 1984 newspaper report notes the latest promotions for Randall and Gary.*

**2-C**

**THE ATLANTA CONSTITUTION, Tues., Feb. 28, 1984 ...**



**R. Randall Rollins**

## *Rollins execs are promoted*

Atlanta-based Rollins Inc. announced on Monday the elections of R. Randall Rollins to the new position of senior vice chairman and of Gary W. Rollins, who was promoted from vice president to replace his brother as president and chief operating officer.

Randall Rollins, 52, joined the nationwide services company in 1948. Gary Rollins, 39, joined the firm in 1966. Both are the sons of company chairman O. Wayne Rollins.



**Gary W. Rollins**



*In 1984, Gary was named president and chief operating officer of Rollins, Inc.*

The financial bottom line made everything clear: The spin-off strategy had worked as planned, allowing RPC to tackle its problems while the other two companies were free to expand on their own.

Increasing his level of activity, Wayne continued to involve himself in major decisions of the three companies. One day in July 1985, he met with some of his top associates at eight o'clock in the morning for a lengthy session and convened the group again at eight that evening. He looked ill. There was a gray hue to his face. Yet never once did Wayne lose command of the meeting.

That night at home, Wayne called Emory's Dr. Charles Hatcher and told the doctor that he'd had some difficulty, but was feeling better and might need to have a checkup the next day. It wasn't the first time that Charles Hatcher and Wayne had discussed his heart problem, which had flared up previously during a hunting trip.

After midnight, though, the doctor received another call. "This is Wayne. I'm in terrible shape." He had severe pain in his chest.

Taken to the hospital immediately, Wayne underwent test after test all the next morning and into the afternoon. The team of Emory doctors wanted to pinpoint whether there was damage to the heart muscle. By four o'clock, Wayne was told that he needed surgery, but he balked. Dr. Hatcher discussed the situation with Randall and Gary. Surgery was imperative, but Wayne would not agree to an operation. The doctors were clearly worried. The angiogram that had been performed on Wayne had caused a disturbance that might trigger an attack in his case.

"He really needs to have this done," Dr. Hatcher told Gary and Randall. "We're very worried about it. And he doesn't want to have it done, but you just need to impress upon him to have it done."

"Well, you know, Dad is Dad," Randall replied. "And we're not going to make him do something against his will."

They went into their father's room. He was still quite sedated. He said to his sons, "What do you think?"

Almost in unison, Randall and Gary said, "You need to go ahead and have this done."

"You're satisfied that I don't need to wait?"

"Absolutely not," they both answered.

"Okay," their father agreed. There was no argument, no further discussion, but he had one request of his sons. "I want you to tell them to get me a fresh doctor. It's late afternoon. I don't want a doctor that's been here all day and is worn out." He mustered a smile.

It broke the tension. His sons laughed in relief. They went into the corridor and told Charlie Hatcher that though their father had agreed to the surgery, he had one request. "He wants a fresh doctor, not somebody who's tired."

Dr. Hatcher assured the family that the surgical team on hand was excellent, and that it would take too long to get a new team assembled at the

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## THE GROWTH OF ROLLINS

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hospital. The bypass surgery proceeded and was successful, the fifth that day for young Dr. Joe Craver. Grace said later that if Wayne had known the doctor already had performed four heart operations, he definitely would not have agreed to the operation.

After the heart surgery, Wayne tried to slow down his pace a bit, even though such an accomplishment was difficult for him. While recuperating, he used his time to think about the future, focusing on his desire to use his money for the good of mankind. His astute planning resulted in 1986 in a \$10 million donation to Emory University for a medical research center, and those who watched him make his decision marveled at the process.

“Mr. Rollins made a major study out of what he felt he should give,” said James Williams, who served with Wayne on Emory’s board and had spearheaded major fund-raising campaigns for the university. “He asked, ‘What’s the most important thing that Emory needs?’ and he landed on research. He made that decision like he was going to buy a business. He wasn’t interested in himself, he was interested in what Emory needed. And with his donation, he put Emory in a new horizon. He put Emory on the map as far as medical research.”

In the same year, Wayne received an award that was all but destined to be his, all but wished upon him by the mother who read to him by firelight the stories of those who made their dreams come true. On May 26, 1986, O. Wayne Rollins received the Horatio Alger Award. It was presented by his brother, John,

*On May 26, 1986, Wayne received the prestigious Horatio Alger Award, presented to him by his brother, John.*



president of the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans, Inc., and a previous recipient of the award. As they stood together before a large crowd of business, civic, and religious leaders at the awards dinner in Houston, Texas, the two men again made history. This was the first time that two brothers had ever won this prestigious award since the Horatio Alger Award was first presented in 1947. In the audience that night were 120 members of the Rollins family, friends, and employees, an entourage and event planned and carried out by Randall and Gary Rollins in tribute to their father.

Back in Atlanta again, it was definitely *not* business as usual as Wayne prepared for what would be the ultimate deal of his business life. Speculation swirled around Rollins, Inc. In the investment community, there was talk of a hidden agenda in the Rollins spin-offs. Was Wayne Rollins setting the stage for selling one or more of the companies or taking one or more private? His response was a noncommittal one. "We'll consider any offer that's in the best interest of our shareholders."

Wayne knew timing was all-important. The time to sell was in a time of strong demand. As he told his friend Wilton Looney, a Rollins board member and chairman of the Genuine Parts Company, "I have always found that when someone wants to buy, it is a good time to sell. And if you've got more than one person who wants to buy something, then it's a really good time to sell."

The opportunity to sell Rollins Communications did not happen overnight, nor did Wayne deliberately set out to sell the company that was the heart and soul of his first business career and success. Gradually, however, he could not ignore the signs. In 1986, broadcast stations and cable systems commanded premium prices in the market. Justus Martin, a friend of Wayne's and head of the Robinson-Humphrey Company, talked with Wayne frequently after the spin-offs. Gradually, he noticed that Wayne often mentioned that some broadcast properties had recently sold at a very high price. "If those properties are worth that kind of money, our company is worth a lot," he remarked several times.

"Wayne," Justus replied one day, "I'm hearing you say the Rollins properties are too high if you were the buyer. You've always had the theory that if they're too high, then maybe you ought to sell them. So, based on your philosophy, would you sell the properties?"

Wayne didn't have an immediate answer. He had to admit that there was an emotional attachment to the media business. It had been the start of his now huge enterprise, with its genesis in radio station WRAD in Radford, Virginia, on his birthday, May 5, 1950.

Could it have been thirty-six years ago? His mind replayed the opening day, his nervousness over the new venture, and whether the transmitter and everything else would work properly as his first radio station went on the air live.

## THE GROWTH OF ROLLINS

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Through his mind flashed the other stations and places: WRAP in Norfolk, Virginia, the first Rollins radio station programmed specifically for blacks; and WPTZ-TV, the first Rollins television station at Plattsburgh, far up in the northernmost corner of New York; KDAY in the formidable Los Angeles market; WEAR-TV in Pensacola; and the first Rollins cable system in Wilmington, Delaware.

"Each one of those places," he confided to a friend later, "I had built or acquired them and had been right into every detail of them. They have all been a part of me."

Wayne realized that if he personally owned the media business, he would not sell it. After all, he didn't need the money, and he would not want any of his employees to lose their careers through a sale of the business.

Against his personal feelings, however, Wayne weighed the interests of the other shareholders. They had no emotional attachment to the business. They had invested their money as a business proposition. And it was Wayne's job to manage the business and increase their investment.

After much deliberation and lengthy discussions with Randall and Gary, Wayne reached a conclusion. He would sell the media operations if the price was high enough. What price would he demand for this, the most highly prized of all his enterprises? A good rule of thumb for a price was ten times earnings; Wayne Rollins was thinking of much, much more than that.

All these thoughts ran through his mind before he answered Justus Martin. "Yes, I would sell the media division. But nobody would pay us what we want."

"Well, I don't know," Justus replied. "What do you want for the media company?"

The price per share of Rollins Communications stock would have to be in the low forties, Wayne said. Justus relayed this figure to Shearson Lehman Brothers in New York, considered a Wall Street expert on media properties. If there was a deal, it would be handled by Shearson Lehman with the support of Robinson-Humphrey in Atlanta, Justus Martin's company.

A Shearson Lehman executive called Justus. "We've looked over the Rollins properties as carefully as possible," he reported. "There is no way in God's world that anybody would pay more than thirty-two, maybe thirty-five dollars a share."

"Wayne Rollins won't sell at that price," Justus retorted. "He has already said it would take more than forty dollars a share."

The "impossible" deal was batted around again at Shearson Lehman. Someone mentioned a company that might want Rollins Communications — even at the price Wayne had set. It was Heritage Communications, Inc. headed by James Hoak, the chairman and chief executive, who had given up a law practice in 1971 to start his own cable television company in Des Moines, Iowa. He had built Heritage into a major operator through well-planned acquisitions.

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Hoak showed immediate interest, and negotiations began in earnest with Wayne and Randall both deeply involved in the bargaining. It quickly became apparent to Justus Martin that Randall, like his father, possessed great skills as a negotiator and trader. The same could not be said of the Shearson Lehman representative. In Justus Martin's view, the young man was very arrogant, very cocksure, "Wall Street confident." From the outset, this did not set well with Wayne Rollins, and his displeasure was evident.

As the bargaining ground on, the Shearson Lehman representative became quite cavalier and generous with Rollins money. To him, many of the issues that concerned Wayne and Randall were unimportant. "That's only a dollar a share," he would say. "Let's overlook that. Oh, well, let's forget this. That's not the point. We can iron that out later."

After comments like that in several sessions, Wayne and Randall had had enough. "Listen," Wayne said, "these things may not be important to you, but they are important to us because it's our money." Randall reinforced the point so there would be no misunderstanding. Both he and his father made it crystal clear they were not going to tolerate the Shearson Lehman representative's attitude.

Wisely, Justus saw to it that the offending negotiator attended no more sessions with the Rollins executives. In his place was a more sensible young man, and the discussions went smoothly.

In the waning years of his career, Wayne Rollins was still at his negotiating, deal-making best. At the outset, he made it clear he would not agree to an exchange of Heritage stock with other shareholders while the Rollins family received cash. "Whatever deal you make with us, you are going to have to do the same for all the stockholders," he declared.

Once the two sides had hammered out the agreement on a price of \$41 per share, Wayne and his family agreed to sell their 6.5 million shares, approximately 43.5 percent of the common shares outstanding. Heritage agreed that the same price would be paid for shares held by other stockholders. The total price for all the 14.6 million shares outstanding would be \$598.6 million. The price was not ten times but fifty times the last year's earnings of \$12 million — an incredible price, Wayne thought. The closing price of Rollins Communications, Inc. stock the day before the announcement was \$32.875 per share.

"Would you take any paper?" the Shearson Lehman broker asked Wayne.

"Well, I guess it would depend on what kind of paper we were talking about," Wayne responded.

The broker answered quickly. "It would be money good. The same as cash."

Nothing more was said about that as the negotiators worked out the terms. But Wayne remembered it and later worked out in his mind what "money good" might be and what he would propose when the moment came.

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*Wayne with sons Randall and Gary as they appeared in the company's 1986 annual report.*

The terms were settled with Wayne agreeing to a price of \$41 per share. To assure their ability to acquire control, Heritage paid \$1.50 per share to the Rollins family corporation and individual family shareholders, for the option to acquire the total 6,354,771 shares of RCI common stock. This added another \$9.5 million to the sale price of \$598.6 million, for a total of \$608.1 million.

"We'll pay all the public shareholders and individual family shareholders in cash," the broker proposed, "and we'll give the family corporation a note."

"That's fine," Wayne replied. "But what will be the guarantee of that note?" It was not a typical question in such deals. But by now the purchasers and their agents knew that Wayne Rollins was in no way a typical negotiator.

"You've got the properties here in the company, and we've got other properties." That should be sufficient collateral, the Heritage people felt.

"No," Wayne answered. "That's not 'money good.' I don't know whether there is *anything* that is money good or not. But the nearest thing I can think of would be to have the notes guaranteed by the five top banks that we select, the top five banks in the country. And *that's* what I would consider being money good."

Since the "money good" promise had been made, the purchasers had to accept Wayne's plan. The Trust Company Bank drew the assignment of selecting the five banks it considered the best. Then the guarantees or letters of credit were prepared. If for any reason, the purchaser failed to pay principal or interest when due, the sellers could immediately demand and receive payment from the banks as guarantors, without any collection process. The 11 percent interest would be paid every three months, with the principal to be paid in installments of 25 percent in four years, 25 percent in six years, and the remaining 50 percent in eight years.

"This is about as good as you could get," Wayne thought, as he sat at a table in his office and began signing preliminary documents prior to the closing. Despite his sentimental feeling about the media business, Wayne felt no regret about his decision. As he had practiced throughout his career, once he reached a conclusion, he never indulged in second thoughts. With the price being paid for the company, he could see no alternative but to sell.

When the Rollins and Heritage principals gathered for the closing at King and Spalding's offices in the Trust Company tower, Justus Martin estimated that between thirty and forty lawyers crowded into the conference room. The signing of the papers moved slowly, and the Heritage people became impatient.

Justus telephoned Wayne and said, "Wayne, we've got to get this thing signed. If we don't get it closed by three o'clock, these people have borrowed the money, and if the deal isn't done, they're going to send the money back to the bank so they won't be charged a day's interest on it."

At once, Justus realized he'd said the wrong thing. He could hear defiance in Wayne's reply. "You tell them to take their money and do anything they want

## THE GROWTH OF ROLLINS

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to with it!" He would not be hurried. After all, he didn't have to sell, and the media properties held sentimental ties. Everything had to be correct.

And it was. The deal was completed for a total price of \$608.1 million, with Wayne Rollins, his family, and Rollins family interests receiving \$269.9 million. It was, indeed, an offer he could not have refused.

When asked later about the day's events, Randall was somewhat surprised. "We never spent any time celebrating or crowing. We sold the communications business that afternoon, and we never talked about celebrating, we started focusing on our other problems that very afternoon. It was just business as usual. When you think back, maybe we should have stopped and celebrated."

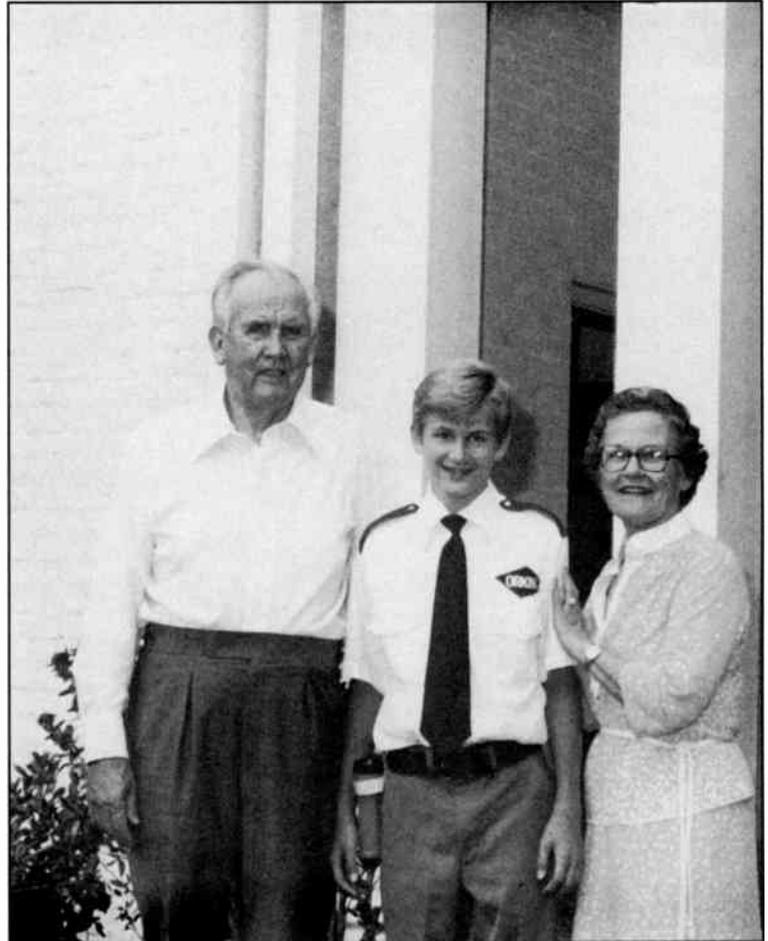
But in their own way, the Rollins family did celebrate. After all, they went back to work — the element in their lives that more than anything else distinguished O. Wayne Rollins from others, the ingredient that allowed him to be better than average.

At RPC Energy Services, there was much work to be done. The spin-off company, which had taken a reeling blow from one of the worst depressions the oil and gas industry had ever seen, reported a net loss of \$4.6 million for 1985, which shot up to \$40.9

million for 1986. To take advantage of huge loss carry-forwards in RPC, Randall searched for another acquisition that could also help bring earnings to the company. RPC, Randall knew, could not afford to make a mistake; the acquisition had to be a solid one with a good financial record.

The choice was a leading manufacturer of powerboats, Chaparral Boats, Inc. of Nashville, Georgia. Acquired for approximately \$23.5 million on November 4, 1986, Chaparral brought a profitable operation to RPC and enabled it to begin using \$25 million in RPC loss carry-forwards. For Randall, who had loved working on boats since his youthful days in Delaware, the purchase was not only good for the company but interesting to him, too.

At Rollins, a new commercial interior plantscaping business was formed in 1990, Orkin Plantscaping. The new division was now one of four divisions in Rollins, Inc. including Orkin Termite and Pest Control, Orkin Lawn Care, and Rollins Protective Services. By 1990, Rollins, Inc. was regarded as one of the



*Wayne and Grace welcome their grandson Glen into the Orkin family. (1982)*



# CHAPTER X

*I feel I am a  
caretaker of the land,  
and that I have a responsibility  
to leave it in better shape  
than I found it.*

— *O. Wayne Rollins*



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## LOVE OF THE LAND

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*Wayne with Can Am Investor, his national champion Hereford  
(about 1970)*

O

n a crisp March morning in 1991, Wayne Rollins stood in front of his white frame house at Catoosa Springs and surveyed the quiet scene around him. A gray squirrel peered from high up the trunk of a tall oak near the house. In the distance came the call of a bird. Even in late winter, the grounds of Catoosa Springs were well kept, with everything in order.

Wayne took a step toward the house, then turned back again, gazing down the hill of the property he had first dreamed of owning when he was a child and later purchased with his brother in 1945. "Nobody wanted the property when I bought it, and after I bought it, everybody wanted it," he said, not boastfully but with satisfaction. "I have the ability to see what land will look like after I improve it. In my mind, I can see the character of the land.

"I always had an interest in land," he explained. "I always looked toward what I could do with it, how I could improve it. Land has a character, and you look at it and you see it. The biggest thing I approach it from is, 'How can I make it more beautiful?'"

Throughout his career, Wayne not only proved himself a successful businessman but a successful property owner as well. From the time he bought his first speculative real estate in Cherokee Valley in 1945, Wayne enjoyed not only the lure of owning land but the satisfaction of knowing that his land was a good investment. And on the land that he owned, Wayne indulged his own passions for hunting, fishing, farming, and raising prize cattle.

Grace loved to tease Wayne about his love affair with the land, allowing that he "collected" real estate. But when it came to buying property, Wayne was no casual collector. He had a formula for success. Among his criteria were the

## LOVE OF THE LAND

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right location, the general terrain and how it could be improved, availability of water, accessibility to roads, and the eventual use of the property. And “if I can’t see enough value from a car to know whether I ought to buy the land, then it’s too close,” Wayne always argued. “If it is too close a deal, you had better drive on.”

And when he bought land, the businessman in Wayne meant that he always factored in his ability to sell it. Because Wayne believed that holding real estate was like having an automatic savings plan.

“I’ve always tried to buy land where I thought I would have a profit in it the next morning,” said Wayne. “My idea is to make part of your profit when you buy the land and the other part when you sell. I’ve always tried to never be extended as far as credit is concerned, so I could hold land and sell it at my option. I believe that any property you buy that’s located right, and if you buy it right, and if you have the ability to hold it — you’ll make a profit.”

Scouting for land was Wayne’s favorite pastime. “I have done that while other fellows played golf,” he said, smiling, “because I have always loved land and looking at land.”

When Rollins Broadcasting went public in 1960, listed in the company’s assets were almost 10,000 acres — 8,000 acres of land in Okeechobee County, Florida, purchased from Wayne by Rollins in 1957, and an additional 1,700 acres acquired by the company prior to the public offering. “I put in the proxy statement that we would continue in real estate,” said Wayne. “That was really because of my love of the land.” And by 1990, the Rollins land holdings totaled 59,099 acres in Georgia, Florida, and Delaware.

Atlanta and north Georgia holdings included 2,400 acres in Douglas County, assembled in seven separate parcels in 1967 and 1968 as investment property. Also, almost 2,000 acres located in Bartow County with extended frontage on Interstate 75, north of Atlanta, acquired in sixteen separate transactions over a fifteen-year period between 1970 and 1985.

Florida real estate included the Okeechobee County hunting preserve, with 6,569 acres acquired in 1955; the Myakka River property, consisting of 3,619 acres purchased in two transactions in 1967 and 1973; the Pressley property in Indian River County, 5,331 acres acquired in 1979; the Rollins Blue Cypress Ranch, lying in Indian River and Osceola counties, and covering 18,478 acres, acquired in 1981; the Griffith property, 2,431 acres purchased in 1988; and the Voor Jarr property in Okeechobee County, 4,792 acres purchased in 1989 and 1990, the last of Wayne Rollins’ land acquisitions.

In his real estate dealings, Wayne calculated that he had never sold any property without making a profit, with some transactions bringing up to twenty times what he had paid for it. Early purchases in Florida had produced excellent profits in the 1950s, and his later investments proved again his skills at

moneymaking in real estate. From 1967 to 1973, for instance, Wayne acquired 3,619 acres around the Myakka River on Florida's west coast, some of it costing as little as \$200 an acre. Twenty years later, Wayne estimated the land would bring \$5,000 to \$8,000 an acre, the kind of appreciation not uncommon in his real estate transactions.

And though his land transactions were profitable, some required more sweat equity than others. In the spring of 1962, for instance, Wayne purchased 73,563 acres of North Carolina coastal land at the bargain price of nearly \$41 per acre, totaling almost \$3 million for the entire acreage. The land was known as Pamlico, named for Pamlico Sound, on which the land fronted. Largely inaccessible, the land was comprised of thousands of acres of cypress swamp and large stands of pine timber on the higher ground. There were towering cypresses with girths so large that it took three men to reach around them, said Oscar T. Payne, who had been the manager of the property under the two previous owners. And the wilderness of the place made it a haven for bear, deer, and other wildlife.

Wayne inspected the land as best he could, and the sheer size of the holdings must have enticed him. In deciding to buy the land, he envisioned a profitable timber business if roads could be built. The higher land might become productive farms. And most of all, the value was there.

Wayne bought the land in three tracts, and the massive task of building roads through the swampy terrain began under the direction of Randall Rollins, who commuted from Wilmington, Delaware. Oscar Payne, who knew the land better than anyone else, assisted Randall as the supervisor of a dozen men, and massive draglines began cutting rights of way and digging canals and building roads through the timber and the cypress swamp. The work was remarkably difficult and at times dangerous. But eventually, Payne estimated that a hundred miles of roadway were built into the property, and several large culverts with back gates were installed underneath the roads in strategic places to allow water to flow out but not flow in. On the higher ground, Wayne developed farmland, experimenting with soybeans and other crops.

When Wayne sold the property five years later to a Georgia timber company for approximately \$6.5 million, he received more than double what he had paid for the land. Even after deducting the development costs, Wayne still made a handsome profit.

Wayne's penchant for improving the appearance of property paid off handsomely not only along the North Carolina coast but in a deal involving a 1,950-acre farm in Gwinnett County, Georgia, a growing suburb north of Atlanta. For ten years between 1967 and 1977, Wayne had assembled the parcels that would become an attractive development tract, eventually rezoned for office, residential, and retail development, and a hotel. But when Wayne first began buying the property, it consisted of old cotton fields grown up in pines

*Opposite page: This map shows Catoosa Springs (inside the small rectangle in the middle), in the northern corner of the state.*



# Manufacturer Puts \$500,000 Into 'Hereford Heaven' in Walker County

## LARGE SHOW BARN RECENTLY FINISHED

T. V. DuBois Developing His Mountain Cove Farm Since Purchase in 1943

**BY JIM LINDSEY**  
*Times Staff Writer*  
KENSINGTON, Ga., July 6.—Soap Manufacturer T. V. DuBois has spent approximately \$500,000 since 1943 to develop his Mountain Cove farm into a "Hereford heaven on earth" at the head of McLemore's Cove eight miles south of here.

The model-a-ged Cincinnati manufacturer looked over many sections of the United States in his search for an ideal spot to develop his farm ideas. A friend of the late Rudy Davenport, Chattanooga official of the Krystal Company, he came to Walker County after Mr. Davenport had told him of the livestock raising possibilities in the northwest Georgia area.

Folk in the Cedar Grove community speak of DuBois as a "big farmer," but in the same breath note that he has the finest farm they ever saw even if it did cost "a pile of money."

"The Mountain Cove Farm is the kind of development we need in this country and Mr. DuBois, who visits here pretty often, is one of our No. 1 citizens," said H. H. Shanklin, owner of a general store at Cedar Grove.

**Equipment Needed**  
Of his efforts in developing a modern stock, grain and hog farm (he likes Durcots), the manufacturer points out that a practical livestock farm with outstanding herds must be equipped for the job, says his manager, George Bibb, graduate and former instructor in animal husbandry at the University of Tennessee.

A total of 250 purebred Herefords graze happily on the luxuriant grasses on some 600 acres of steel and electric-fenced pastures. In the hog section he has 250 head of purebred Durcots, led by Smooth Star, son of the famous Gold Star's Lad, and MC Froud Cherry King, son of the \$2,000 Froud Cherry King.

Here bulls include TT Real Wilton, chief of the sire and a son of Real Prince Domino 12th; Mica chief Domino 18th and WP Rupert Nokay 11th and 23rd.

**Here Complete**  
A big show barn was completed recently at a cost of approximately \$10,000 and 24 show houses which the farm will sponsor on the show circuit this fall. An unannounced visit to the farm by newspapermen found the cattle and the new barn open and open, with barely a fidget of hay out of place.

Eighteen corrals are situated near the new barn and a new dipping vat was completed several months ago. The barn is equipped with specially built stalls open and separated by the new-type bar construction. In addition to the natural hill-top cooling, two force fans are operated during hot weather.

All across the 2,500 acres in cultivation on the 4,000-acre farm which DuBois purchased for \$10,000 from James Benham, grade short-horn breeder, almost every square foot of land is utilized.

Expert forestry practices are evident in the mountain woodland, some of which grows virgin timber, and soil conservation efforts are 100 per cent effective from any vantage point.

**New Tenant Homes**  
A businessman who evidently seeks a happy farm life for his employees, DuBois has constructed four new five-room houses and four six-room houses for his tenants. Other new homes are also planned. These completed have electric power and lights, modern bathrooms, running water and well-kept lawns.

Operation of the farm moves with the dispatch of a modern corporation, and specialists are in charge of each department. Bob Kiser and his assistant, J. R. Stogdill, are in charge of the Hereford herd; Sandeja Turgesse is the avian breeder, and Chandler Everett is general farm superintendent. Other tenants are W. N. Hall, William Badmore, Odell Siddons, W. W. Abernethy, T. H. Knight, Warren Hicks, J. S. Ball and Alton Everett. Most of the employees are natives of Walker County.

In the general farm plan, crop rotation, cover crops and proper soil utilization are integral units of the master outline in farming for a profit, Bibb said. This year, for example, 200 acres have been planted in small grains on soil specially prepared for the crop. 150 acres are growing corn, 60 acres grain sorghum, and 200 acres are in hay crops. Pastures are rotated for year-round utilization, and soil chemistry is used to determine needed minerals. If any, in the development of strong livestock and hog herds, he said.

**Has 250-Ton Silo**  
A 250-ton concrete silo also built two years ago, preserves near-capacity crops each year.

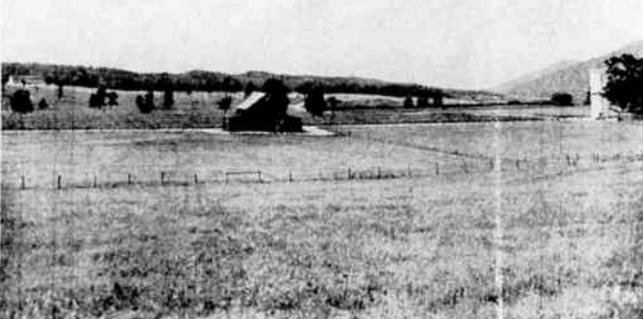
Manager Bibb said the farm crews this fall and winter will clear 600 acres of the cove and mountain land, their job lightened with power equipment.

"We plan to have at least 2,000 acres in cultivation and pastures by this time next year," he observed. "With the present herd of Herefords and Durcots and their normal increase in number we will need all the planned expansion in acreage."

Bibb estimated the value of the purchased cattle and hogs at "close to \$100,000," and said the livestock department is now earning a good return on the original investment.

The young manager and his wife

### VEWS OF INDUSTRIALIST'S IMPROVED ACREAGE IN NORTH GEORGIA



From the head of McLemore's cove, where Fugate and Lookout mountains adjoin each other in Walker County, Georgia, The Times camera brings a panoramic view of Mountain Cove Farm, on which Soap Manufacturer T. V. DuBois has spent some \$500,000 since 1943.



Shown is the \$60,000 show barn recently completed at Mountain Cove farm. A section of one of the 24 show houses is pictured in the foreground.

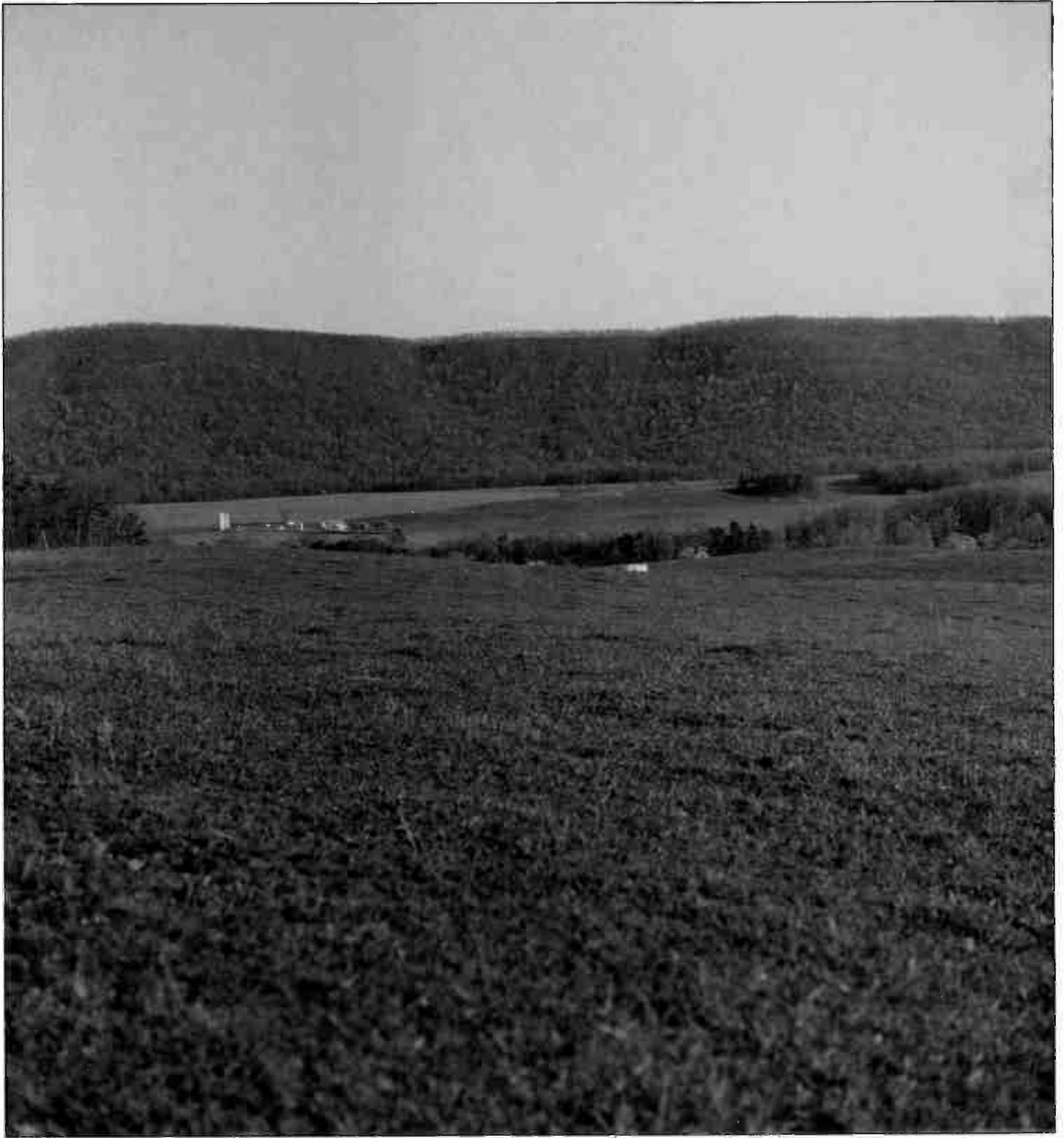


Two of the well-typed and modernly equipped tenant homes on the DuBois core farm are shown. They are occupied by families of J. S. Ball (right, arm), veteran, and Alton Everett, veteran of many days.

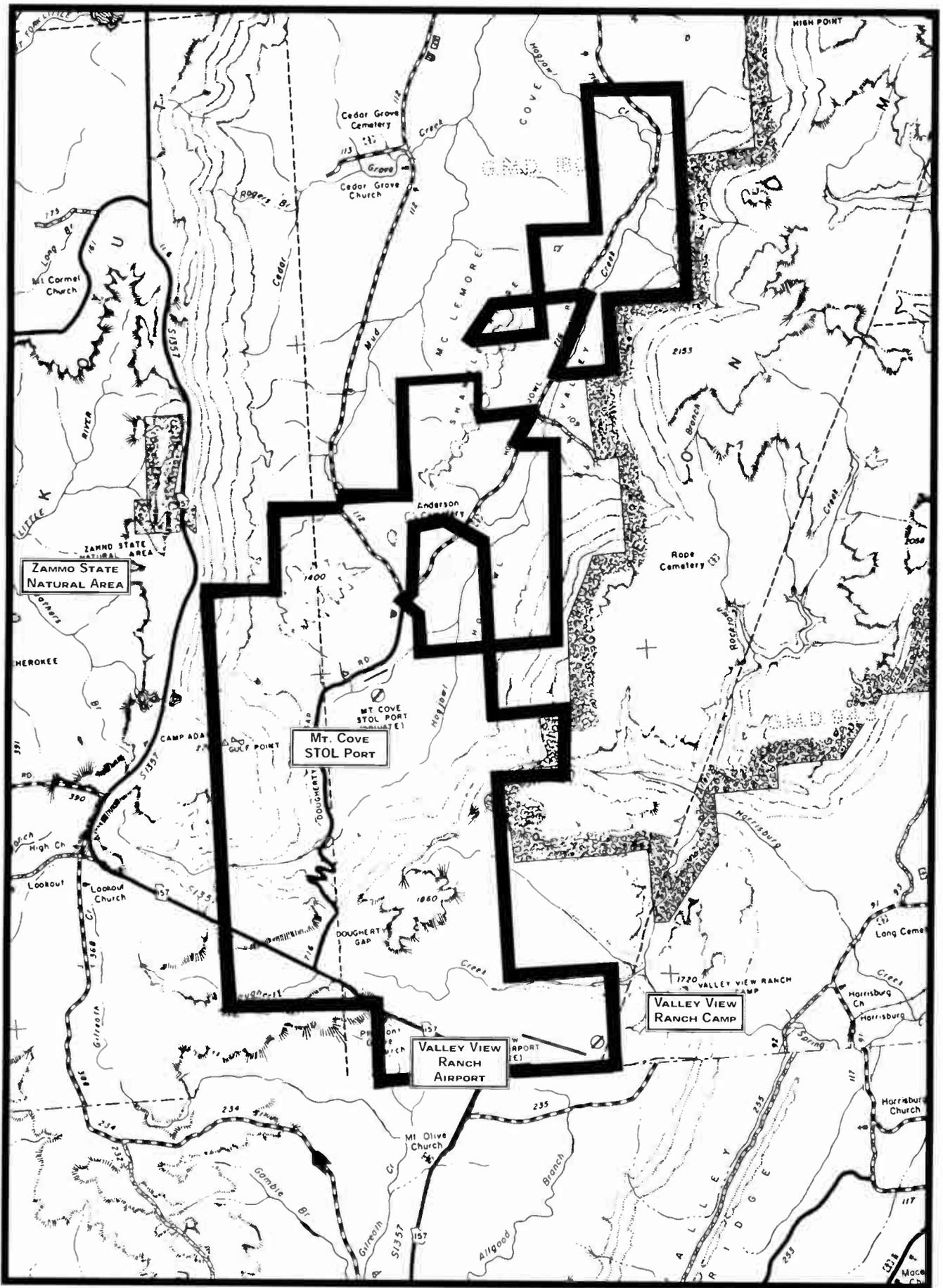


George Bibb, right, manager of Mountain Cove Farm, shows MC Lady Rupert and Hereford Bob Kiser hobbles halter on MC Minkler Domino, pure Hereford.

Grace loved to tease Wayne that he "collected" real estate. Nearly twenty-two years after he clipped this article from the Chattanooga Times, Wayne purchased Mountain Cove and an additional six hundred surrounding acres.



*Mountain Cove was purchased by Wayne in early 1969.*



The map shows the 6,132 acres of Mountain Cove owned by the O. Wayne Rollins estate. The land features meadows, forests, and hills.

## LOVE OF THE LAND

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and underbrush. "Just a little trail of a road went through it," Wayne recalled.

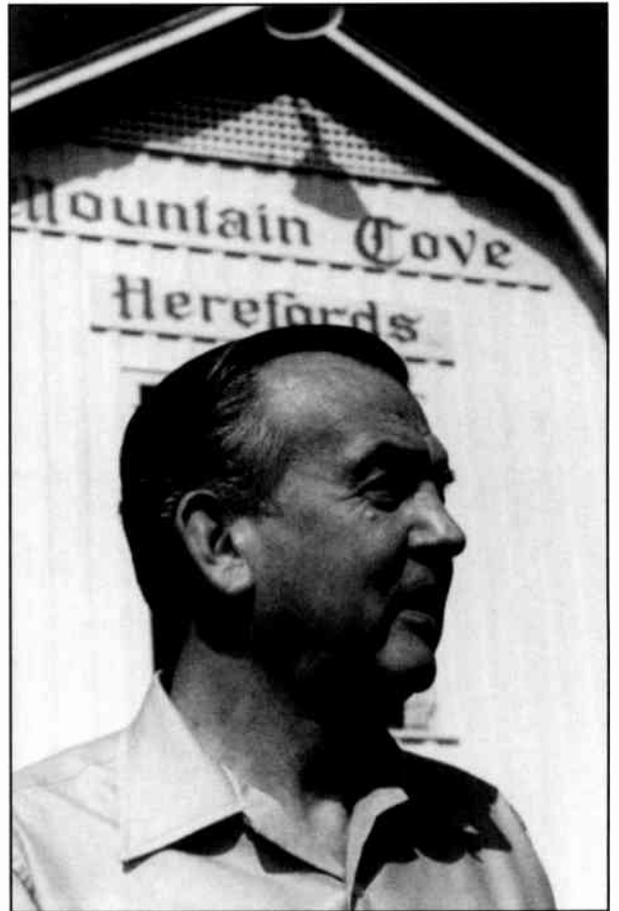
Wayne began the process of making it much more attractive for his family's enjoyment and for a future buyer. A masonry entrance with landscaping was soon in place, and a paved road was constructed through the property. Trees and pastures were planted, fencing established, two show barns built, and old fields and underbrush were cleared. It no longer looked like the same place, nor was it. It became Rollins Ranch at Duluth, its lush green, rolling pastures framed by natural woods and stocked with Polled Herefords and Tennessee walking horses owned by Wayne and his sons.

Several million dollars went into the purchase of the land and the improvements. The prices paid for the half-dozen tracts ranged from \$800 an acre to \$2,500 an acre. In 1985, the property was traded in a deal that brought millions of dollars in profits when it was sold to the Eastern Airlines Pilots Pension Fund. Wayne was bound by an agreement not to disclose the price; however, newspaper articles indicated that the transaction involved over \$54 million.

In addition to making money, land and owning land meant many different things to O. Wayne Rollins. As he did in business, Wayne enjoyed the process of locating, negotiating, and buying land. He enjoyed the way that it gave his efforts a sense of time and place. For instance, after Wayne's gallbladder surgery in 1965, he soon regained his strength in the warm Florida sun on Hutchinsons Island, the picturesque barrier island off Fort Pierce, where their South Sea apartment complex was located. Wayne had bought the island property in the mid-1950s and converted an old naval hospital into productive apartments, located on the beautiful Indian River Inlet. His mother also enjoyed this wonderful setting from her own apartment located at the South Sea.

And, too, acquiring land offered Wayne a chance to indulge his dreams and fantasies. Catoosa Springs was Wayne's first realization of a dream come true. And a beautiful northwest Georgia mountain farm in Walker County was another.

For years, while living in the region, Grace and Wayne had driven by the property called Mountain Cove, a name that to Wayne seemed almost magical. Wayne longed to own the property, and he later joked that when Grace was passing by the farm, she always speeded up as if to dull Wayne's interest in owning Mountain Cove — 4,000 rolling acres of farmland, pastures, impressive barns, and homes all framed by the surrounding north Georgia mountains. In



*O. Wayne Rollins at  
Mountain Cove  
about 1970*

## LOVE OF THE LAND

1943, Mountain Cove was purchased by soap manufacturer T. V. DuBois of Cincinnati as the ideal place for the farm of his dreams. By 1945, he had 1,200 acres under cultivation with more than two hundred head of purebred Herefords grazing in the pastures. A show barn, built by DuBois at what was then an unheard-of cost of \$40,000, sheltered a herd of twenty-four show cattle.

A quarter-century after DuBois brought his prize livestock to the farm, it had changed hands and fallen into disrepair, and again came on the market. On January 1, 1969, Wayne purchased Mountain Cove. Within four months, he had added more than 600 surrounding acres to the property as he began the process of making this north Georgia haven more beautiful and inviting than ever. For years to come, Wayne added acres to the farm, and he and his sons would bring

their families to this special place, where grandchildren and great-grandchildren would enjoy hunting, fishing, camping out, and family fellowship made possible by Wayne's vision and energy.

And, too, Mountain Cove offered Wayne more opportunities to raise cattle. Indeed, champion breeding stock was on Wayne's mind a few weeks after he purchased Mountain Cove when he traveled to Houston, Texas, for the National Polled Hereford Show. After the judges selected Can Am Investor, a majestic bull weighing 2,100 pounds, as the grand champion, Wayne paid \$40,000 for a quarter interest in the bull. Later he purchased another quarter interest in Can Am. From the investment, he anticipated his cows would produce more champions, and he was not disappointed. Two years later, RR Miss Can Am, sired by Can Am, would become the National Grand Champion Polled Hereford Heifer at the annual show in Denver. Can Am Investor was delivered to a new Rollins Ranch at Duluth, Georgia,

*Curl Hobbs, ranch manager,  
about 1990*





near Atlanta, to be displayed for those interested from the region. A show and sales arena was built for purebred Polled Hereford, as well as the sale of Tennessee walking horses. Randall and Peggy had become leading Tennessee walking horse owners and breeders, which provided an avid pursuit for their three older children, Rita, Richard, and Pam. The children were now showing horses in competition under the name of Sugarloaf Farms, carried over from the Odessa, Delaware, farm.

The family's involvement with show horses had its beginning when Randall bought a Tennessee walking horse for his dad. The horse's slow, easy gait made it possible for Wayne to ride despite his back problem. And when he was away, which was often, his older grandchildren almost fought over who would ride the horse. In the spring of 1970, the older Rollins grandchildren were training for the national competition. Rita Rollins died before the National Celebration in Shelbyville, Tennessee, but a moment of special poignancy for the Rollins family came when Rita's walking horse, ridden by Winky Groover, won its class. Pam also won her class, and Richard came in second in his class. The finale of this tremendous showing came when Sugarloaf Farms' Ace's Sensation captured the World Championship title for Tennessee walkers.

*Wayne and Randall join a crowd viewing two of their prize animals, the Hereford Can Am Investor and Ace's Sensation, their world champion Tennessee walker. (about 1970)*



*In 1981, Wayne purchased Blue Cypress Ranch at auction, which covered 18,478 acres in Florida.*

From horses to cattle to pastures to fence to equipment, Wayne enjoyed keeping close tabs on his property and his holdings. In overseeing the management of the ranches and other personal assets, Wayne insisted on personally approving every purchase voucher, even though more than four hundred vouchers crossed his desk every month. Ben Malcolm, the one-time project manager for the Rollins properties, recalled how Wayne wrote comments on any vouchers that were not entirely in order — and then directed Ben to return these to the farm manager involved. The message on those vouchers was twofold: Details were important, and the man at the top knew what was going on and he wanted to be sure his employees did.

Reviewing one manager's purchase of a new oil can for \$3.19, Wayne wrote on the voucher, "What happened to the last one?" The manager's reply? "Fell off tractor and was run over." Before returning the voucher the final time, Wayne wrote on it, "Be more careful next time."

It was Wayne's photographic mind that amazed his granddaughter, Pam, who acquired a real estate license and assisted him in his real estate dealings. "A closing done properly should take a minimal amount of time," he told her.

At the closing for the purchase of a piece of Florida property, Pam had the opportunity to observe what her grandfather meant. The seller's lawyers presented a two-page statement, which Wayne scanned quickly, and without the benefit of a calculator or even a pencil, he told the attorneys, "It's been added up wrong."

"Oh, no, Mr. Rollins," one of them replied. "You're mistaken."

"Add it up again," Wayne insisted. "You added it up wrong." They did, and he was right. Later he told Pam, "I go swim every morning in the pool at home so my mind is in control of my body. And I work math problems in my head as I go up and down the pool, to exercise my mind."

In working with his ranch managers, Wayne emphasized, "Take care of the little things. The big things will take care of themselves." This saying registered over and over with Curl Hobbs, the Mountain Cove manager who could hardly believe some of the details that his employer remembered amid his myriad business dealings and other activities.

While living in Wilmington, Wayne had purchased the farm known as the Dodd property, which, like all Delaware homesteads, had many small outbuildings behind the main house. The outbuildings at the Dodd place were run-down, and on a visit after church on Sunday, Wayne made plans with Curl Hobbs for demolishing the structures.

An old barn had a hayloft in it, and Wayne insisted on climbing an old rickety ladder to the loft, where he discovered eight or ten bales of hay, stored there for years. Pigeons had roosted on the hay, and it was hardly fit for consumption. Curl threw the stuff away to get rid of it, cleared away the old buildings, and sowed pasture for the cattle.

Months later, when Wayne was recovering from the gallbladder surgery, Curl received a telephone summons to visit his employer in Wilmington.

"What have you done with the Dodd property? Have you got the place cleaned up?" Wayne wanted to know.

"Yes, sir, I have," Curl replied, explaining that he had removed the old buildings and planted grass as Wayne wished.

"What happened to the eight or ten bales of hay that were in the loft? What did you do with them?" Wayne asked.

Curl Hobbs was astonished. Here was a man who dealt in millions of dollars and ran a huge business empire, but he remembered a few bales of hay that might have had a value of fifty cents apiece.

Wayne's chief pilot, Charlie Campbell, encountered the same eye for detail when his employer was recuperating from surgery. The pilot had flown Wayne and Grace up to Catoosa Springs farm. On the return flight, Wayne directed Charlie to fly low over a barn. The pilot complied, bringing the airplane down to a lower altitude.

# 2nd INVESTMENT SALE

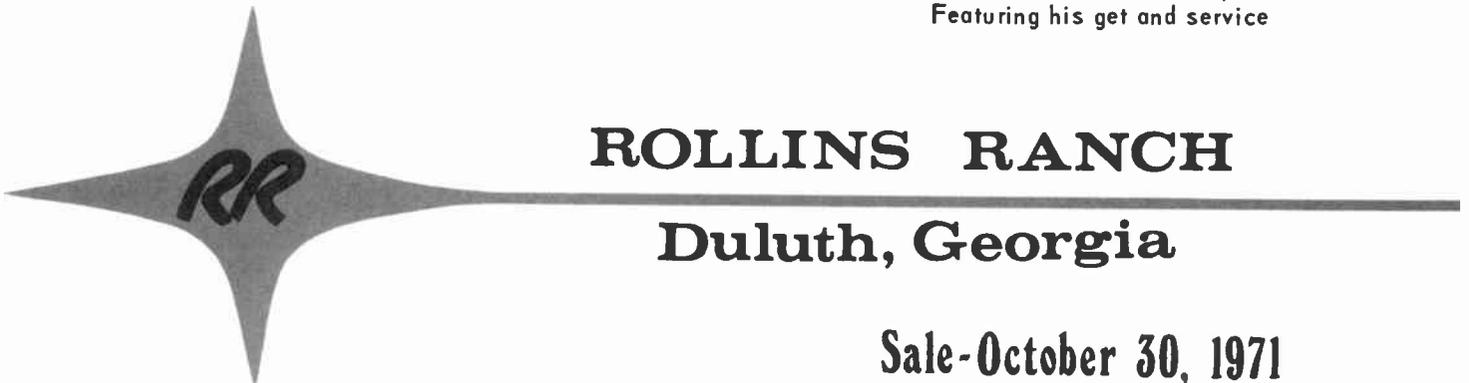


CAN AM INVESTOR  
1969 National Grand Champion  
Featuring his get and service

**ROLLINS RANCH**

**Duluth, Georgia**

**Sale-October 30, 1971**





*Ace's Sensation, the world champion Tennessee walking horse (about 1970)*

Wayne Rollins was silent as the barn loomed beneath. Then he spoke. “Go on home, Charlie. I don’t think they’d painted that barn like they said they had.”

Buying land or negotiating over farmland demonstrated many of Wayne’s unique business skills. And never was Wayne’s prowess at auctions and negotiating deals more apparent than in April 1981, in the tiny town of Yeehaw Junction, Florida.

A little more than two weeks after Wayne and Grace’s fiftieth wedding anniversary, Wayne, Randall, and Ben Malcolm headed south to Yeehaw Junction, about thirty-three miles north of Lake Okeechobee. There the Hamilton South Ranch, sprawling over 18,500 acres, would be auctioned on the afternoon of April 24. Wayne and Randall wanted to buy a part of the property that connected to some land they already owned, known as the Pressley property. The land was a hunter’s dream — deer, quail, wild turkey, hogs, and bobcat. And they were also interested in a large tractor and some other equipment, which, they learned after arriving, had been sold the day before.

The owner, Jim Hamilton, a Kentucky coal magnate, had rejected an offer of \$15 million for the property, and was putting up the

land and all the equipment at an “absolute auction,” which meant there would be no minimum bid required. Rumors circulated that the land would bring at least \$20 million — a price that attracted not only the media but more than a hundred bidders registered for the auction. By auction day, the bidders and their entourages outnumbered the population of Yeehaw Junction, which was officially two hundred residents.

“Big-money boys stalk a bargain,” read the headline in the *Miami Herald* about the sale of the Hamilton South Ranch. “Land auction gets raucous and rich.”

First, Wayne and Randall flew over the ranch in a helicopter, paying close attention to, and marking on their maps, the tracts that could link their land to the Pressley piece and frontage on Highway 441. Back on the ground, they drove around looking at each block. They sat in their car, trying to sort out the

land they wanted, using very large maps of the property. With every room booked at the only Holiday Inn in town, Randall and Wayne spread out their maps on the hood of their car, holding down the corners in a stiff breeze, continuing to review what they had seen and marking their maps. And as they finished, the auction started in the packed dining room of the Holiday Inn.

The media couldn't get enough of the "500 bidders, maybe half of them millionaires, crowded into this tiny turnpike interchange town Friday night, anteing up for the Potential Ultimate Real Estate Bargain," wrote one reporter. The bidders were described as "the half-billionaire in topsiders and chinos"; the "multi-millionaire in cowboy boots, combat fatigues and cowpoke hat"; the kid in tennis shorts and a red bandanna tied to his ankle, who turned out to be the son of the chairman of the board of E. F. Hutton. And there was Wayne. "For Rollins, a self-made multi-millionaire with jowly cheeks and calm demeanor, it was just another night."

Wayne, Randall, and Ben Malcolm took their places in the back of the room. They each had a separate job: Wayne plotted strategy, watching the room and the bidding process; Ben added totals on a pocket calculator; Randall did the bidding. Watching them work, one reporter described them as "three barrel-chested good ol' boys, mapping strategy like Charlie Pell (University of Florida football coach), plotting an onside kick."

No matter the fun, the auction was serious business. First, the land was divided into fifteen tracts that would each be offered separately. Second, all the tracts would be combined for an overall bid. If the overall bid exceeded the bids for all the separate tracts by a certain percentage, then the buyer with the overall bid would prevail.

Wayne and Randall listened as the bidding began at fairly low prices. They started to bid and bought several tracts, all the while negotiating with other buyers who wanted to buy some part of a particular block or an entire block, or trade a block. When the last block of land was sold, the entire ranch was offered at 5 percent above the combined high bids on all the separate tracts. Wayne made the high bid on the ranch, but had to wait while the auctioneer talked on the telephone with another bidder, who needed a little time to decide whether he wanted to raise the stakes.

In a move that was vintage Wayne, the Georgia businessman went over and told the auctioneer, "I want an answer. Either you're going to accept my bid or not, but I want to know right now." It was exactly the same strategy Wayne had used throughout his business career — whether buying land in Delaware or a radio station in California. After making the warning, Wayne, Randall, and Ben left the auction. Knowing the bird in hand was what counted, the seller quickly dispatched his agent, who overtook the Atlanta team in the parking lot and relayed what Hamilton had said: "Okay. Sell it to these people. They are here, and the other bidder is on the phone."

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"SOLD." Wayne bought the ranch for \$15,486,000, just slightly above the offer Hamilton had turned down. Wayne was pleased, but characteristically he shrugged off the congratulations of those who crowded around to shake his hand. It wasn't the kind of attention he liked, and besides, he had to focus on finishing his work here. He instructed Ben Malcolm to obtain the names and addresses of all those who had purchased the equipment and offer each of them a nice profit to sell to him. To his dismay, Ben found that only a few items of equipment could be obtained from their new owners at a fair price.

Wayne, however, wasn't discouraged. Instead, he immediately made plans to attend virtually every major farm sale from Georgia to Texas and shop for the equipment needed to run his new ranch. During the next thirty days, he acquired everything necessary, from Caterpillar excavators to articulating tractors, and with Ben's help shipped it all to Florida, where the Hamilton South Ranch was renamed the Rollins Blue Cypress Ranch. Not only was the machinery in better condition, but he bought it at less than what the Hamilton equipment sold for at auction.

By 1991, more than ten thousand head of beef cattle roamed the Rollins ranches. Glen Hefner, the manager of Catoosa Springs, now hauled cattle from Delaware to Georgia, from Georgia to Florida, from Texas and Missouri to Florida. As he liked to say, "I have hauled a blue million cattle to Florida."

Wayne always searched for ways to improve the cattle as well as the land, and that was the motivation for establishing the Rollins Beef Research Center at Berry College. For years, he had searched out the top beef sires for breeding better stock on his ranches; the Berry facility, with embryo transplant capabilities, would be a wonderful breeding resource.

Investing large sums in superior breeders, Wayne came to realize that cattle farming was his special interest. "I've worked all my life," he was fond of saying, "so I could afford to farm."

Even though Wayne harbored an intense interest in the more scientific side of farming and cattle ranching, his love for the land encompassed far more than agriculture. Hunting and fishing were two pursuits that he enjoyed with his family and friends, especially at Mountain Cove and Rollins Blue Cypress Ranch.

Over the years, Randall and Gary took on the responsibility for organizing and conducting the hunts. Their wives, Peggy and Ruthie, took up hunting, too, and became part of the traditional festive outings at Rollins Blue Cypress Ranch and Rollins Ranch at Fort Drum, a short distance south of the Blue Cypress Ranch.

From ten thousand acres in 1960 to almost sixty thousand acres in 1990, Wayne Rollins' "collection" of real estate was clearly extensive. But to Wayne, there was something far more significant in his land holdings than counting the acreage.

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## LOVE OF THE LAND

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One cloudless spring day at Mountain Cove, Wayne stood looking out over the blossoming dogwood, the green pastures, and the rolling hills. He spoke almost to himself.

“I feel I am a caretaker of the land, and that I have a responsibility to leave it in better shape than I found it. It makes me very happy how beautiful this is. How could anybody look at this and not believe in God?”

# CHAPTER XI

*Giving to a living institution  
that goes on and on and  
affects people's lives —  
to me, that's the best.  
That's the highest kind of giving,  
when you invest in people.*

— O. Wayne Rollins



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# HELPING OTHERS

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*Wayne and Grace at the presentation ceremonies of the  
O. Wayne Rollins Research Center at Emory University  
on June 15, 1987*

# W

ayne Rollins grew up watching his family give generously of their time and money to others.

From his early memories of life in Smith Chapel, Wayne recalled seeing his Grandmother Rollins drop her hard-earned coins into the collection plate at church on Sunday mornings. And Wayne always felt that his maternal grandmother, Emma Scott Nance, did more for charity than anyone else he knew in the community. Though widowed with nine children, she would often leave her little ones in the care of older siblings to take care of the sick and needy in the area.

“They gave more than I’m giving,” Wayne would say of his ancestors, “when you take into account what little they had and how much they gave.”

Wayne’s ability to give was exceeded, perhaps, only by his strong belief that giving back to society was his blessing.

“If the Lord’s been good to you, and you’ve been able to accumulate wealth, you haven’t accumulated it to just waste it and just to do things for your own edification or your own glory,” he said. “I feel this responsibility. I feel that I’ve been blessed and I’ve been very fortunate in the fact I’ve had a lot of good people who have helped me. That’s why I want to help others.”

And as clear as he was about his desire to give, Wayne was just as focused on how best to give to others. He wasn’t interested in giving to institutions where he couldn’t actually *see* his money doing some good. More than anything, he aspired to invest in people and in ways that would help people improve their lives.

“There’s a world of good causes, and I don’t think any person can give to all of them,” Wayne said. “The criterion I use in making my decisions to give is what group or what person has the greatest need? In the case of education, how does the person plan to use his education?”

## HELPING OTHERS

“I think you have the same responsibility in giving that you do in business. You should look into the things you’re giving money to, to see if they’ll use it right. And you’re not building a monument; you’re building something that has a use and something that will multiply. Multiplying is very important. I ask myself, ‘What kind of return will this get as far as humanity is concerned?’”

A look at Wayne’s philosophy on giving begins with the first major gift that he and Grace ever made, to a small college just outside Rome, Georgia, a school called Berry College. In many ways, Wayne Rollins and Berry College were tailor-made for each other. Here was a man who never forgot his rural upbringing and his dedication to sheer, hard work — drawn to a rural college that was known for its student work program.

Established in 1902, Berry College grew out of the work of its founder, Martha Berry, the daughter of a wealthy plantation owner. She began teaching poor mountain children in a tiny log cabin and eventually built a large, self-supporting educational complex on the foundation of learning combined with work. “Anyone who won’t work, won’t eat,” was her creed, and over the years it had served the college well as it expanded over some 28,000 rolling, wooded acres in the Appalachian foothills. At one time, Berry required every student to have a part-time job as an integral part of the college experience.

*Wayne and Grace pledged a \$1 million gift to Berry College in 1970, giving \$100,000 a year for ten years. Left to right, below, are Wayne; Grace; William R. Bowdoin, then vice chairman of Berry’s board and later its chairman; Berry vice president Milton McDonald; and trustees Frank Barron and Harold Clotfelter.*



## HELPING OTHERS

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Wayne's interest in Berry College began soon after the move from Wilmington to Atlanta in the late 1960s. In January 1970, he was invited to become a member of the college board of visitors.

When Wayne attended an annual meeting of the board of visitors in May 1970, the college once noted for its well-cared-for grounds now looked run-down. Fences and buildings were in need of repair. Unpaved roads needed maintenance. This concerned Wayne, who had learned long ago from his own father that the outward appearance of people and property made a critical difference in first impressions. Wayne knew that how the college and its campus looked bore a direct relationship to its enrollment.

And as he pondered the school's future, he had another idea for improving Berry College's status among private colleges. With the thousands of acres of land and the work program of the college, he was convinced that the establishment of a beef cattle research center could provide a major service to the area and the cattle industry. Through the testing of animals for feed conversion efficiency, Wayne believed the industry could determine how much feed it took to raise beef efficiently and which breed of cattle was best at converting feed to beef.

When the Berry official showed enthusiasm for the idea, Wayne laid out his plan in detail in a meeting at his office. The facility he had in mind would also be able to conduct research in embryo transplants and artificial insemination. He also described a plan for extensive improvements in Berry's appearance, with new fencing and upgrading of the agricultural facilities.

All these things would be extremely desirable, Berry's vice president of resources John Lipscomb replied, but they would cost a lot of money.

"What I have in mind is giving a million dollars," Wayne answered with a smile.

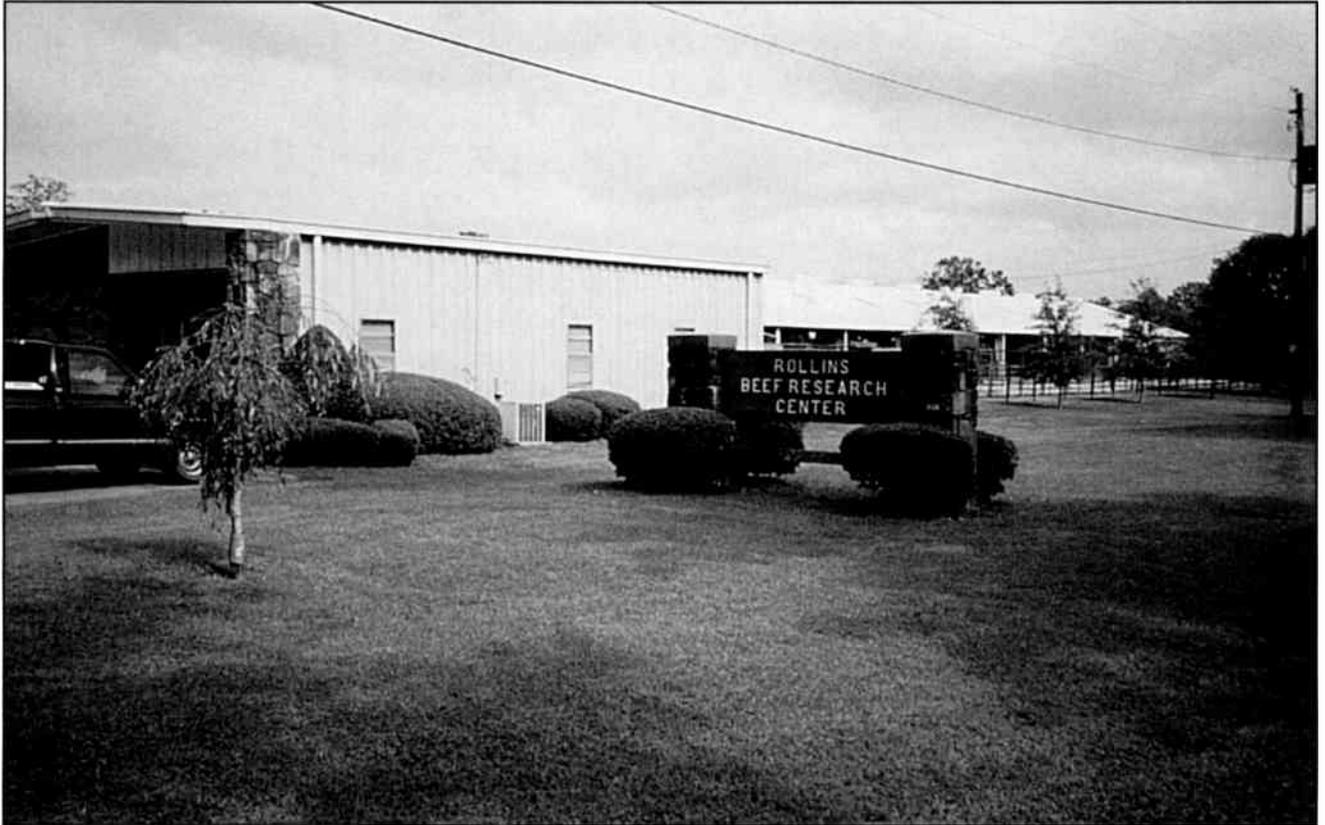
The Berry board of trustees entered into a memorandum of understanding with Wayne. The document set forth his desires to assist Berry by strengthening the agricultural program, advancing scientific knowledge, particularly in beef cattle nutrition and breeding, improving the physical appearance of the college, generating interest on the part of prospective students, and stimulating new pride among students, faculty, and board members.

With pride, Wayne and Grace made their ten-year commitment, giving \$100,000 a year for ten years. Berry agreed to invest up to an equal amount. In the summer of 1972, the college began constructing the Rollins Beef Research Center. Across the Berry campus and farms, nearly all of the ramshackle fences were replaced with new board fences and gates. Pastures were fertilized and resown. Acres of green grass surrounding the college were mowed regularly, giving the campus the well-groomed appearance of a vast country estate. Berry College began to sparkle again, and Wayne accepted a seat on the Berry College board of trustees, giving him the opportunity to shepherd his growing interest in the school.

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## HELPING OTHERS

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And when the Rollins Beef Research Center was dedicated on November 23, 1974, the new beef research pumped new life into the agricultural program, which became the fastest growing of any Berry department. The work of the Rollins Beef Research Center, the first such program of its kind in the region, attracted attention throughout the country and identified many new supporters.

For cattlemen, especially those in the Southeast, the center provided a valuable service by identifying the best sires and cross cattle breeds within the beef cattle industry. For local area farmers, the center not only offered the experimentation service, but it also provided a market, since some of their test bulls were sold at auction after completion of the studies.

Wayne's plan for the center to develop capabilities in artificial insemination provided a way to improve herds for small farmers in north Georgia. Another of his goals — embryo transfers and using surrogate mother cows to produce better beef stock from top bulls — helped accomplish the same thing. What he had in mind was a program "to improve the farmer's future by improving his herd." In ten years, the center would test almost nine hundred bulls representing nineteen breeds, consigned by sixty-seven breeders from nine states.

Wayne always encouraged "new and bolder approaches," said Dr. Gloria Shatto, who became president of Berry in 1980. She saw his hands-on approach in the Rollins scholarship program for freshmen with financial need. He wanted to encourage deserving young people by enabling them to start college, and he

*Rollins Beef Research Center at  
Berry College (1996)*

particularly wanted to assist those who were willing to work. Each of the scholarships required the student to match it dollar for dollar out of earnings from work. Determination, a sense of responsibility, and industriousness were the qualities most important to Wayne.

The more involved Wayne became, the more he saw the need to increase the emphasis on student work. In the early 1960s at Berry, its traditional work program had become voluntary, and two decades later about 80 percent of the students were working at campus jobs. Wayne wanted to see 100 percent of the students in the work program. He was convinced that teaching students to work was just as important as their academic education.

"They're going to spend the rest of their lives working. So they might as well learn how," he told another trustee. "Our problem in our company is we get so many young people who join us who don't know how to work. They don't even know you're supposed to be in on time. They just don't know anything about work habits. And I want to create the work habits of these students so they'll be in demand."

As Wayne recalled his challenge in his early broadcasting days, "You teach me about radio, and I'll teach you how to work."

Requiring all students to work helped Wayne focus on other ideas. Together, Dr. Shatto and Wayne talked enthusiastically about the idea of creating the position of Professor of Work at the college, a full academic position. The concept began to grow into a proposal, and, assured of the president's support, in 1983 Wayne announced to the board of trustees that he would give an additional \$1 million to provide for the professorship and to support student workers. This gift would also be spread over ten years.

As the proposal developed, a Dean of Work was incorporated into the plan. The dean would answer directly to the president in order to elevate the status of the work program to the same level as the academic programs. At the time, Berry's president believed the Dean of Work was the first such professorship in the country.

As important as work was, Wayne insisted it must be meaningful. Wayne always remembered that during World War II at the TNT plant in Chattanooga, some workers were assigned to straighten nails that were never used. It was demoralizing, Wayne knew, and it did not sit well with a man who grew up on a farm trying to do every job better than before, whether it was plowing a field or picking cotton.

The Berry Student Work program, reinstigated according to Wayne's ideas, called for students to have real jobs with responsibility and accountability, strong supervision, and a clearly defined pay scale. The standard was to be ten hours of work per week for one-half the number of quarters a student was enrolled. Work would be evaluated and documented as part of the student's permanent record.

## HELPING OTHERS

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The most outstanding achievers were recognized each year with the Rollins Student Work Awards for excellence in campus work.

Within three years after the Rollins program started, participation in campus jobs climbed to almost 90 percent of the students, and by 1991 Wayne was pleased to see 97 percent of the Berry students employed either at the college or in off-campus jobs. But Wayne refused to concede his belief that *every* student should have to work. As he told a friend, "I'm trying my best to get them to bite the bullet and say, just like Martha Berry, that you've got to work if you go to Berry."

By the late 1980s, gifts and commitments from Wayne Rollins to Berry College were among the largest of any other living donor, and he always made it clear that his giving was in full partnership with Grace.

The college community so admired Wayne that he received numerous honors, including the honorary Doctor of Laws degree on June 7, 1981, jointly with John A. Sibley, former chairman of the board of trustees. The honorary degrees were all the more special because they were the first bestowed by Berry in more than twenty years.

For Wayne, the degree and others that followed represented milestones for a man who lacked a college education. "On the one hand, I felt inadequate, I guess, because of the fact I didn't have a college education," Wayne once explained. "On the other hand, I really didn't feel inadequate because I had accomplished a lot without having a college education."

Wayne was also elected to the Berry Agriculture Hall of Distinction in 1983 by Agriculture Club members. In 1984, he was honored by the Berry College Alumni Association as "the outstanding contemporary benefactor to Berry College." In its tribute, the association said of him: "He has genuinely made a difference at Berry College today and for generations to come."

Berry College was only one of Wayne's educational and religious interests. Even before his involvement with Berry, he had been a supporter of Young Harris College, where his Uncle Frank Rollins had studied for the ministry. While he still lived in Delaware, Wayne set up a scholarship program at Young Harris and appointed his Uncle Frank to manage the process, select the recipients, and monitor their performance.

When Wayne joined the Young Harris board of trustees in 1970, he talked with trustee Frank Malone, a Southern Bell executive from Atlanta. "What does this college need more than anything else?" Wayne asked.

"Nothing that an enrollment of five hundred students wouldn't cure," replied Frank, at a time when the college had a meager three hundred students.

Wayne accepted the challenge to boost enrollment. The first thing he did was to push for improvements in the physical appearance of the college buildings and campus. "Let's make the school more attractive," he urged, an echo

## HELPING OTHERS

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of his message to Berry. Later, he asked another question: "What can we do to make the college a little more outstanding, to make it attract people and contribute to the area around it?"

Among the answers was a planetarium for the new Maxwell Science Building. That appealed to Wayne, and in 1976 he and Grace pledged \$250,000 for the construction of a planetarium and a fund to maintain the science building and the planetarium in perpetuity. The Wayne and Grace Rollins Planetarium, the only one in the north Georgia area, proved as successful as Wayne envisioned, attracting some 25,000 people every year.

For his support of the college, Wayne received the Young Harris Medallion in 1984, honoring both him and Grace, with a citation for exemplary giving and "standards of excellence as a husband and father, as a businessman and as a churchman."

In 1985, Wayne pledged \$500,000 to Young Harris College for the construction of a modern dormitory, the Rollins Residence Hall. Four years later, he committed an additional \$500,000 for renovation of the college dining hall, which was named for Grace.

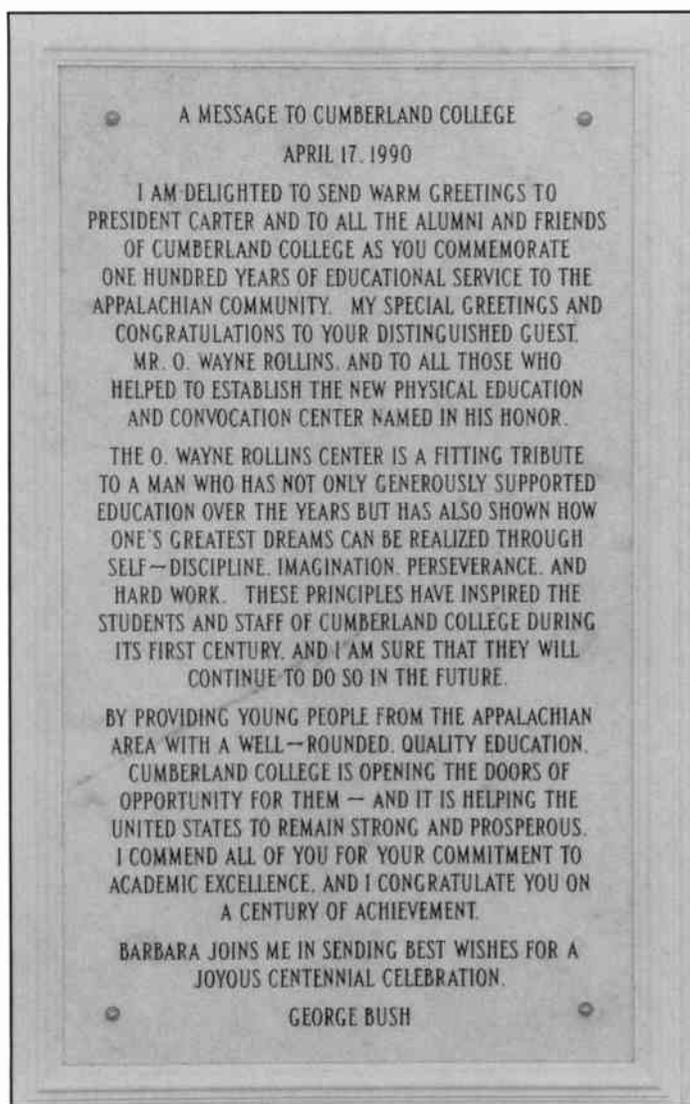
Wayne's gifts were often the result of inspiration from his family and his efforts to honor individual family members. His Uncle Herschel's death on March 12, 1980, and Wayne's visit back to Smith Chapel for the funeral, gave Wayne the opportunity to reflect on his childhood. How could he now help the community where his own personal memories began? Wayne wondered. It wasn't long before the Smith Chapel United Methodist Church announced that Wayne and his brother John had donated a tract of land for a new parsonage, the first for the little congregation.

The church also was told that "an interested party" wanted to help build the parsonage in memory of the Nance family. It was a gift from Wayne Rollins, who contributed half the cost of the new house. It was completed a year later under the supervision of cousin Bob Rollins, the chairman of the church building committee.

Due largely to the success of his efforts at Berry and Young Harris, Wayne began to enlarge substantially his contributions for education and religious training. This became possible when Wayne met Dr. James Laney, then dean of the Candler School of Theology, and who would later become Emory's president. Wayne became interested in the Candler School's plan for a new chapel, and in 1981 he gave \$200,000 to be used for the Claudia A. Rollins Center for Church Ministries in memory of his mother, at the new Cannon Chapel.

In 1982, Wayne, Grace, Randall, Peggy, Gary, and Ruthie pledged \$500,000 toward construction of the Simpsonwood United Methodist Conference and Retreat Center. Another beneficiary of Wayne's giving was Cumberland College in Williamsburg, Kentucky. In a visit to the campus in the early 1980s,

## HELPING OTHERS



*A message from then-president George Bush, which was read at the Rollins Center dedication ceremonies at Cumberland College, was later made into this wall plaque.*

Wayne and Grace talked with President James H. Taylor. They liked what they heard and saw — including Jim Taylor's commitment to Christian principles, and the work of Cumberland students in building houses for needy people.

Wayne had contributed money for the materials to build several houses, most of them for elderly people in the Appalachians, and his first visit to the college stemmed from the desire to see the work the students had done. Wayne was drawn to the opportunity to help these hardworking students, who wanted to work and make something of themselves in spite of their humble backgrounds.

"I know Cumberland is a Baptist college, and I'm a Methodist," Wayne remarked teasingly to the college president. Then Wayne added with a smile, "That's all right. My wife was raised a Baptist."

Wayne gave \$500,000 to start the funding campaign for a desperately needed physical education and convocation complex at Cumberland, a building



*Former president Jimmy Carter and Wayne Rollins at Cumberland College in Williamsburg, Kentucky, at the dedication of the Rollins Center in April 1990*

large enough to accommodate all the students. Wayne was determined that the building be impressive enough to inspire pride in the students attending Cumberland College. By the time the plans were finished, the 3,000-seat center would be the largest facility of its kind in eastern Kentucky. The Rollins family would ultimately give \$1.6 million to build this \$6.5 million complex.

In recognition of Wayne's early support, credited by President Taylor as the critical factor in launching the campaign, Wayne received the honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Cumberland College in 1985. The new facility would bear the family name: The Rollins Center at Cumberland College. And when the complex was dedicated in 1990, former president Jimmy Carter flew to Kentucky for the ceremony with the Rollins family on Wayne's private jet. Before a crowd of 3,000, Mr. Carter praised Wayne Rollins' dedication to higher education, saying, "Mr. Rollins is making an investment in future generations."

*Opposite page: Wayne donated \$1 million to Emory University for a pastoral services program. (1984)*



## Rollins \$1 million gift establishes pastoral program

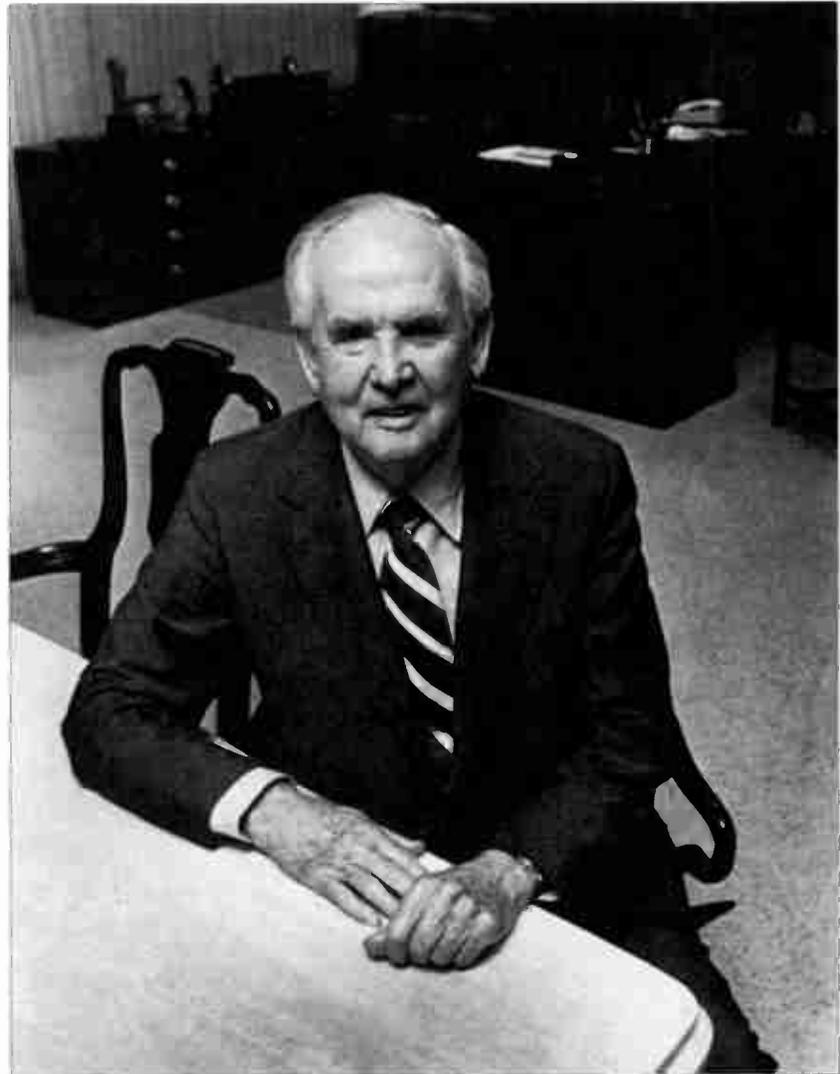
In an exciting announcement for both Emory and theological education, Atlanta businessman O. Wayne Rollins has contributed \$1 million to the Candler School of Theology for a unique program in pastoral supervision and church ministry.

The gift will establish a professorship in practical theology and church ministries, provide scholarships for student pastors, and support a permanent endowment for the continued funding of both programs. The \$1 million gift will be contributed over ten years.

According to Jim L. Waits, dean of the School of Theology, the program underwritten by the generous Rollins gift sets as its target the improvement of "actual skills and competencies of pastors, which will surely result in a church better equipped to provide ministry for the future.

"Candler's long-standing commitment to practical church life and Mr. Rollins' interest in educating a more effective ministry makes this a highly promising program," Waits says. "It is a magnificent gift that allows us to address major issues in the preparation of ministers."

Rollins, who personally helped plan the program his gift has created, has long taken an active role in the support of Emory and higher education in Georgia.



Billy Howard

*A long-standing contributor to Emory, Atlanta businessman O. Wayne Rollins has traditionally supported the Candler School of Theology.*

The generosity and distinguished character of O. Wayne Rollins, so well recognized by institutes of higher learning, did not go unnoticed by other distinguished groups as well. In 1982, he was named a recipient of the Golden Plate Award from the American Academy of Achievement, a nonprofit organization dedicated to inspiring high school honor students by exposing them to America's distinguished leaders. In 1983, the Southeast Father's Day Committee of the national Father's Day Council named Wayne Rollins as a "Father of the Year" together with four other men, including Georgia Tech's popular head football coach, Bill Curry. It was a recognition that perhaps Wayne cherished more than many other honors, for it placed the emphasis on family, the focal point of his own life. And at Colgate University in 1988, Wayne received the honorary Doctor of Humane Letters. Wayne had been recommended for the degree by John R. Wilson, former supersalesman for Rollins Broadcasting, who was then a member of the Colgate University board of trustees.

And while much of Wayne Rollins' generosity was a matter of public record, many of his deeds were kept private. For example, his gifts to Ebenezer Baptist Church through Dr. Martin Luther King, Sr., the father of the slain civil rights leader, were not generally known.

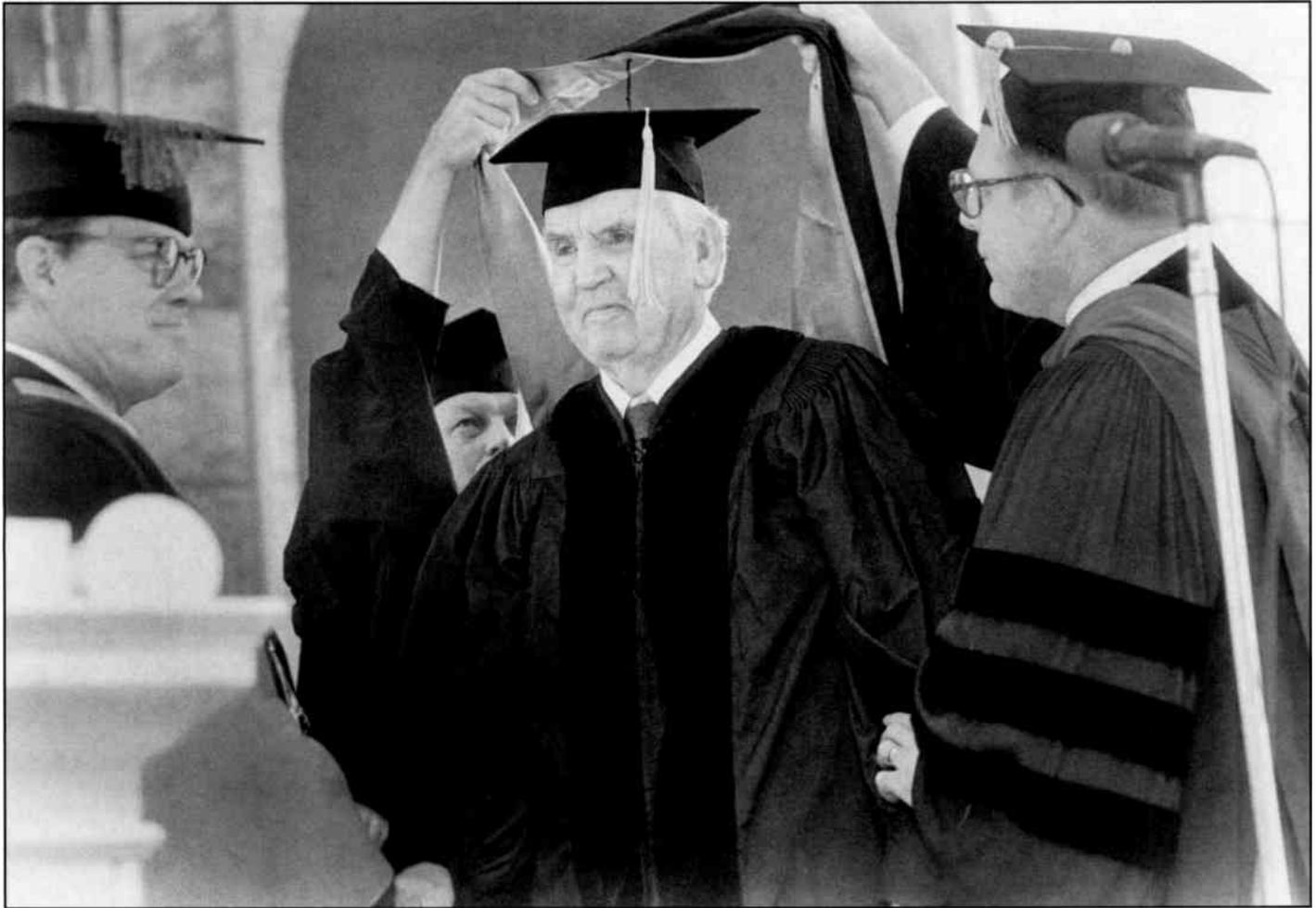
To a large extent, Wayne's strong interest in promoting the development of Christian principles and the work of the church led to his increasing involvement in the Candler School of Theology at Emory. Of special interest to Wayne was the school's program for training young ministers in the practical side of their responsibilities. From his own experience growing up in north Georgia, he knew that there was a dire need for parishioner-relations training. Wayne recalled how his mother had taken in young pastors on the circuit and offered to them her suggestions and advice, in a very real sense functioning as a teacher.

In late summer 1984, Wayne and Grace announced a gift of \$1 million to the Candler School of Theology at Emory. The gift would fund a unique program in pastoral supervision and church ministry, establish a professorship in practical theology, provide scholarships for student pastors, and support a permanent endowment. Through this new program, called the North Georgia Teaching Parish, new preachers would be taught how to better meet the needs of their congregations. In this way, Wayne believed that young ministerial students and pastors could best be prepared for the practical needs of their profession.

Within a few years, the success of the North Georgia Teaching Parish resulted in its expansion by the United Methodist Church to other areas of the country. To Wayne, the Parish program was among the most rewarding of all his gifts. And a week after his seventy-fourth birthday in 1986, Wayne received one of his most memorable presents. Emory University, at its 141st commencement, awarded him the honorary Doctor of Laws degree.

## HELPING OTHERS

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The ceremony, with all its pomp and circumstance, was a thrilling event in the life of Wayne Rollins. Bagpipers of the Atlanta Pipe Band carried the colors of Emory and the University of St. Andrews, Emory's sister university in Scotland. The Atlanta Symphony Brass Ensemble rendered "The Emory and Old St. Andrews Processional," a special composition by Emory alumnus Henry D. Frantz, Jr. A lengthy procession provided a multitude of banners and a colorful array of blue and gold Emory robes. Jim Laney spoke words of welcome, and the crowd joined in singing, "God of Our Fathers," followed by the commencement address from Dr. Steven Watson, principal of the University of St. Andrews.

Then came the presentation of O. Wayne Rollins for the conferral of the degree. As his family savored with him this special moment, Wayne stood as Jim Laney read the citation that honored the man whose life had been committed to family, work, and helping others:

"Brilliant entrepreneur, wise counselor and generous friend, yours has been a career of remarkable accomplishment and service. Blessed with native ability, strengthened by deep religious faith and strong family ties, gifted with shrewd judgment of men and opportunity, you have made it your business to meet a wide variety of the needs people have in the course of their daily lives.

*Wayne receives the degree, Doctor of Laws, at Emory University's 1986 commencement ceremonies.*



*In 1987, Wayne was named Georgia Philanthropist of the Year; one year later, he was tapped as the National Philanthropist of the Year.*

“From this vocation has grown one of America’s most notable corporations, whose diverse activities bring enormous benefit to the economy and quality of life in our state. You have carried the wit and wisdom of your beloved hills into the high councils of industry and state, college and university, and enriched them all. We salute you especially today for your vision and generosity in ensuring educational opportunities for the deserving youth of our region, so that they might go forth to lead full lives in the ministry and other fields of service. We are honored today to confer upon you the degree DOCTOR OF LAWS, *honoris causa*.”

Through his philanthropy and growing record of personal achievements, Wayne Rollins moved comfortably in another sphere of influence outside the world of business. More and more, he was drawn to medical research at Emory. His interest had been nurtured through his friendship with President James Laney and Dr. Charles Hatcher, vice president for health affairs and director of the Robert W. Woodruff Health Sciences Center of Emory University.

Wayne was intrigued by the progress Emory had made in the treatment of heart disease; the Emory angioplasty laboratory had developed into the largest service of its kind in the world. But Wayne knew that if a relative or friend with cancer or Alzheimer’s disease needed help, little could be done for them even at Emory. During a hunting trip to Wayne’s Florida ranch, Hatcher shared with Wayne his own hopes for expanding Emory’s research capabilities through a new medical complex. And as he listened to Charles Hatcher talk of research needs, Wayne asked more questions.

## HELPING OTHERS

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“Charles, if you get that building, do you think you can do the same kinds of things with cancer and Alzheimer’s disease that you have been able to do with heart disease?”

“Yes, sir. I believe so,” Charles replied. “It will be more difficult and we haven’t had the breakthroughs there. But that’s where we would be putting a great deal of our research effort.”

“Charles, would you say that the research building is your highest priority at the medical center? If you could have some help, would that be your highest priority?”

“Yes, it would be. All things considered, Emory could be a bigger player in the research area if we had this facility.”

Wayne’s keen interest in contributing to the fight against disease led Wayne and Grace to donate \$10 million to Emory University as seed money for a new research center that would bear his name.

Emory announced the gift in December 1986, as the university launched a campaign to raise \$40 million for the new center. It would house special laboratories in molecular genetics and neurobiology, together with facilities for biochemistry, microbiology, immunology, pharmacology, and biology. Of special concern to Wayne Rollins was research into genetics, work that could shed light on the causes of nervous system diseases as well as cancer and other disorders.

Six months later, on June 15, 1987, Wayne and Grace joined Georgia governor Joe Frank Harris in ground-breaking ceremonies for the Rollins Research Center, a six-story structure that would double Emory’s life sciences research space. The center would provide 250,000 square feet for seventy-five laboratories and up to 120 researchers, one of the most sophisticated research facilities in the world.

Wayne’s lifetime of giving did not go unnoticed in his home state or the nation. In 1987, Wayne was named the Georgia Philanthropist of the Year, and was tapped as the National Philanthropist of the Year in 1988.

And on April 12, 1990, a ceremony was held to dedicate the Rollins Research Center and to honor its benefactor, Wayne Rollins. Grace was at Wayne’s side when Emory president James T. Laney predicted that the O. Wayne Rollins Research Center would enable the university “to take a quantum leap toward becoming a leader in cell and molecular biology.” And Wayne’s initial gift of \$10 million for the research center contributed tremendously toward the success of Emory’s goal to receive \$100 million annually in research grants by the year 2000; the university medical center ultimately reached this goal in 1993.

On June 5, 1991, Wayne and Grace returned to Berry College for “O. Wayne Rollins Day.” Before the official program for “O. Wayne Rollins Day” began, they enjoyed lunch with more than one hundred Berry alumni, there for the annual Berry Alumni Work Week. The participants, who spent the week doing everything from painting buildings to caning chairs, had decided to

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dedicate their work this week to honor Wayne Rollins, who had served as a trustee from 1973 to 1983 and was now trustee emeritus. And as "O. Wayne Rollins Day" concluded, Wayne gave a speech that reflected not only his memories of the past but his dreams of the future:

"I cannot think of greater honor than to be recognized by people who believe so strongly in the virtue of hard work," he began. "Alumni Work Week is an appropriate time for me to be here. If there's anything that I believe in, it's hard work."

With a sense of urgency in his voice, Wayne continued. "Work teaches people to use their time. Now is our time and our only time. Time cannot be bought or replaced. Time rules all that we do. We cannot lament the fact that 'This is not the time and circumstance to accomplish something.' This is the only time we have a chance to accomplish something. If we fool ourselves into thinking that when the time is right we will do something, we are excusing our current inaction. Use this time. It is all you have available."

Grasping the sides of the lectern with both hands, Wayne continued, his words at once soothing the crowd and commanding everyone's attention. He told again the stories many had heard, the stories loved by those who knew him, the stories of building the first radio station, of his grandmother's counsel on working twelve hours a day to be 50 percent better than average, of the trip to see Ford Motor Company's Charlie Beacham and his blunt advice that "you have stopped growing, and you've started swelling," and of his grandmother's forced savings with her petticoat pocketbook.

"I strongly believe in education," he concluded. "I believe in it so much that I've given more to education than anything else. In fact, I've given more than I thought I would ever have. I also believe just as strongly in work. People define their self-worth in work — by being productive, creative, contributing to society. And to the extent that we can make work meaningful, we will succeed in educating young people to the true value and rewards of work."

When the speech was over, the crowd responded with a standing ovation. Many of the alumni workers lined up, waiting in turn to shake the hand of a man from the foothills of Georgia who had become one of the country's leading philanthropists. And as this very special day drew to a close, Wayne Rollins stood patiently, shaking every hand, listening to every word, and thanking each person for a wonderful day.

Without a doubt, his gifts had multiplied. The return on his investment had been great. As Wayne Rollins once said, "Giving to a living institution that goes on and on and affects people's lives — to me, that's the best. That's the highest kind of giving, when you invest in people."

# CHAPTER XII

*I think every bit of my childhood  
contributed to every success that I had.*

— *O. Wayne Rollins*



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## A COMMITMENT TO FAMILY

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*Members of the Rollins family at Wayne  
and Grace's fiftieth-anniversary party  
(1981)*

**H**e made millions.

He bought and sold and managed thousands of acres of land.

He developed multimillion-dollar companies and became a well-known and highly respected businessman on Wall Street.

But the greatest legacy in the life of O. Wayne Rollins, he often said, was something he held close to his heart — his family.

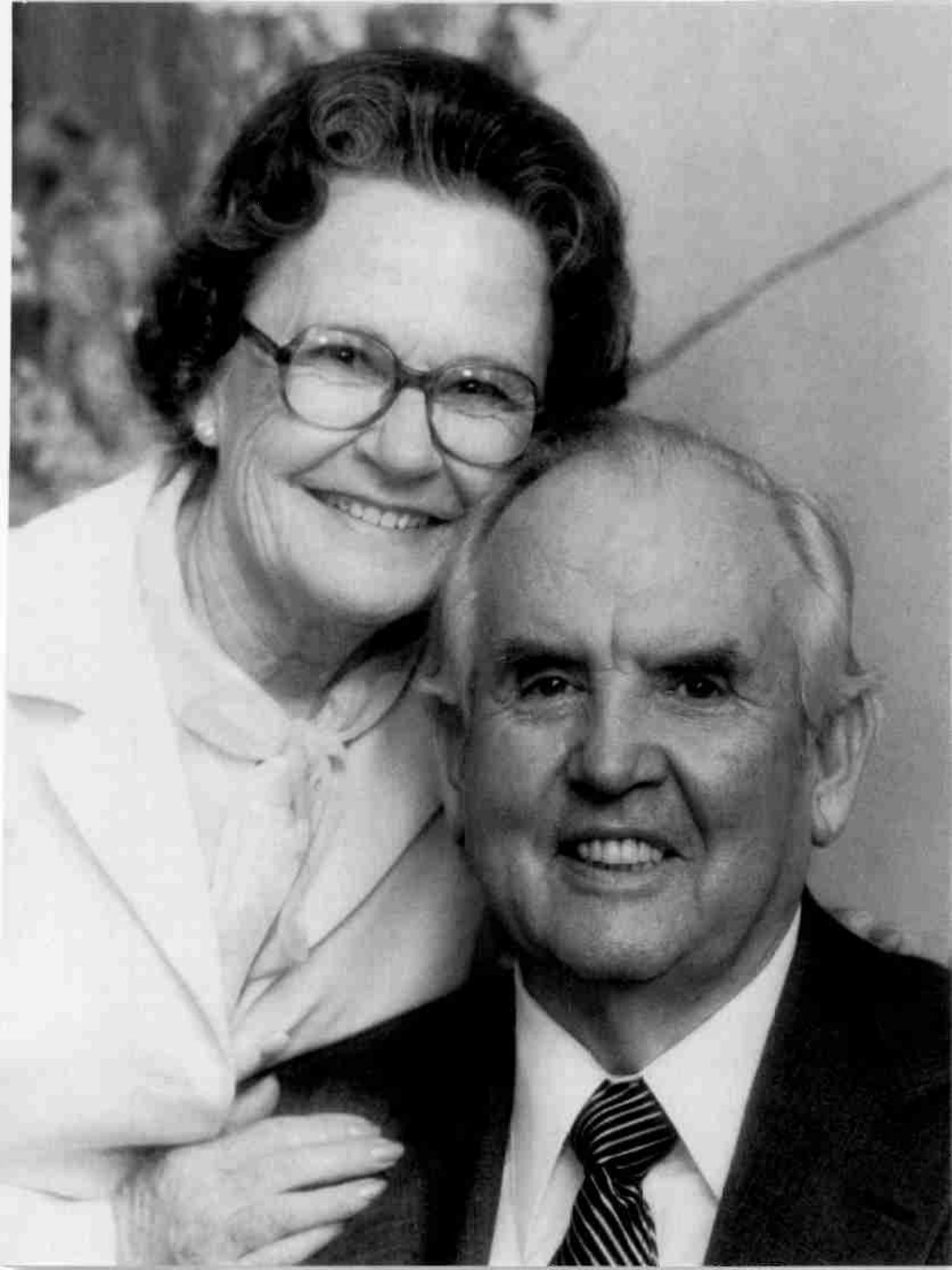
His wife, Grace. His two sons, Randall and Gary. His two daughters-in-law, Peggy and Ruthie. His ten grandchildren: Rita, Richard, Pam, Robert, Tim, Amy, Glen, Ellen, Nancy, and O. Wayne II. And by 1991, his eight great-grandchildren: Richard Randall III, Christopher, Claude Wilson, John Henry, Michael, Margaret, Timothy Curtis Jr., and Jack.

“I consider success in this order,” Wayne once said. “First, your family and the different parts of it because I believe that’s the biggest responsibility you have. I would have to have my children to be where I would be proud of them, and I don’t mean money-wise. And I would want them to be proud of me. I think that would be success.”

By anyone’s measure, but particularly his own, the life of O. Wayne Rollins was a success. He and Grace were married for over sixty years. His sons were both remarkably astute businessmen, and Wayne was never prouder of anything in his life than the fact that his two sons worked with him in business. And to say that Randall and Gary were proud of their father would be an understatement. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to find two sons who ever loved and respected a father more.

Grace Rollins never wavered in her devotion to her husband of six decades. “We’ve had a wonderful life. We’ve traveled all over the world. We’ve

*Opposite page: Wayne and Grace celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversary in 1981.*





*Wayne and Grace in their  
Atlanta home (about 1985)*

seen so many things that I'd never even dreamed of seeing or doing. He has been good for me. He has worked so hard and so long. A few years ago, I said, 'Wayne, why don't you retire?' And he said, 'You wouldn't want me if I retired. Every time you went out, I would want to know where you were going. When you came back, I'd say why were you gone so long?' And that's the truth."

Through the story of their own lives, Grace and Wayne Rollins provided their children and grandchildren with a textbook case of how to honor your family, make a contribution, enjoy life, and give to others.

The stories that Wayne Rollins often told in his business career were learned by heart among his family members. Here was a man, after all, who relished the experiences of his humble beginning as invaluable to his success. Of all his genius, none was more impressive than his ability from an early age to see lessons in daily, commonplace events and to incorporate these into his life. He was both teacher and mentor, with insights both profound yet simple. And as he grew older, he was known not so much for his success in busi-

ness or his wealth but for his wisdom.

"It's incredibly clever how Granddad operates, because he lets you figure it out. He doesn't tell you. He just drops a few seeds in there and listens," said Glen William Rollins, Gary and Ruthie's oldest son. "It's like Socratic teaching. Socrates believed that everyone held the answers, and you just had to coax them out. And in a way, that's the way Granddad does it, and when someone does that, you're grateful. You're grateful in two ways: You're grateful he's shared with you his wisdom, and you're also grateful that he did it so tactfully."



*The Rollins family at dinner in 1968, left to right: Grace, Richard, Gary, Wayne, Claudia, Peggy, Pam, Ruthie, and Rita Anne.*

And, too, Wayne emphasized something else to the generations of his family that followed after him — generations that would never know poverty and what it was like to be poor. Whenever he had the chance, he told them of the place called Smith Chapel where he grew up. Of plowing fields and making the trip to the cotton gin and the bank when his father was too sick to go. Of the house where he grew up, and the creeks where he played. Of sitting by the fire, hearing the stories of Horatio Alger. And as they grew, Wayne Rollins took his grandchildren back to Smith Chapel for family reunions, to visit Catoosa Springs, to see the old homeplace where his life began.

“I think the biggest problem that happens to some people who have been poor and become rich is that they forget their childhood,” said Wayne. “I think many of them want to. And you know, the thing I can’t understand is that some of the people I run into are ashamed of it. And I’m proud of it, and I can’t see why there is that difference. I think every bit of my childhood contributed to every success that I had.”

These lessons were learned well by both sons. “I was taught to be unconcerned about material things, to be nice to all people,” said Gary. “That really



*John and Wayne visit with their mother, Claudia, in 1972.*

has served me well all through the years. It was just a quiet form of modesty. I think Dad was smart enough to know there's very little good that can come from bragging and trying to throw your weight or your wealth around. Dad always said that the difference between a wealthy man and the average man where he came from was maybe one cow."

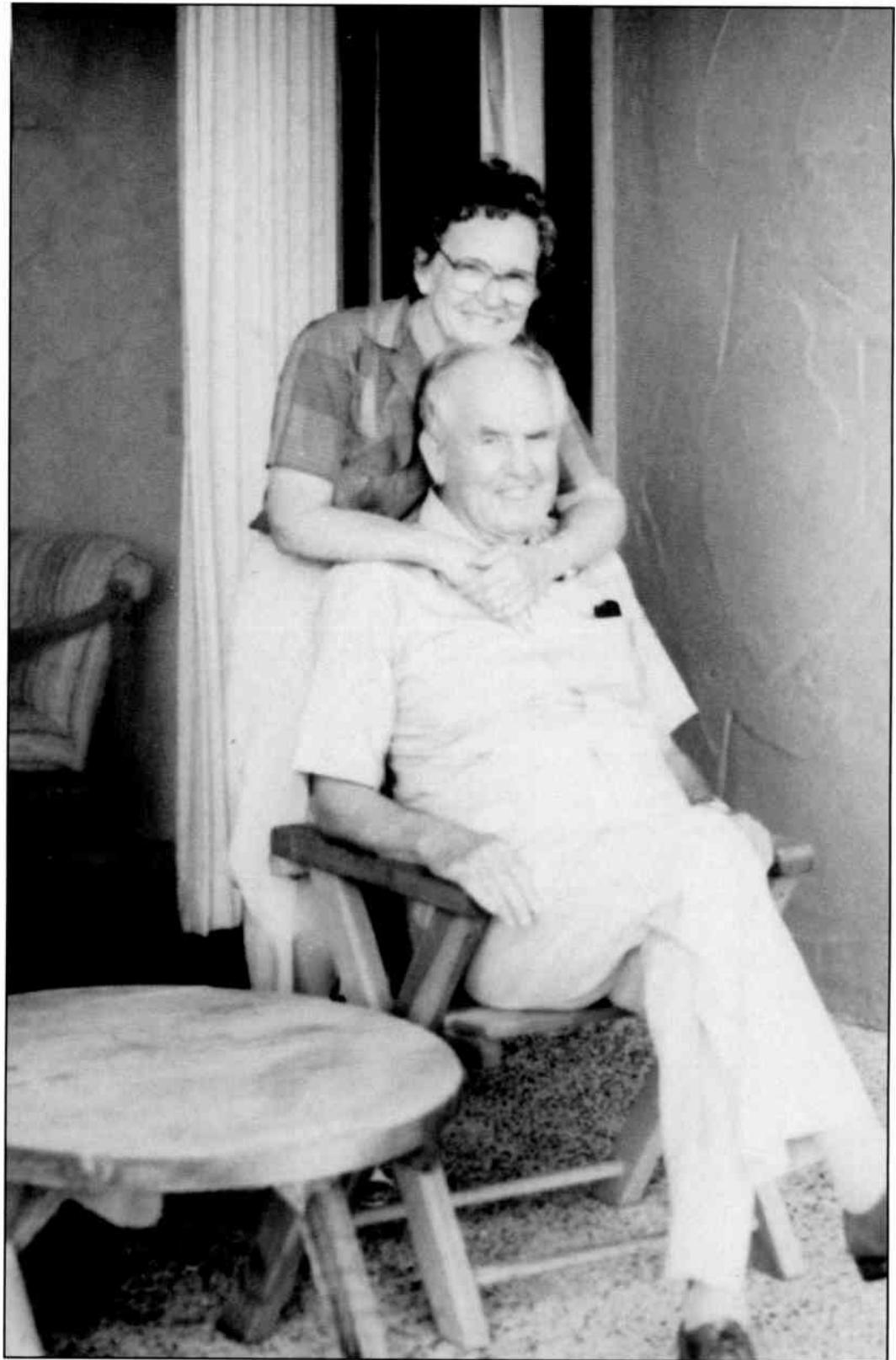
And Wayne and John Rollins believed strongly in a principle they witnessed in their grandparents and their parents. "My Dad and Uncle Wayne have instilled in this generation that it's your family and your blood. That's the most important thing in the world," said John William Rollins, Jr. "If another one needs help, no matter what, you respond. We believe in the family."

Wayne took to heart his mother's words to "keep your family together." When they lived in Wilmington, Randall's children were always in and out of their grandparents' house. Said Grace, "Pam would have lived with us all the time, and we would have been happy to keep her. One night, though, Wayne put them all out so he could read, and in a few minutes Pam opened the door and walked in and said, 'Hello, Chief.'" Wayne could barely contain his smile, but Grace remembers that he stood firm. "Now, you have plenty of room in the rest of the house," he told Pam. "Now just go on."

When toddler Tim, the youngest son of Randall and Peggy, stepped on a hot coal from a barbecue grill at Wayne's house in Wilmington, he suffered a bad blister on his foot. He refused to let anyone touch his foot but his grandfather, who gently punctured and treated the blister.

*Opposite page: Pam on horseback, Wayne stands with his first great-grandchild, Richard Randall Rollins, III. (around 1983)*





## A COMMITMENT TO FAMILY

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When the Rollins clan moved to Atlanta, Wayne and Grace's home was always open for family. The grandchildren loved to roll down the front slope of their expansive lawn, or slide down the sloped floor of a closet inside the house. And as Wayne acquired farms and ranches for his children and grandchildren to enjoy, the family vacationed together every summer and spent holidays together. They even traveled together on long trips around the United States and Canada, in the family bus. And when the grandchildren were older, they shared chores and responsibilities and helped plan the trips for the enjoyment of the whole family.

And it wasn't long before the grandchildren were telling their own stories about Granddad and his humorous tales.

"He would tell about a time when he was walking across this ledge in the Grand Canyon, and it was so thin he had to walk sideways," Glen remembered. "And this bear came trotting along towards him, and he didn't know what to do. So the bear roared, and Granddad reached his hand down the bear's throat and grabbed his tail and pulled him inside out — and then he was walking the other way. Except the fur was inside, so it tickled him and he started laughing, and he fell into the Grand Canyon."

And there were more stories. Like the tale of two snakes that started eating each other at the tail and eventually they both disappeared, the story Wayne used to make a point with grown-ups who had problems getting along. Or the one about Wayne walking through the woods with only one shot left in his rifle when he saw six turkeys sitting on the limb of a tree. So he shot the limb, splitting it open, causing the toes of the turkeys to fall into the slot which then snapped closed. He cut off the limb and carried all the turkeys home! Granddad also told the youngsters of his gun with special cartridges that had salt in them. When he shot an animal over a mile away, the bullet would cure the meat by the time he got there.

At Mountain Cove, the whole family would occasionally camp out. Nancy remembered that her grandfather would tell tales of Indians who had lived there. He showed them a dip in one of the stones along a stream and told them that was where the Indians would put their heads down and drink water. "They were almost like ghost stories," Nancy said. "We were mesmerized by them."

And after hearing an especially scary story, grandson Wayne would say, "Granddad, don't tell another Indian story even if I ask you to tell one."

Amy said when her granddad told the stories about Indians, "I could just see Indians on that ledge behind our camping spot, peering down at us."

During their family weekends, the grandchildren learned about fishing and camping. They learned how to run a saw down the end of a small sapling, causing vibrations that brought earthworms from the ground for fish bait. Nanny, as Grace was known to the grandchildren, would often bait the hooks for the girls.

*Opposite page:  
Grace and Wayne on vacation in  
the 1980s*

## A COMMITMENT TO FAMILY



*Wayne and Grace Rollins' family  
at Rollins Blue Cypress Ranch,  
Christmas 1986*

The summer family vacation trips were adventures that the small ones looked forward to. On a trip out west in 1979, Grace took a ride on a four-wheel bike with grandsons Robert and Tim. Robert and Tim pedaled while their grandmother sat in the middle driving the contraption. After a while, they started to speed up, trying to catch other members of the family ahead of them. As the vehicle passed the others, it struck a big pothole, and Grace lost control of the steering wheel. She went flying through the air, tumbling head over heels into the woods. Robert and Tim hung on until the bicycle crashed to a stop. They looked back, afraid their grandmother was hurt. But Grace picked herself up, straightened her clothes, and grinned. She had somehow escaped injury.

On one of the family's traditional Christmas vacations to Florida, Richard and his granddad watched while Randall and Gary drove stakes into the ground to anchor a skeet machine. Randall, Richard's dad, had his foot against a stake while Gary was swinging the blunt side of an axe.

"You just watch," Richard's grandfather said. "Gary is about to hit Randall's toe."

Sure enough, on the next swing, Gary missed the stake and hit Randall's toe. Randall started hopping around in pain, while his dad laughed until the tears came. "I thought Granddad was going to fall off the hunting truck laughing," Richard recalled.

This same hunting truck was the inspiration for one of the family's favorite stories. The open-top hunting truck with comfortable airplane seats was designed so that the hunters could easily watch the dogs work. It was

## A COMMITMENT TO FAMILY

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quite different from the way hunting was done in south Georgia, where mules and wagons were still used. But the more modern approach suited Wayne, and the truck certainly appealed to Bubba Pearce, the topflight hunting manager for the Rollins family. Said Pearce, "I like the idea of not having to get up in the morning and go down and catch the mules and get them harnessed. I'm ready for the new generation of quail hunting."

Eventually, however, Randall and Gary decided that the Florida hunting might be more traditional for their guests if a wagon drawn by a team of mules was available for the hunters' use. Bubba was dispatched to find all the components and constructed the old-style wagon, which was no easy task. The wagon was then customized with high cushioned seats and rubber tires for all the comforts of a south Georgia hunt — complete with a pair of matched mules.

When Wayne got wind of the plan, he called Randall and Gary in for a chat. "What's this deal about the hunting wagon?" As they began to explain, Wayne shook his head. "You know, I'm surprised I've raised two boys that have little enough judgment to go backward into time, to want to get involved with a mule and wagon." He paused for a moment, then went on. "But I'll tell you what. I won't tell because I don't want anyone to know I have two boys that are crazy."

Randall and Gary laughed that off. "Well, do you want to be a partner?" Gary asked.



*Wayne and Grace, with Bubba Pearce, at Blue Cypress Ranch, Christmas 1986*

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*During family vacations, Ellen, Nancy, and other Rollins grandchildren often huddled around their grandfather in the family bus. (1970s)*

“No, I don’t want to be a partner,” his father replied quickly. “I spent so much of my life walking behind a mule, with that tail slapping me in the face, that I have no inclination whatsoever to get back in the general proximity of a mule.”

After the incident, Wayne good-naturedly reminded his sons of his original observations on mules and wagons. Back at the office, Wayne discussed several times with Linda Graham, Randall’s longtime employee, about what a waste of time and money the mules and wagon were. But what their sons could never figure out was why Grace and Wayne volunteered to sit on the wagon and have their pictures taken during a Florida outing. Imagine everyone’s surprise when this very picture appeared on the couple’s 1986 Christmas card. Gary and Randall teased their father that he didn’t want to participate as a hunting wagon partner but was willing to have his picture taken on the wagon and share it with his friends. When asked about it, Wayne never said a word. And he and Grace sent Randall and Gary a Christmas card without the hunting wagon picture.

There were many laughs and much good fellowship among friends and family at the Rollins’ ranch in Florida and during the hunting trips to Mountain Cove. Among those invited to join the Rollins family for dove shoots at Mountain

## A COMMITMENT TO FAMILY

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Cove was Dr. Charles Hatcher of the Emory University Clinic. On his first trip in the mid-1970s, Dr. Hatcher, who had done no dove shooting for two decades, was a little apprehensive. He watched as dove after dove flew in his direction, only to be felled each time in an awesome display of marksmanship by someone just beyond a slight hill. Finally, Hatcher trudged over to the other hunter. "Fellow, who are you, anyway? There's not a bird coming my way. You're getting them all!"

A tall man with close-cropped graying hair turned, and a wide smile lit up his features. "I'm Jasper Dorsey," he said. Jasper was a retired vice president of Southern Bell in Georgia and wrote a syndicated newspaper column for regional newspapers. From that day, he and Charles Hatcher became good friends. And they enjoyed one particular surprise they planned for Wayne and Grace.

Riding back on the bus from Mountain Cove, Jasper had a suggestion. "Why don't we just take our doves over to the Piedmont Driving Club and have them prepared for a surprise party for Wayne and Grace?" Hatcher, along with Hop Owens and Frank Carter, two of the other regular hunting guests that day, agreed right away. Said Carter, who was president of the club, "I'll get the chef to clean the birds and freeze them. Then we'll arrange through Randall and Gary for a little surprise party and a bird supper."

The dinner was a complete success, and Wayne and Grace were delighted. After the meal, Wayne had something to say. "First of all," he said to Jasper, Charles, Hop, and Frank, "let me tell the four of you that this has worked and you are going to be invited back next year!"

Oscar Rollins was one of Wayne's cousins who was often invited to go fishing or hunting with him. "Wayne is a great outdoorsman," said Oscar. "I like to fish with him. He always has this agreement before he starts: The one who catches the fewest fish will have to clean them. I don't know how he does it, but he always comes out ahead so he doesn't have to clean the fish. He always outsmarts you. That's the way he is in his business. He doesn't look at it as business; he looks at it as a contest and the smartest man will win. And that's how he does everything. He tries to outsmart you. And I think he gets a lot out of life for that reason."



*Amy and her grandfather Wayne fishing in the 1970s*



*Randall and Peggy Rollins and family on their fortieth anniversary, January 2, 1993*

For Grace and Wayne, their homes and land at Mountain Cove and Rollins Blue Cypress provided something unique. Because in these family retreats, they often returned to the ways of their past.

When Wayne went quail hunting with his sons, Gary was always reminded of the stories of Wayne as a young boy, and how he treasured quail hunting every Christmas Day with his Uncle Marvin Nance. Said Gary, "Dad's main interest in hunting has been wing shooting, for pheasants, quail, and dove, but especially quail. And I know that goes back to his time as a young boy with Uncle Marvin."

Another great interest was having a garden. Grace, who had so loathed farm life as a young girl, now delighted in working in the garden at Mountain Cove. She planted beans, tomatoes, okra, corn, turnips, turnip greens, and other vegetables, sometimes canning up to five hundred jars of vegetables in a season. Grace was a champion bean picker, according to Mountain Cove manager Curl Hobbs. "I'll put her up against anyone on picking beans. She can go down the

## A COMMITMENT TO FAMILY

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row and pick more beans than anybody I've ever seen." And in the country solitude, Grace wasn't afraid to climb atop a truck and trim the maple trees along the entrance or pick up limbs and branches scattered over the yard.

For his part, Wayne would climb into his blue 1973 Ford Bronco (nicknamed the Bluebird) and drive around the farm, looking over the hundreds of head of cattle, such as Charolais, Polled Herefords, Salers, and Simmentals. He would often spend time strolling through the fields while examining the conditions of the pastures and fences. And he especially liked the orchard and the garden, both encircled by an eight-foot fence to keep out the deer that would wreak havoc on fruits and vegetables. His favorite apples were Black Twig and Arkansas Black. The bean he preferred was a half white runner, brought from Delaware by Curl Hobbs. He wanted tomatoes growing until the first frost, and he loved nothing more than okra. At Mountain Cove, Wayne would get up early to pick okra for the noon meal. And through all these activities, the farm-boy returned to his roots.

Vegetables from the Rollins garden would surprise and delight their many friends, for Grace and Wayne were forever sharing their bounty. Once while the family lived in Wilmington, Randall and Wayne flew down to Rehoboth Beach in a twin-engine Beechcraft Baron for a visit to the farm near Lewes. Since turnip greens were at their peak and ready for picking, Wayne and Randall gathered bags full of the greens, loaded them in the airplane, and returned to Wilmington.

It was Sunday, and a crowd of people had gathered at the airport to watch the planes take off and land. Wayne and his son stepped out of the airplane carrying all the big bags of turnip greens and walked past the spectators. "I'll bet this is the first time you folks have ever seen a fellow flying with a planeload of turnip greens," Wayne remarked with a grin.



*Gary and Ruthie  
Rollins  
(around 1984)*

## A COMMITMENT TO FAMILY

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In Atlanta, family friends like Jimmy Williams, CEO of SunTrust Bank, once came home to find his wife, Betty, with a bathtub full of turnip greens sent over by Grace, while at other times Wayne or Grace would appear with more fruit than they could eat. And one year, when the orchard produced a bumper crop of apples, Wayne had Curl Hobbs locate an old friend and Ringgold High classmate, Eldon Lansford. Eldon had a cider mill in Chattanooga which had belonged to his father. Eldon brought his mill to Mountain Cove and put it to use, turning out almost twenty gallons of cider for Wayne and Grace and their family and friends.

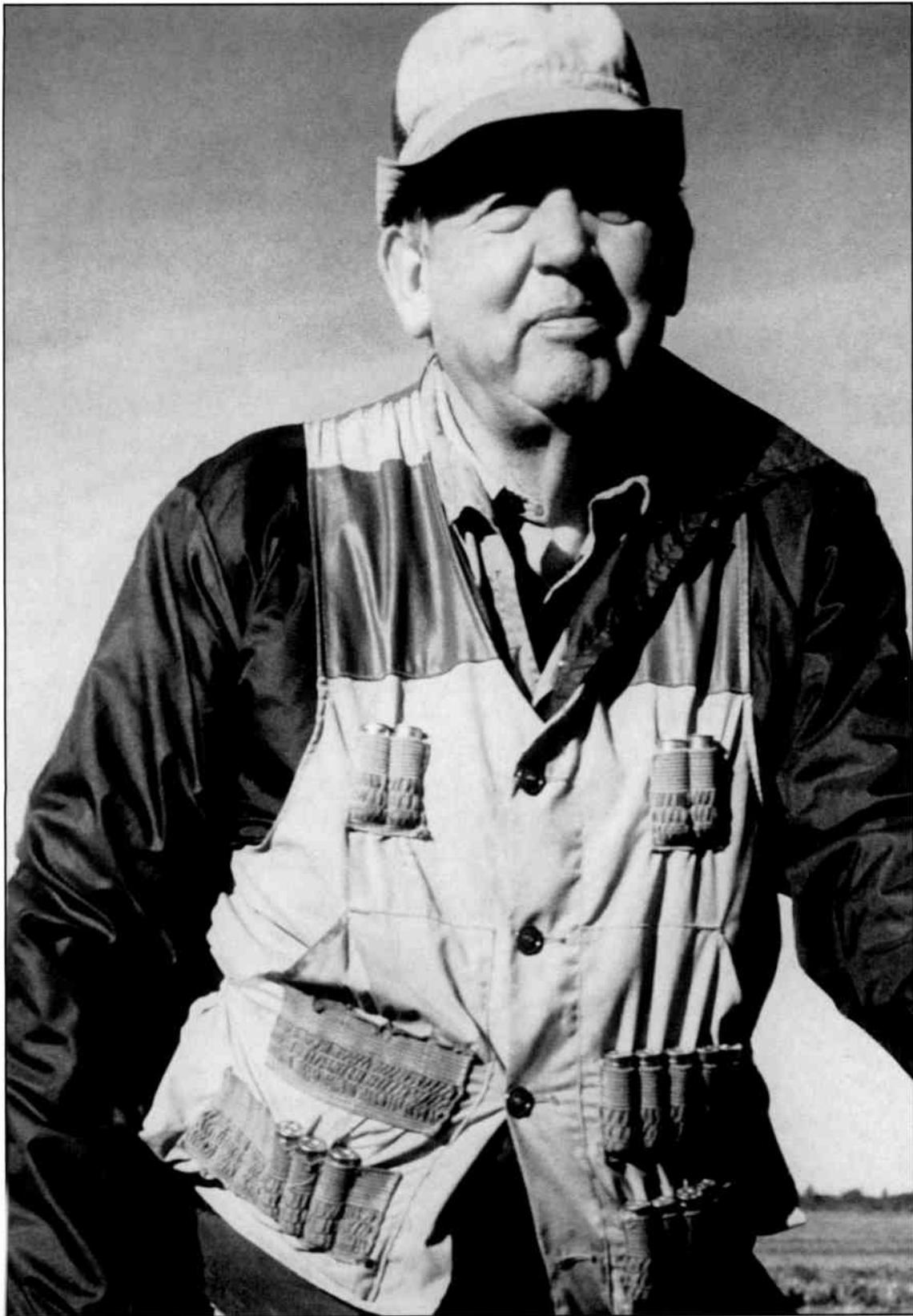
As his wealth and prestige grew, so did Wayne's ability to help his extended family. Throughout the homes of Ringgold and Tunnel Hill, stories abounded of Wayne's generosity and sheer goodness. Not only did he help financially when someone needed it, but he never forgot to call if someone was sick or visit

*Randall, Wayne, and Gary  
on a pheasant hunt  
(about 1984)*



A COMMITMENT TO FAMILY

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*Wayne hunting at Yeehaw Plantation in 1987*

## A COMMITMENT TO FAMILY

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*Wayne and Randall present Louise Copelin, one of Wayne's longtime employees, with a fifteen-year employment award. (1983)*

if they were in the hospital. The community where he grew up loved Wayne Rollins not so much for his millions but because he didn't let the millions take him away. "He just loved everybody," Oscar Rollins said simply.

In fact, Wayne used his business skills to help the economy of his home county of Catoosa when he was asked to acquire 412 acres of prime land near Interstate 75, known as the Ritchie property and dairy farm. Wayne's purpose in buying the entire tract was to make available an industrial park for Ringgold (a suburb of Chattanooga), when the owners refused to sell the county part of the property. The county couldn't afford to purchase all of the land, and the family wanted to sell only the entire acreage. "The county kept wanting an industrial park," Wayne explained. "So I bought the land and said, 'We'll just turn it into one and help provide jobs for the county.'"

And his generosity in time and money often extended beyond his immediate family — to the workers, associates, and employees of Rollins, Inc., who saw in O. Wayne Rollins not only the attributes of a good employer but someone they could turn to as a friend. "How can you describe a special love for somebody, when you just love him the same, all the way through, all the time?" said Louise Copelin, the executive cook at Rollins who came to work for Wayne in 1969. "Over the years, he's talked to me like a father and I just grew to love him."

Like any close family, the Rollins family was far from perfect. Over the years, the family members had their share of heartaches and personal tragedies, and it



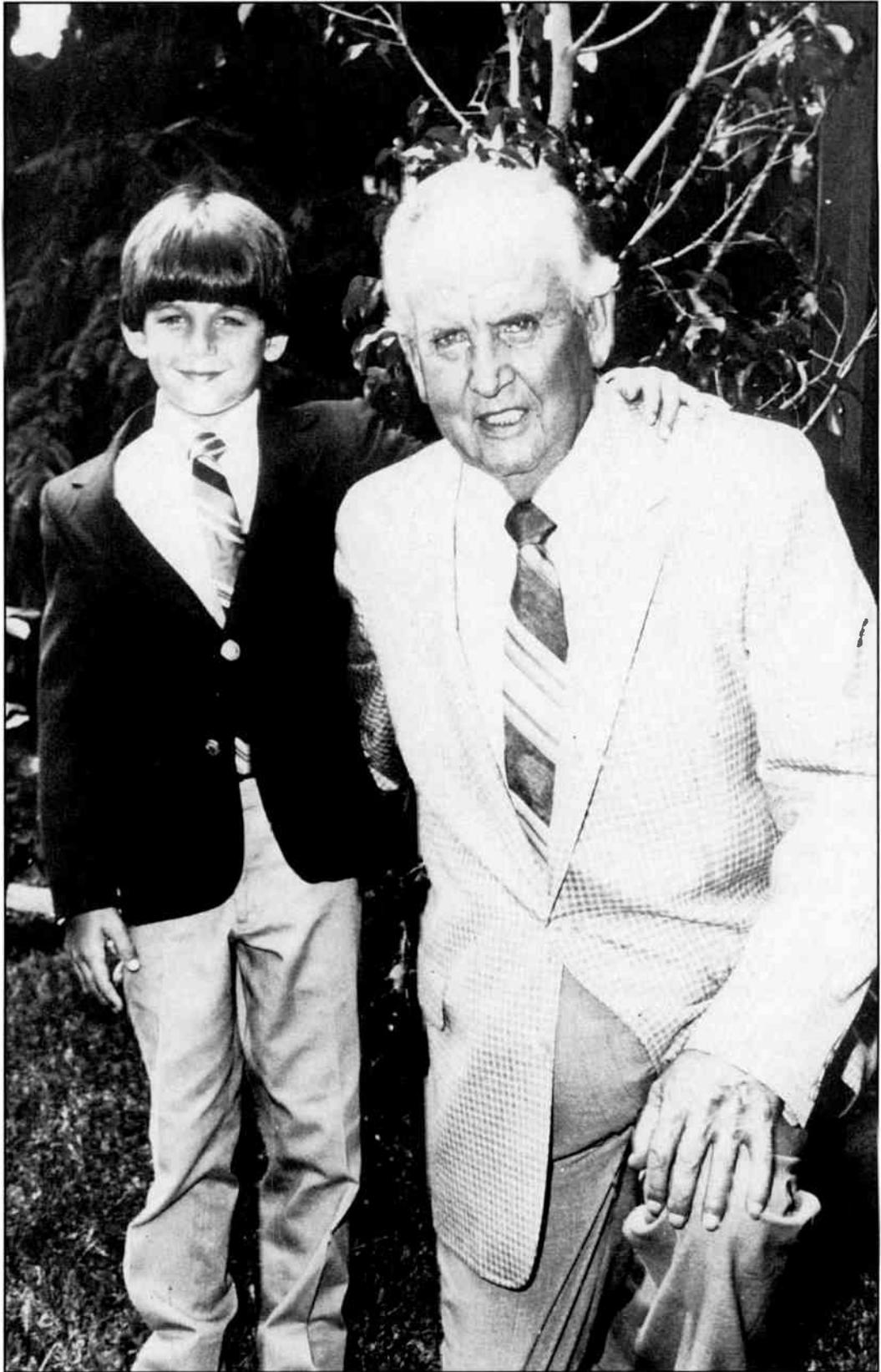
wasn't always easy to combine traditions and trips for children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. But what often impressed the community around the Rollins family was their ability to recognize that family was, indeed, important.

"What a thrill to see the entire family, Wayne and Grace, Gary and Ruthie, Randall and Peggy, and the children in church on Sunday mornings," said Pastor T. Cecil Myers of the Peachtree Road United Methodist Church. "The family has become an inspiration to me and a blessing to the church."

And throughout their sixty years together, Wayne and Grace remained not only delighted in their family, but delighted in each other, too. Remarkably, they seemed especially pleased when one could surprise the other.

In 1965, for instance, Wayne and Grace joined with John and his wife for a trip to Hong Kong and the presentation of the Rollins applications for the television franchise to that government. The trip didn't result in a new television enterprise for Rollins, but nonetheless gave Grace and Wayne one of the most memorable trips of their lives. Taking full advantage of her time in such an exotic place, Grace ate every imaginable kind of food. She even dined on hundred-year-old eggs and sipped bird's nest soup, to Wayne's utter astonishment.

*Wayne and Grace at the  
1986 Nance-Rollins Family  
Reunion*



*Two OWRs together — Orville Wayne Rollins, Sr., and Orville Wayne Rollins, II, Gary and Ruthie's youngest child (about 1982)*



“You ate that?” asked her husband.

“Yes, I did,” Grace said, grinning infectiously, “because I wanted to say that I had experienced all of these different foods.”

In 1981, for their fiftieth wedding anniversary, Wayne couldn’t wait to surprise Grace with his gift — a Cadillac Eldorado convertible. He explained the gift like this: When Grace and Wayne were dating, “I always had trouble with her wanting to follow these boys who had convertible cars. So I’m going to give her a Cadillac convertible for our fiftieth wedding anniversary and I’m going to have a sign put on the back that says, ‘Still Married.’ It’s taken her fifty years to get her convertible.”

And after so many years of marriage, their trust in each other’s judgment was complete. When the company moved from Wilmington to Atlanta, Wayne was the first one to find a property that he liked in Buckhead along Blackland Road. The house had only three bedrooms, but Wayne loved the huge, sloping front lawn and the almost four-acre lot in one of Atlanta’s most desirable neighborhoods.

He had called Grace in Wilmington. “I think I’ve found us a place.”

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*Wayne, Grace, their two sons  
and daughters-in-law, on a  
Greek cruise in 1984*



*Gary and Ruthie and their four children, left to right, Ellen, Wayne, Nancy, and Glen (about 1982)*

“What kind of a house?” Grace asked.

“Well, it doesn’t have much of a house,” Wayne admitted, but he said the lot was beautiful.

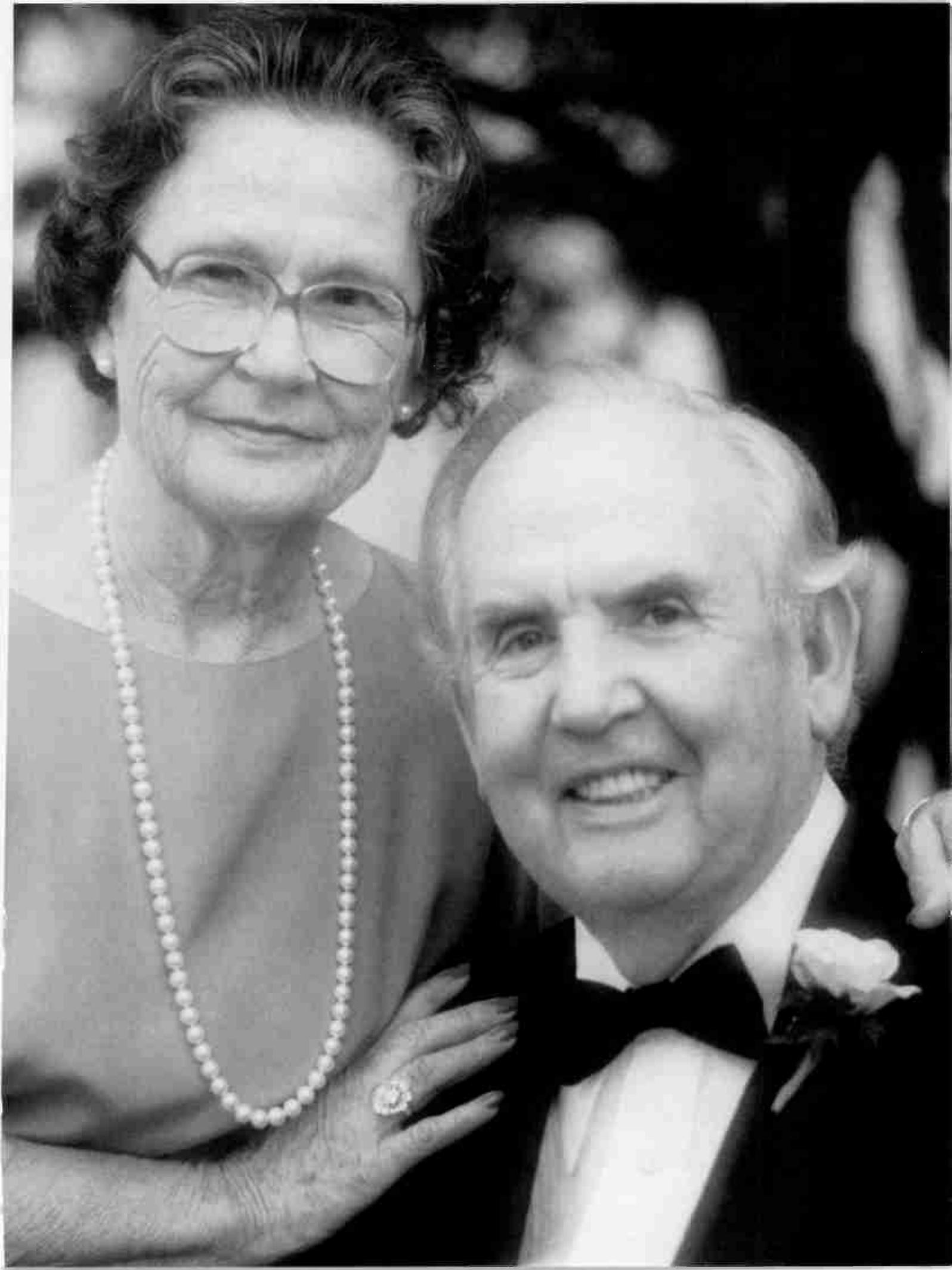
“We’ve got to have a house,” Grace replied. “We can’t just have a lot.”

When she saw the place, though, Grace fell in love with it, too, and agreed with Wayne that they should buy the property and remodel the house. When the renovations were completed, the new colonial home with massive columns out front was exactly what Grace and Wayne had envisioned. And together, they enjoyed it.

Said Wayne, “I’ve been unusually lucky and fortunate in having Grace as a wife whom wealth never has affected. We’re getting a lot more happiness than most people who have wealth, because we’re not trying to put on any pretensions or any show or to lord it over anybody. It’s been easy for me.”

If Wayne loved spoiling anyone, however, it would certainly be Grace. And for their sixtieth wedding anniversary on April 5, 1991, he decided to take his wife to the finest restaurant in Paris. The transportation would be via a newly purchased Gulfstream III jet.

*Opposite page: Grace and Wayne at a formal occasion (1982)*



## A COMMITMENT TO FAMILY

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The opportunity arose when Randall and Peggy decided they would visit their youngest, Amy, twenty-one, an exchange student at the University of London. Wayne and Grace decided to travel with their son to London. For the next several days, they thoroughly enjoyed not only the British theater but flying to Geneva, Switzerland, for lunch, a drive to Lewes, England, and Brighton Beach, and on Friday, April 5, the Rollins jet took off for Paris and an anniversary luncheon. A limousine met the party at the Paris airport.

"Where is the nicest restaurant in Paris?" Wayne asked the driver, who recommended Lucas Carlton's. They were not disappointed. The setting was elegant, the food was marvelous, and the champagne cost two hundred dollars a bottle. "Wayne didn't spare any money that day," Grace remembered.

"We were always so thankful we had so much time together," said Grace. "There were but very few days, I would say, in our last years together, that we didn't tell each other at least one time during the day that we loved each other, and how we loved each other so much more now. When we went to bed, that's when we'd do our talking. And lots of times we'd talk until midnight, discussing old times. And you know, Wayne told me not too long before he died, 'I think I fell in love with you the first date that we had. You were so feisty.' Now, can you imagine a person falling in love with someone because they're feisty?"

*The home of Wayne and Grace Rollins  
on Blackland Road in Atlanta*



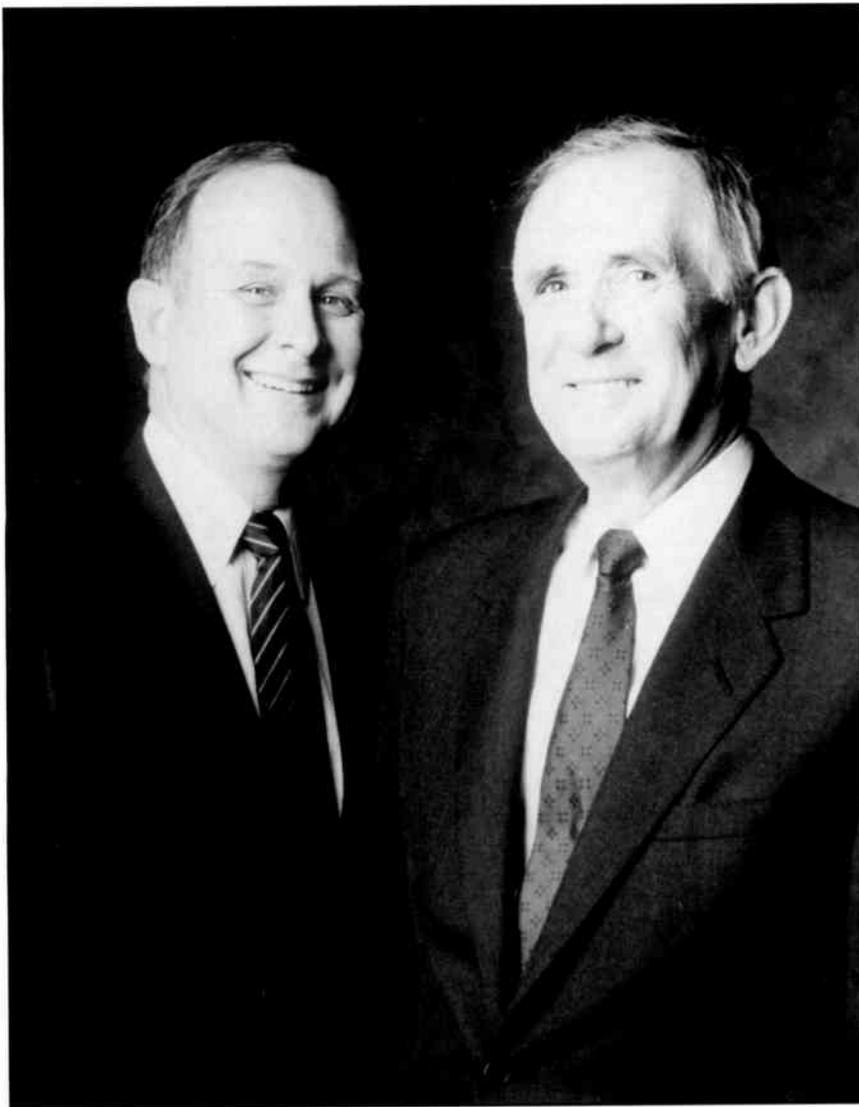
## A COMMITMENT TO FAMILY

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Sitting in her house on Blackland Road, Grace still marveled, at times, about “where we started and where we ended up. But I can say one thing. And I think Wayne felt the same way. We were just as happy whenever we were poor, because all of our friends were in the same boat. They had nothing, and we were just starting out like all the rest.”

And then her eyes started to sparkle, the same kind of sparkle that a young farmer named Wayne Rollins noticed the night he first glanced at Grace, sitting in a church pew.

“I was never going to marry a farmer,” said Grace, softly, “but my farmer husband surprised me.”



*To Wayne, one of the greatest accomplishments in his life was his family and having two sons like Gary and Randall who worked with him every day. (about 1992)*

A COMMITMENT TO FAMILY

*Wayne and Grace  
welcomed two  
daughters-in-law and  
ten grandchildren to the  
family by the 1970s.*



*Richard Randall, Sr.  
Margaret Hastings*



*Rita Anne*



*Richard Randall, Jr.*



*Pamela Renee*



*Robert Wayne*



*Timothy Curtis*



*Amy Claudine*

A COMMITMENT TO FAMILY

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*Gary Wayne  
Ruth Ellen Magness*



*Glen William*



*Ruth Ellen*



*Nancy Louise*



*Orville Wayne II*



# CHAPTER XIII

*If it could be said  
truthfully about me,  
I'd rather have it just say that  
"He was a good man."*

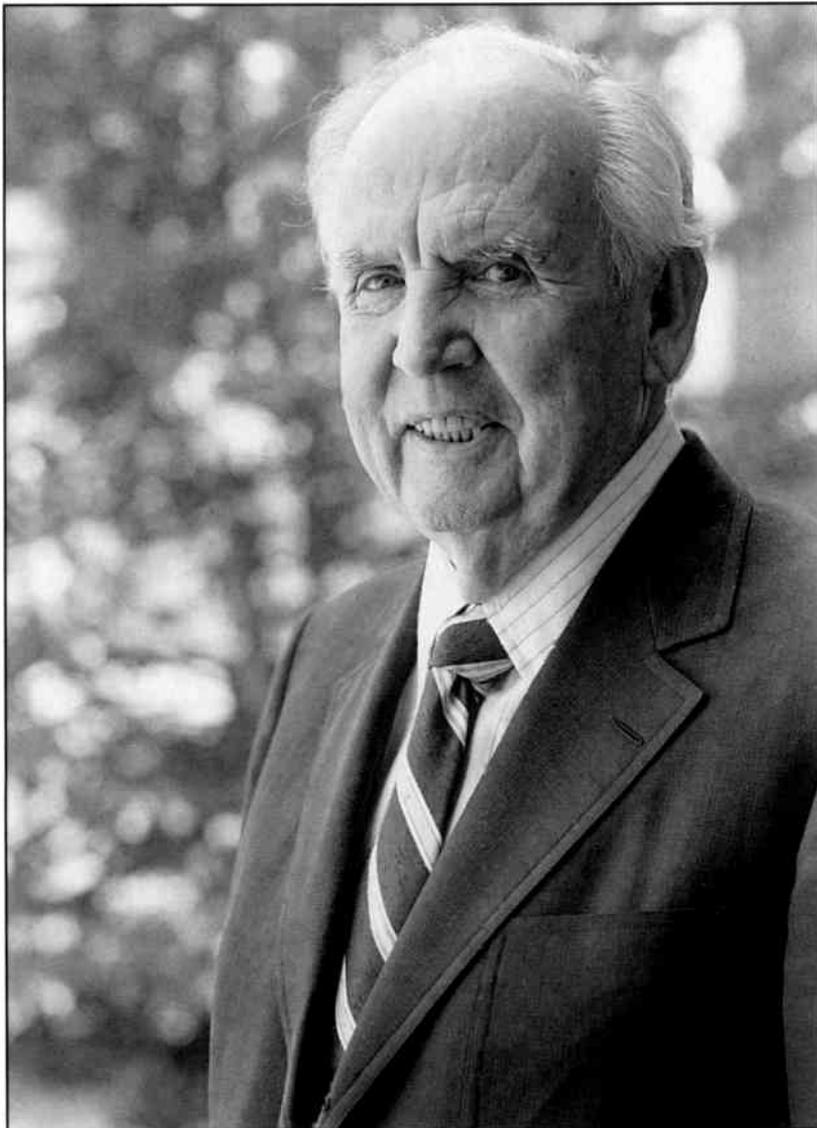
— *O. Wayne Rollins*



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“I AM THINE,  
O LORD”

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*O. Wayne Rollins at Emory University in 1990*

**I**'ll tell you one thing. I've enjoyed life."

Wayne Rollins spoke with quiet emotion, sitting at the large, old mahogany English desk in his office at Rollins, Inc. Outside it was a hot, sunny morning in late summer, 1990, a day when the seventy-eight-year-old businessman was asked to look back on his life from the vantage point of time, experience, and perspective.

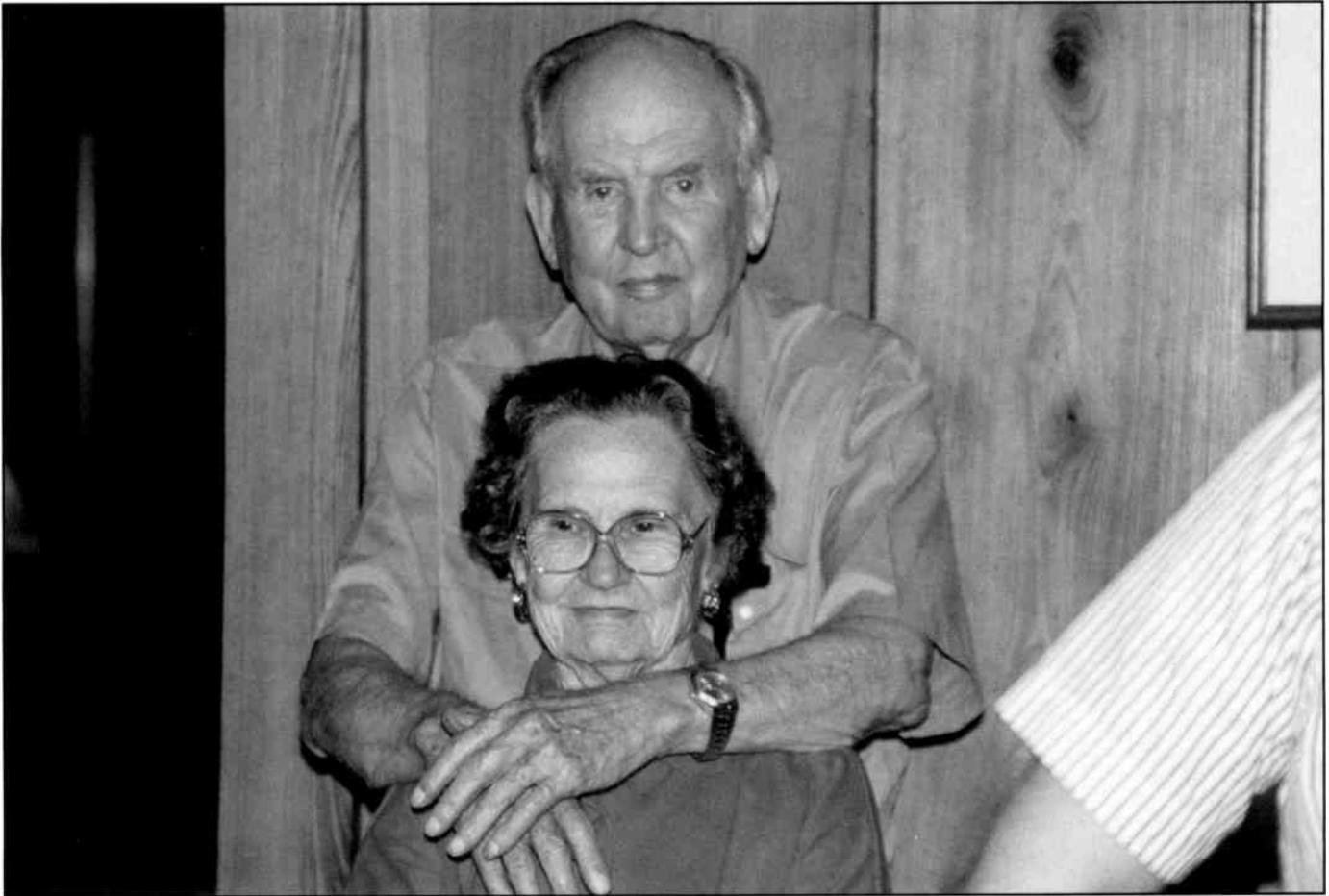
Wayne Rollins liked what he saw. There was no remorse over what he had done and how he had lived. His life had been full and rich, which he attributed to the principles he learned from family and friends — hard work, honesty, determination, and commitment. He had not only lived and prospered through these virtues, but had also found fulfillment in them.

"I still enjoy life," he went on with feeling, leaning forward, resting his chin in his hand. "I think the thing I enjoy most is being able to control my wants and control the things I have as well. Even though I have jet airplanes, cars, houses, and farms, and I can go anywhere I want to, I don't let that control me."

Several months later, with Wayne sitting once more behind his expansive desk, he was asked an unusual question. "If you had an epitaph, what would you like for it to say?"

Wayne Rollins did not hesitate in his answer, but he spoke softly and chose his words carefully.

"I guess if it could be said truthfully about me, I'd rather have it just say that 'He was a good man.' To me, that means a whole lot of things. It means that in every phase and every approach of my life, in the things I stood for and the things I did, that my actions qualified me to be remembered as a good man."



*Wayne and Grace, Christmas 1990*

In the last year of his life, O. Wayne Rollins enjoyed watching his family and his company continue to grow. He enjoyed watching Gary and Ruthie plan their new house at Rollins Blue Cypress. He welcomed two new great-grandsons, which gave Randall and Peggy seven grandsons and one granddaughter. And on February 14, 1991, when Wayne, as chairman of the board and chief executive officer, signed his statement for the Rollins, Inc. 1990 Annual Report, the company had all but equaled the family in important milestones. During the 1990 fiscal year, Rollins celebrated its thirtieth year as a public company; Orkin marked its ninetieth anniversary; Rollins Protective Services had completed its twentieth year; and *Forbes* had recognized Rollins as the Nation's Number One Service Company for the fourth consecutive year.

“With confidence in our resources and capabilities,” wrote Wayne in his last annual report, “we look forward to 1991 and beyond.”

Like clockwork, the Rollins family got together for their summer vacation at the end of July 1991, at the Saranac Lake resort near Plattsburgh, New York. They had their own bus, driven by Randall and Gary, and there was talk of visiting WPTZ-TV, the Plattsburgh television station once owned by Rollins and where Randall had been a salesman, or perhaps taking an outing on Lake Placid.

The night of their arrival, however, Wayne was not feeling well. Early the next morning, he flew back to Atlanta with Grace, Randall, and Gary. Doctors at Emory examined Wayne and found that he had an erratic heartbeat. They advised that a pacemaker be implanted during a surgical procedure that was by now considered fairly routine.

Wayne, however, didn't make an appointment for the surgery right away. He was considering many important obligations, including an honor proposed for him by the Newcomen Society of the United States, a nonprofit organization that recognized outstanding companies and pioneering achievements by their leaders.

The Newcomen dinner was scheduled for October 17, 1991, at the Piedmont Driving Club in Atlanta. Dr. Gloria Shatto, the president of Berry College and chairman of the Georgia Committee of the Newcomen Society, would preside. The blessing would be given by Dr. Donald A. Harp, senior minister of the Peachtree Road United Methodist Church, where the Rollins family worshiped. Invitations to the dinner had been printed by the Newcomen Society and already mailed to business leaders in Atlanta and Georgia. In August, Wayne began working on the Newcomen speech he planned to deliver on October 17. It was the last speech he tried to write, and his words echoed not only the great accomplishments of his career but the great lessons of his life.

"First, let me make this clear," Wayne had decided to begin. "The honor accorded our company tonight is really a recognition of the enduring values and principles learned from my parents and grandparents. And it is a tribute to the people of Rollins, who put these principles into action on the job every day.

"It's always been my belief that management's responsibility is to supervise the person on the job so that you get the very best he has to offer. Not half of what he has. But the very best. . . . In this way, the company benefits, and so does the employee and the employee's family.

"My mission as head of the company has always been to get the very best out of the employee. And to get the very best value and return that I can for the shareholder. In the process of getting the very best from employees, they then deliver the very best service to the customer.

"For me, this goes back to my mother reading Horatio Alger stories to me and my brother — and telling us we could be whatever we wanted to be in life if we did our best.

“Our company is built on a strong work ethic. That is the foundation. My maternal grandmother taught me, ‘If the average person works eight hours a day, and you work twelve, you are 50 percent better than the average. And no one can take that away from you. . . .’”

And while Wayne contemplated the Newcomen honor that fall, Dr. Charles Hatcher of Emory and later Dr. James T. Laney, president of the university, talked with Wayne about the idea of a new school of public health. Wayne listened very intently, becoming pensive. “There are many great needs around the world,” Wayne said. “I am concerned about the inner city. I am concerned about the world we are going to leave our children and grandchildren. Somebody has got to do something about the city. That’s my great concern.”

In the twilight of his professional career, Wayne Rollins spoke of the importance of work and dedication whenever he had the opportunity. And his message often took his listeners by surprise, according to Dr. Laney.

“This past year Wayne Rollins, who is one of Atlanta’s success stories, spoke at the business school, and everyone thought he would talk about the first leveraged buy-out in this country, which he engineered,” Laney wrote in his collection of essays, *The Education of the Heart*. “They all wanted some secret, some trick that would give them a leg up on the competition.

“And Wayne Rollins, in his rather laid-back, almost country-boy manner, got up and said, ‘I want to talk today about dedication.’ There was a noticeable loss of enthusiasm in the class. ‘I know that in business school you don’t think dedication has its place in the curriculum,’ he said. ‘But if I have a choice in hiring someone who has 90 percent of another’s intelligence but 100 percent of their dedication, I’ll take the one with the dedication. That quality is so rare, so fundamental, that I place it above everything. I can buy competence a dime a dozen, but it is dedication that makes the difference.’”

Dr. Laney would personally witness Wayne’s remarkable sense of clarity, dedication, and foresight in yet another setting, one that would carry an impact far beyond the classroom. While Wayne contemplated the Newcomen honor that fall, Dr. Laney and Emory’s Dr. Charles Hatcher met with Wayne and presented their personal proposal for a new school of public health for Emory. “We went to him and told him about all the good we’d be doing around the world through the School of Public Health — the importance of public health in the large scheme of things,” Laney wrote in his book of essays, “I thought we made a completely convincing case.”

“After we had finished, we waited to get his first reaction. He leaned back and said, ‘In general I’d say I support your proposal, but my greatest concern today is what’s going on in our inner cities. We cannot continue to live in this country with the kind of marginalization that’s happening among so many of

our citizens, with the crime and the drugs and the poverty and the short life spans. It is absolutely impossible for us to live in one country, side by side."

Dr. Laney wrote what happened next. "I said, 'Well, I'm not sure we're prepared to address that issue today, Mr. Rollins. That's far grander and more ambitious than anything we had in mind.' And we left, sobered and somber.

"His words haunted me, and over the next few months some of my colleagues and I began to think: You know, a well-endowed institution like Emory University, with all its facilities and human resources, really does have a larger responsibility to the whole city than just to its students, to the research community, or even to the delivery of health care for so many of Atlanta's citizens. Finally, we decided that we wanted to try to address in a very defined fashion in part of the city of Atlanta some of the social problems Mr. Rollins had mentioned. It was risky, and it was also controversial, because it would divert time and energy from programs in which the faculty already had vested interest.

"Soon after we made that decision, I had breakfast with former president Jimmy Carter, who serves on our faculty. I told him what we had been thinking and what we had decided. He was uncommonly silent for a moment. Then he said, 'If you would agree, I would like to devote my time on the faculty to this.' Of course, we agreed. We were delighted that we could find a colleague and sponsor who carried that much weight and influence and energy."

The concept being discussed would become the Atlanta Project, first envisioned by Wayne Rollins and embraced by Emory University and former president Carter. With Emory's assistance, Carter would create a program to try to deal with the major human problems of Atlanta, ranging from teen pregnancy and crack babies to drug addiction, juvenile delinquency, school dropouts, homelessness, unemployment, and divided families.

After meeting with President Carter, Dr. Laney visited Wayne again on October 10, "to tell him that Emory had decided to try, within a very limited sphere, to tackle the issues that he had raised with such arresting power. Then I said that former president Jimmy Carter had decided to participate in this as a major project of his and of the Carter Center of Emory University. Mr. Rollins smiled broadly and said, 'You know, I didn't vote for President Carter. I didn't much like him in the White House. But I think he has done an extraordinary job since he left. He is a fine man, a good man, and I'm encouraged by this.'"

The very next day, just one week before the Newcomen Society dinner, Wayne's doctors became worried about the irregularity in his heartbeat and convinced him to enter Emory Hospital for the pacemaker implant operation. Early on the morning of Friday, October 11, Randall drove to Blackland Road to pick up Wayne and Grace and take his father to the hospital. His dad, Randall remembered, was sitting on the porch waiting for him, and they talked about everything from family to business and baseball on the ride to Emory.

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Later, as Wayne was being wheeled to the operating room, Grace leaned over and kissed him goodbye. She and Randall went back to the waiting room until the doctors arrived to brief them on the outcome of the surgery. The first news was excellent: The surgery was pronounced a success. Grace and Randall went to the recovery room where a doctor showed them the monitor, and explained how the pacemaker would work when necessary. Grace saw that Wayne had his eyes partially open, but he was still sedated and did not answer when she spoke to him. "We're going on upstairs to your room, and we'll be up there waiting for you," Grace told him.

Randall then telephoned Gary, who was at Blue Cypress Ranch with Ruthie. They had just arrived there after an anniversary trip to New Mexico, and had left Atlanta before the doctors decided Wayne must have the pacemaker implanted at once. Wayne had insisted, "Don't call Gary. This isn't that big a deal. All he's going to do is worry about it and want to come home."

Gary was out on the construction site of a house he was building on the Florida ranch. A message for him came over the two-way radio. "Randall wants you to call him." Gary sensed something unusual had happened, because Randall wouldn't normally call at that time of day.

"We didn't want to let you know ahead, but Dad's had the pacemaker operation," Randall told his brother, knowing that they had both discussed the pacemaker operation many times that summer and fall. "Everything's great. There's no reason for you to come back. We didn't call you before because he didn't want to disrupt your trip. We've got it done."

Relieved, Gary returned to the construction site. Randall returned to his mother's side at Emory Hospital, and he and Grace went to Wayne's room, where they had planned to have lunch. While there, Dr. Steve Clements called to say that they "were having a problem." A short time later, Dr. Charles Hatcher came into the room. His face told them the worst had happened. "We tried everything," he said helplessly.

Inexplicably, while still in the recovery room of the hospital, Wayne Rollins had died suddenly as his embattled heart gave out, and he passed quietly from life. He was seventy-nine years old. The shocking unexpectedness of his death after the success of the operation made it that much harder for his loved ones to bear.

"It was just overwhelming to me," said Randall. "I just couldn't believe it. I had encouraged him to have the pacemaker, we went in, we saw him after the operation, everything seemed to be fine. . . . It was just more than you could comprehend."

A few minutes later at Blue Cypress Ranch, the ranch manager hurried to Gary Rollins. The man's face was somber and pale. "You need to call Randall right away." Instinctively, Gary knew it was tragic news.

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"Of course, I just knew it. I knew. I just absolutely knew," said Gary. "When you're in business, and you see logic move forward, there would be no good reason to call me back within forty-five minutes. I suspected that he'd died. I knew the minimal that had happened was that he'd had a stroke.

"I think you're just devastated. You're just numb. Probably for the last ten years, I had dreaded the thought of my father dying because of the business responsibilities. And when it finally happened, I never thought at all about that, which is a tribute to him in my preparation.

"I mean, all I could think about was I had lost my father, somebody that no matter what the problem, I could always talk to. I lost a friend, and I had lost my father. Dad had that saying about, 'Don't worry about things because most things don't ever materialize,' or 'Don't worry about everything.' And I thought 'What irony,' because here was another example of what he said being true. Because when that time finally came, the business concerns didn't worry me at all."

At Rollins headquarters, around lunchtime, Linda Graham got her second call from Randall that morning. "He didn't make it," were Randall's first words.

Getting that phone call, Linda recalled, "was a day that you prepare yourself for, and when it finally comes, you say, 'Well, this has been the time that I have always feared, and now you have to do what you have to do.' Part of you backs off, and watches."

First, Linda and Darlene Johnston, Wayne's secretary, began to call the members of the Rollins board of directors. "Darlene, very reasonably so, fell apart," remembered Linda. "The people she was calling were close friends of Mr. Rollins. They were so distraught. I talked to three people — Wilton Looney, Henry Tippie, and Jimmy Williams — to help us decide what to do. We had to think about Wall Street, the media, the funeral preparations. And from that point, we started keeping a list of who we had talked with. We called in key people, and let them filter the news down through the company."

Then, Linda called Paulette Chitwood, a genealogist who had worked for the family since 1985 and knew both sides of the family in Smith Chapel. Linda asked Paulette to call Wayne's cousins. And when the Smith Chapel community found out that their beloved Wayne Rollins had died, "it was like the impossible had happened," said Paulette. "He was always two things to them. He was a cousin they grew up with, and a successful man who made things happen in life. When he died, it was like someone larger than life died, but they were left to mourn their friend, their cousin, their heart."

Outside the family, among those close to him, none seemed to grieve more than Barrington Riley, who had moved from Jamaica to Atlanta in 1981 to serve as driver and valet for Wayne and Grace. "We had a special relationship," Riley

## "I AM THINE, O LORD"

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said. "He taught me to do what you do to the best of your ability. He was somebody I could talk to."

The grieving family of Wayne Rollins felt the outpouring of sympathy from people around the country. Hundreds of calls, cards, and letters poured in from those who had known the charismatic O. Wayne Rollins, those who now joined the family in mourning his unexpected death. On Monday, October 14, 1991, three days after Wayne's death, the funeral was held in the sanctuary of the Peachtree Road United Methodist Church, where Wayne and his family were members.

The crowd of mourners filled the church sanctuary and the balcony. Everyone, it seemed, wanted to say goodbye. The Rollins family had arranged for a bus to be driven to Ringgold, so that family and friends and cousins who wanted to attend the funeral would not be inconvenienced by the long drive to Atlanta.

As the service began, the sanctuary was filled with the familiar melodies of songs that Wayne Rollins had loved in his childhood at the little Smith Chapel church . . . "I Am Thine, O Lord" . . . "Shall We Gather at the River." Dr. Donald A. Harp, the minister, and William R. Bowdoin, Wayne's longtime friend through Berry, Emory, and the Trust Company Bank, delivered moving eulogies and praised the life this good man had lived. Grace, her two sons, their families and John Rollins' family sat together, grieving. "I wasn't ready to lose him," said Randall, later. "I thought we had another five, even ten years."

When the service was over, the pallbearers carried the casket out to the front of the church. It was a beautiful day, and for just a moment, Wayne's whole family was outside, too, alone in front of the church before the rest of the congregation came out. It was a poignant memory for those who saw it — the family of O. Wayne Rollins, bound by love and profound grief.

The funeral procession made its way to Arlington Memorial Park, where Wayne had told his family he wanted to be buried in order to be close to his granddaughter, Rita, and his family in Atlanta. The seemingly endless line of limousines and cars made its way quietly through the tree-lined, residential streets of Atlanta, complete with a police motorcycle escort that seemed flawless and impressive.

On the bus with Wayne's other friends and family members, former classmate Miller Clark watched the procession from the window. The motorcycle escort — crisp, professional, with each policeman expertly performing his job and paying attention to details — nearly moved Miller to tears. "This was done," he said, "exactly the way Wayne would have wanted it."

When the Arlington service was over, family and friends returned to Gary and Ruthie's home. Throughout the house, people would stop for food and refreshment, sharing stories between tears and laughter. But in the quiet

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comfort of the family library, Gary or Randall, a daughter-in-law or a grandchild — someone was constantly at Grace's side. At times, while she sat in this room, Grace would smile. And for those who came to her to pay their respects, Grace's own words to them were comforting.

"You know what I'm going to miss?" she asked. "I'm going to miss having been loved so much. You know, he couldn't be in the same room with me, without putting his arm around me. I'm really going to miss that. He was just so good to me."

Without knowing it, his wife of sixty years had paid O. Wayne Rollins the very tribute he once said was all he wanted. For in the year before his death, Wayne had noted that all the accolades in the world didn't matter to him as much as one simple remembrance:

*"I guess if it could be said truthfully about me, I'd rather have it just say that 'He was a good man.' To me, that means a whole lot of things. It means that in every phase and every approach of my life, in the things I stood for and the things I did, that my actions qualified me to be remembered as a good man."*

And he was.

## EULOGY FOR O. WAYNE ROLLINS

Given by William R. Bowdoin

*Retired President of Trust Company of Georgia*

More than forty years ago, Wayne and his brother, John, founded what has become one of the world's largest service companies — Rollins, Inc.

The growth and development of this company and its many diversities is a fascinating and inspiring story.

But, today, I want to talk about Wayne Rollins — the man.

Throughout his long and successful career, Wayne Rollins was guided by the lamps of integrity, opportunity, courage, sound judgment, pride in his accomplishments, and an unselfish devotion to those ideals and principles of service and cooperation that benefit all of our people.

These principles have served for many as a rallying point to build courage when courage seemed to fail — to regain faith when at times there seemed little cause for faith, and to create hope when hope seemed to fade.

Wayne was born in the community of Tunnel Hill, Georgia; grew up on the family farm; attended a one-room school; and graduated from nearby Ringgold High School as valedictorian of his class.

His parents were not wealthy by financial measure, but rich in the traditions of a good home life that brought their two sons, Wayne and John, the strength of character that both have demonstrated to a high degree. This imbued him with those fundamental principles upon which the nation was built and which man must live by for a successful and useful life — faith in God, the dignity of worthwhile work well done, and the proper discharge of the responsibilities of good citizenship. Both boys learned well the lesson that it is not sufficient that we just preserve the great heritage that is ours but we should so nurture and improve upon it that we leave it to future generations richer in advantages and opportunities and freedom than has been ours to receive.

Wayne did not always have an easy life but he was reared in a time when people looked upon a willingness for hard work as a God-given asset and

ambition as virtue. He possessed an abundance of both and welded them together with dignity.

He subscribed fully to the motto of Miss Martha Berry, the founder of Berry College, where he also has served so effectively as a member of the board of trustees and chairman of important administrative committees — "The pursuit of easy things makes us weak. The pursuit of the difficult makes us strong."

His many accomplishments demonstrated his unusual qualities of human understanding and compassion for all with whom he came in contact and touched the lives of people in all walks of life.

Possessed of a keen mind and wit, he could quickly analyze a problem and express its requirement for solution with clarity and simplicity.

Although he held strong personal convictions, he was tolerant of the views of others and respected their virtues.

These attributes are recorded in the annals of his many business enterprises — in education, agriculture, areas of renewable wealth throughout the nation and beyond.

It was a long and sometimes difficult road from a ten-dollar-a-week employee in the winding room of a Chattanooga, Tennessee, textile mill to a listing in *Forbes magazine* of the Four Hundred Wealthiest People in America, but it was traveled without deviating from his basic concept of character.

The generosity of Wayne and his family for the benefit of others is legend.

He harbored quiet but deep religious convictions — convictions lived by seven days a week, and not just on Sunday.

He was honored for his large contributions and dedication to education in Georgia and elsewhere by colleges and universities. Buildings bear his name on the campuses of Emory University, Berry College, Young Harris College, and Cumberland College in Kentucky. The Claudia A. Rollins Center for Church Ministries on the campus of Emory University is named in honor of his mother.

Another evidence of his continued devotion to education and research in a changing world is the \$10 million contribution to Emory University as a first step toward building a \$40 million O. Wayne Rollins Research Center to encourage cross-disciplinary research among the scientists who are working on possible cures for cancer, heart disease, genetic birth defects, and other dreaded diseases and ailments.

For more than two decades, he provided a large number of college scholarships for deserving young people at four high schools and three colleges and universities. He literally placed upon the highest mountain the lamp of learning for all to see and be guided by its brilliance and beauty and warned by the principles of its creation.

He was the recipient of the Horatio Alger Award, the Golden Plate Award by the Academy of Achievement, the Philanthropist of the Year award from both

## “I AM THINE, O LORD”

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Georgia and the nation — as well as honorary degrees from Emory University, Colgate University, Berry College, and Young Harris College.

Wayne had more sources of pride than any man I know, but for him the greatest source of all was his wonderful family. He and his lovely wife, Grace, were married for sixty years. This within itself is an inspiration in an unfortunate era of faded morality. They had two successful sons. Randall is Chairman of the Board of Rollins Energy Services, and Gary is President of Rollins, Inc. — both highly accomplished in the world of business and civic contributions, both following in their distinguished father’s footsteps. Two lovely daughters-in-law, Peggy and Ruthie, nine grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren. Wayne was named the Southeast Father of the Year for Business.

We can all garner renewed strength by adherence to the basic philosophy of this great and modest man — have courage tempered with humility, ambition tempered with moderation, sound judgment tempered with understanding, and above all, do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God.



*Wayne was clearly patriarch of the clan.  
Everyone from in-laws, children,  
grandchildren, wives, husbands, sons  
and daughters, everybody in the family  
looked to O.W. It was always,  
Dad says, Dad thinks, Dad wants to do  
this. . . . He was the guiding light.*

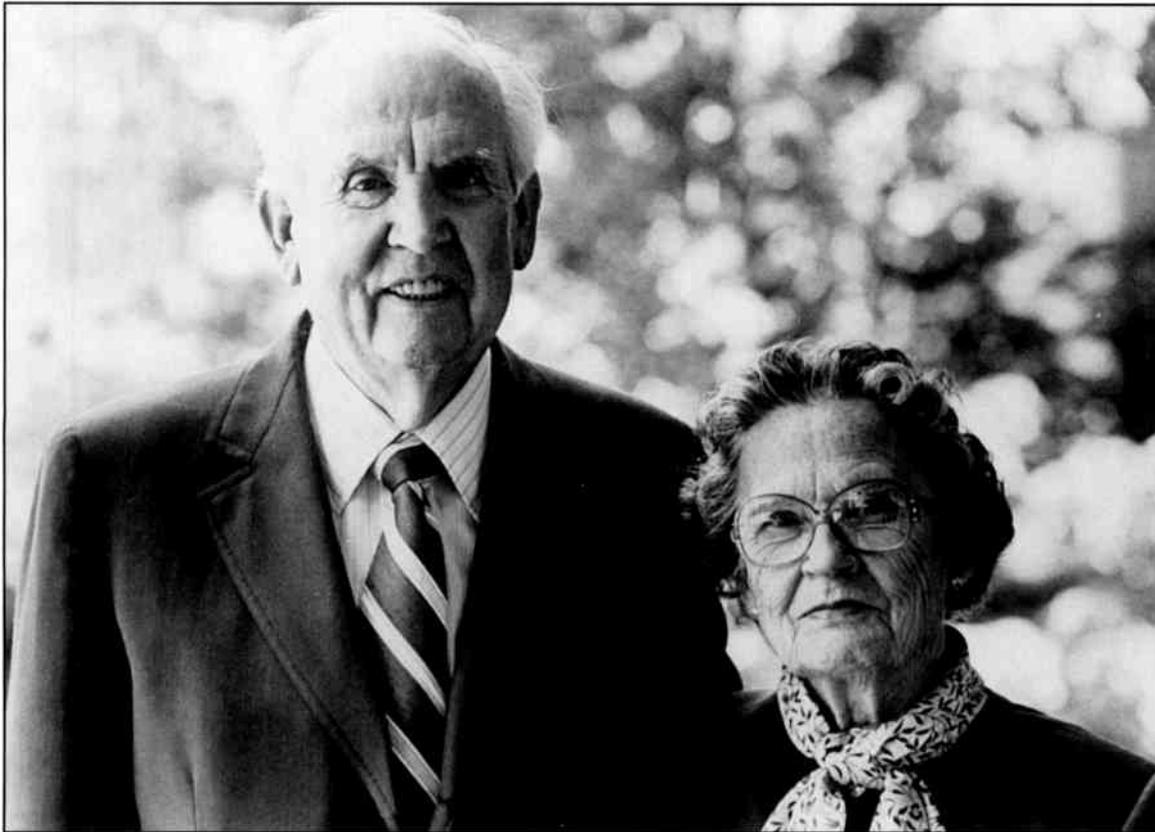
*— Justus Martin,  
a family friend and  
former chairman of the board,  
the Robinson-Humphrey Company*



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## EPILOGUE

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*Wayne and Grace witnessed many changes during their sixty years of marriage, but their love for each other only grew stronger. (about 1990)*

# N

early two years after O. Wayne Rollins died, his family gathers on September 26, 1993, for the Nance-Rollins Family Reunion on the grounds of the Smith Chapel United Methodist Church. It is a warm fall day. There is a good stiff breeze rustling the canopy of leaves on the trees outside the church, and the country sky alternates between sunshine and dark clouds that threaten rain.

Inside, the covered-dish luncheon is spread out over long buffet tables in the Rollins Memorial Hall, which Wayne and John and their wives had dedicated in August 1962 in honor of their parents, Henry and Claudia Rollins. The dessert table, fairly bursting with cobblers and pound cakes and chocolate squares, has been set up in the hall's new addition, built and dedicated in memory of Wayne on October 25, 1992, by Grace, John and Michele Rollins, Randall and Peggy, and Gary and Ruthie.

Outside are tables covered with photograph albums, remembrances of reunions past. Under the red and white-striped canopy tent, the history of the Nance and Rollins families unfolds in words and pictures through a historical display — a display that begins with the Nance-Rollins story around the turn of the century, when the two families lived one farm apart. And on the gravesites in the nearby cemetery, the family history is told again through the engraved tombstones that mark the graves of many who are gone.

As everyone arrives and begins to mingle both inside and out, the layers of existing family ties gradually emerge . . . John Rollins and his family from Delaware . . . Grace, Randall, and Gary, their wives, children, and grandchildren from Atlanta . . . And from as far away as Texas to as close as Tunnel Hill, Nance and Rollins cousins have come to reunite with their extended family.

## EPILOGUE

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And while the family patriarch is missing, the presence of O. Wayne Rollins is everywhere. He is still here, helping build the church hall and the parsonage and sitting in the church pew and listening to one of his favorite hymns. He is still here, laughing while he stands between Grace and Clara Ruth Rollins, towering above the two women who still giggle like the childhood friends they will always be. He is still here, talking with his cousins Bob Rollins and Madison Nance, quietly to one side. And he is still here, in the hearts and minds of all who belong to the Nance and Rollins families, because he will forever be the Wayne they all grew up with. Said Madison, "It still doesn't seem right to come here without Wayne, does it?"



Two years after his death, Wayne Rollins remained a guiding light for his family. And in tribute to Wayne's preparation and his sons' abilities, both his family and the business he worked so hard to establish have moved forward successfully without him, just as he planned.

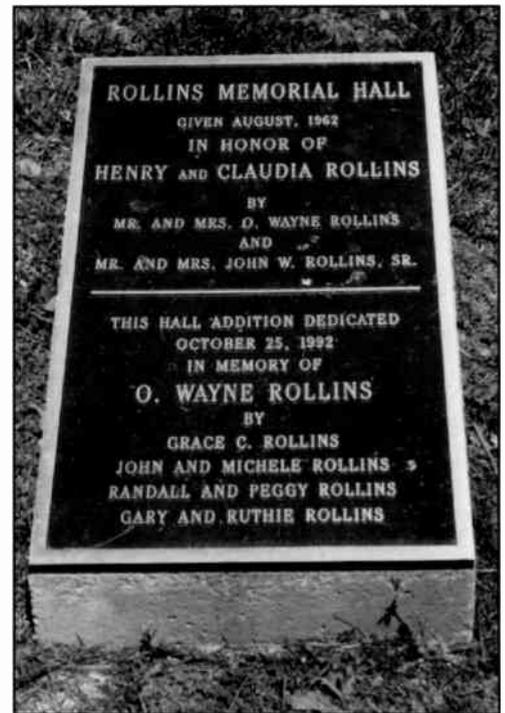
Said Randall: "After Dad's death, the public companies had to operate. That was the first time we had to prove that we could run them without Dad. And if we didn't know how to do that, we didn't know anything. We had run them a long time. I can't really say that it felt differently. We haven't had one crisis or one problem where we've said, 'We wish Dad were here to help us.' But we've said a thousand times, 'We just wish Dad were here.'"

Said Gary: "It was a tribute to Dad that there was not any chaos in the organization, there was not any panic on Wall Street. People were saddened, but I don't think our stock moved a quarter of a point. Obviously people were distressed because Dad had died, but people knew that he had two boys who were going to continue doing what they were prepared to do and what they had been taught to do. That although emotionally we had been shattered, there was not going to be a crisis in the company. The people had been working with Randall and me for many years and knew their futures were secure."

And as Wayne often said during his career: "My job is really two jobs. I want to build the company, make it more productive, to grow internally and externally. My second job is to build an organization. I'm in a wonderful position. I don't have to protect my job. I don't have to prove that the company can't run without me. My job should be to build an organization which doesn't depend on one man."

In newspaper articles following the founder's death, reporters and analysts speculated over the direction of Rollins, Inc. The conclusion was always the same: "Rollins' sons absorbed dad's lessons: steady, careful management . . ." "Slow and steady and careful management will continue . . ."

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*Plaque in front of Rollins Memorial Hall's new addition (October 25, 1992)*

At a regularly scheduled board meeting on October 22, 1991, Randall was elected to succeed his father as chairman of the board of directors and chief executive officer of the company. And together in their grief and their determination, Randall and Gary prepared the company's 1991 annual report — the first annual report ever issued for Rollins without O. Wayne Rollins' signature.

The Rollins, Inc. report contained a two-page tribute to O. Wayne Rollins: "By working hard, thinking creatively and inspiring others to do the same, Wayne Rollins succeeded in his goal to get the very best from people. In the process, each customer got exceptional service, every stockholder an excellent return on their investment and each employee received security and opportunity in their work. This simple, effective approach is the legacy of Wayne Rollins. It has become the hallmark of the company, and for us, his colleagues and friends, it is our promise of the future."

And his outstanding leadership, the sons announced, "has enabled Rollins, Inc. to be recognized, for five consecutive years, by *Forbes* magazine as America's Number 1 Service Company."

By the time the Nance and Rollins families gathered for their reunion in 1993, the company O. Wayne Rollins left to his sons was performing exactly as their father would have liked.

The company, with more than 9,000 employees serving 1.5 million residential and commercial customers, had been tapped by *Forbes* for the sixth year in a row as the nation's number-one service company. Its services had grown: The Orkin division, providing residential cleaning and maid services, had been added to Orkin's Pest Control, Lawn Care, and Landscaping divisions, and Rollins Protective Services. Record revenues of \$528 million were reported on February 15, 1993, an increase of \$52 million (11 percent) over the previous year; record net income was \$38 million, an increase of \$6.5 million (21 percent), while earnings per share was a record \$1.07, compared to 89 cents the prior year (a 20 percent increase). Moreover, the company was moving forward with its "Mission of Excellence" program, a commitment to a long-term quality improvement process designed to achieve total customer satisfaction and improve operating efficiency while building a more professional work force.

And in the same confident manner of his father, Gary could envision a company that was destined for continued growth. "I think we can be a billion-dollar company by the year 2000," said Gary, when asked to project the future for Rollins, Inc. "Our new Landscaping businesses offer us a tremendous opportunity. They are billion-dollar industries and very fragmented. There has not been much corporate organization, which we can provide. No one has really come in and provided the same kind of clout that a company like Orkin did in standardizing the service product, the sales practices, and the marketing."

## EPILOGUE

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And Gary promoted a company strategy to better educate and enlighten the public's view of Orkin of being much more than mere "exterminators."

"We believe we've been environmentalists since 1901," argued Gary. "If you go back and look at the origin of exterminators, they were associated with people who were the earliest sanitarians because pests have had such a dramatic effect on humankind.

"Now, we have to be more aware of nonpesticide pest control, and we are willing to work to educate the public on our ability to deal with Lyme ticks, as well as termites. Our services and capabilities are really conducive to providing a better environment and protecting people's property."

As part of this strategic direction, the company strengthened its multiyear partnership with the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of Natural History. And in a gala party, the O. Orkin Insect Zoo opened at the Smithsonian, and launched an environmentally focused science program for elementary schools throughout the nation.

In addition to Rollins, Inc., RPC Energy Services, Inc. had begun once more to increase its revenues and earnings, after its two industries — oil and gas services and boat manufacturing — were among those hardest hit by the recession of the early 1990s. Through effective expense controls and income maximization, RPC anticipated increasing its revenue opportunities and enhancing its profitability in 1993.

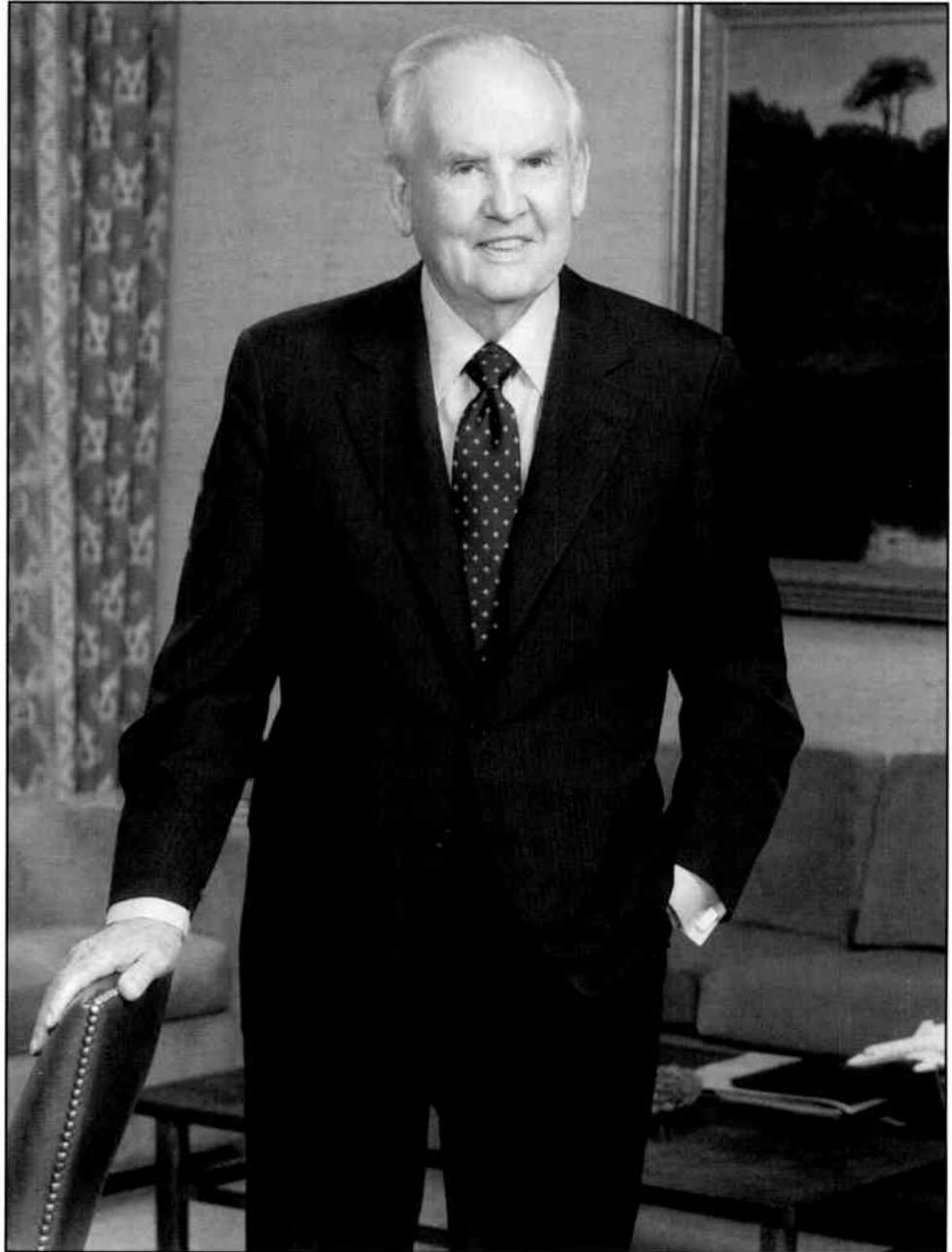
And like the public companies, LOR, Inc. and the rest of the private family entities continued to thrive in a way that would have pleased Wayne Rollins.

The continuing success of LOR, Rollins, Inc. and RPC Energy Services, Inc. was extremely gratifying to Wayne's two sons. But at times, it was bittersweet.

"I sure do miss Dad," said Randall, sitting in his office the week before the family reunion. "We worked together every day. Sometimes, I feel like getting up and going in and seeing what Dad would think. I very rarely made a decision without talking with Dad and Gary, and Dad very rarely made a decision without talking with us. Gary, Dad, and I met on a weekly basis, to talk, and had lunch almost every day. We were good friends. And I don't think he was as proud of business as he was of family."

The Rollins family has grown since Wayne's death in ways that would have delighted this consummate family man.

There is a new great-grandchild: James William Rollins. In what would have been an especially proud moment for Wayne, Amy, the granddaughter Wayne once nicknamed the "Little Dragon," was the first to go to law school and is now a practicing attorney in Atlanta, thus realizing an unfulfilled dream of her grandfather's.



*O. Wayne Rollins*  
1912 – 1991

And when Wayne died, said Randall, his very methodical and thorough father “came as close to having his affairs in order as could be. I think Gary and I knew, almost without exception, what to do with everything.”

“Almost without exception.” Together, Randall and Gary have been unable to decide what to do about two aspects of their father’s life that were as much a part of him as the signature white wooden fences around his ranches and land. Namely, his cars and his office.

## EPILOGUE

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While the land was one of Wayne Rollins' passions, he also carried on a lifelong infatuation with automobiles. He favored Lincolns, especially Continentals and stylish Town Cars. Friends laughed that Wayne Rollins never got rid of a car, and the basement of the Rollins building on Piedmont Road was filled with his collection — ranging from a black 1957 Lincoln Mark II, the 1976 Cadillac convertible with 720 miles on it that he once gave to Grace as an anniversary gift, a 1978 Jeep Wagoneer for snowy weather, and a 1969 Rolls Royce Shadow he had bought from his brother John as an investment.

"He loved these cars. He hated to part with them," said Paul Murphy, who joined the company in 1957 and was, among other things, responsible for maintaining the Wayne Rollins fleet in Atlanta. Murphy's job was summed up in the "Three S's." Wayne once told him what was expected from a car: "I want it to start. I want it to stop. And I want it to shine."

Two years after his death, the cars still shine, and they're still parked in the basement of Rollins' headquarters. Randall shook his head, when asked if they would be sold. "It would be like part of him disappearing," he said.

And neither Randall nor Gary could for a long time bring themselves to move into the office of O. Wayne Rollins, a spot that Randall should technically now fill. Though several personal items have been removed, the office remained largely untouched; the desk and high-back leather chair where Wayne Rollins sat are still in place, awards and favorite prints still hang on the walls. Those who enter the office still remember what it was like to see Wayne working at his desk. They remember his presence, big and bold enough to fill the large room. And they remember his smile, warm and wonderful.

When asked if he will move into the chief executive's office, Randall doesn't really answer, though he would eventually make plans to do so. "I just hate to do it," he said. "It's kind of like his cars, part of him disappearing."

For those who knew O. Wayne Rollins, however, there is a sense that he will never disappear. Not only has Rollins, Inc., RPC, and the Rollins family continued to grow, but Wayne's philanthropic goal to give gifts that multiply has without doubt succeeded. Before his death, Wayne established the O. Wayne Rollins Foundation; after his death, Grace continued their significant contributions to causes they both believed in, including \$10 million to the Grace Crum Rollins Public Health Building at Emory, and a \$1 million commitment to the growing Atlanta Project.

And the family has continued its educational support and annual scholarship funds for schools around the country. And nowhere has Wayne Rollins' support — and his presence — made more of an impact than it did at Berry College.

## EPILOGUE

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“There’s still a Wayne Rollins fence around the entire campus. You come in, and there is Wayne Rollins,” said Dr. Gloria Shatto, president of Berry College, where Wayne made one of the last and most powerful speeches of his career. “More than one hundred students each year receive O. Wayne Rollins Work Awards. His presence is felt. He loved the work program and he had a lot of common sense about what schools should be doing today.

“And I think Mr. Rollins would be very proud of what’s happened at Berry. Berry has been recognized by *U.S. News and World Report* as among the top ten liberal arts colleges in the South since 1985. He always cared that we had special outreach programs for low-income students. For the past two years, Berry has been recognized as one of the hundred best college buys in the nation. And this year, we had our first Rhodes Scholar, one out of thirty-two students from around the nation.”



Randall always argued that his dad was “like a young fellow,” like someone you might meet on a college campus. “Dad was on the leading edge. He was not like an older individual. For his age, he was a very young person. We had some wonderful times. He was just a sport. You could load him up and take him anywhere! I just miss that. I just miss Dad.”

Which is why, perhaps, on a September day in 1993, at the Nance-Rollins Family Reunion in Smith Chapel, everyone still misses Wayne Rollins. He was the family’s patriarch, its moral and ethical center, its generous and giving spirit, its guiding light. He was proud of where he came from, and everyone in Tunnel Hill was proud of how far he had traveled. And through hard work and vision, he had created a life for himself and his family that was far away from the community of Smith Chapel, and yet still very close to his heart. Because wherever he went, O. Wayne Rollins told everyone who would listen the stories of Smith Chapel — of Roxie and Emma and John, of Claudia and Henry, of two brothers named Wayne and John, of two families who grew up just one farm apart.

When the dark clouds cover the sky and the rain begins, the 1993 family reunion ends quickly. Photograph albums are hurriedly packed in boxes. Relatives scatter to cars and to the family bus. But Gary and Randall, a few children and grandchildren and several cousins run quickly to the tent, where the panels of family history must be dismantled and packed away into boxes before they are drenched. At first, no one seems to know exactly what to do. But after a few harried moments, the men and women working under the tent find a pace to their packing, a place for each panel, a rhythm to the taking down and the putting away.

And for a while, the sons of O. Wayne Rollins work in silence, packing up the story of their family’s history at the very place where it all began.

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to

*O. Wayne Rollins:  
An Authorized  
Biography*



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