

Lathrop, Virginia Terrell ^[1]

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by Philip A. Walker, 1991

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Virginia Terrell Lathrop, author, journalist, and longtime member of the governing boards of The University of North Carolina ^[2], was born in Raleigh ^[3], the daughter of George Sumter and Lovie Park Terrell. She attended public schools in Raleigh, along with her brothers Benjamin Park and Franklin Sidney, and received her higher education at the North Carolina College for Women ^[4], from which she was graduated with a B.A. degree in 1923. President of the student body in her senior year, she returned in 1937 to establish the College News Bureau of which she was director until 1941. In 1966 she was chairman of the search committee to find a new chancellor for the institution and in the same year was awarded the honorary L.H.D. degree at commencement ceremonies.

During the 1920s Virginia Terrell pursued a career as a newspaperwoman, working as reporter and feature writer for the Raleigh Times ^[5], the Raleigh News and Observer ^[6], the London Daily Express, the Paris edition of the New York Herald, the New York Evening Post, and the Asheville Citizen ^[7]. In 1928 she married Albert Henry Lathrop, a civil engineer, and they became the parents of a son, George Terrell Lathrop. She resumed her career for a brief time in 1944–45 as a program writer for radio station WISE in Asheville ^[8].

A resident of Asheville during the last decades of her life, she contributed her energy and talent to a wide range of community organizations and causes there. She served on the boards of the Asheville YWCA ^[9], the local chapters of the American Red Cross and the American Association of University Women ^[10], the Parent-Teacher Association ^[11], the Asheville Friends of the Library (president, 1941–50), Memorial Mission Hospital, and the Family Counseling Service. She was regional director for the Western North Carolina Division of Women's War Bond Committee (1942–44). In addition, she was a charter member of the North Carolina Presswomen's Association and a member of the Western North Carolina Historical Association, Delta Kappa Gamma, the Democratic ^[12] party, and the Episcopal ^[13] church.

The author of two books, Educate a Woman ^[14] and Bricks and People: A Walking Guide to the University at Greensboro ^[15], she also wrote numerous magazine and newspaper articles, pamphlets, book reviews, and radio scripts.

Virginia Lathrop made her greatest contribution to the state in her long years of outstanding service as a member of the governing boards of The University of North Carolina. In 1949 she was appointed to the board of trustees of the Consolidated University of North Carolina ^[16] and was named to its executive committee in 1953, a position she held until the major reorganization of higher education in the state in 1972 brought all sixteen state colleges and universities into the University of North Carolina system ^[16] under a single board of governors. She was an original member of the new board and continued to participate in its affairs until her death.

She was buried in Calvary churchyard, Fletcher.

References:

Asheville Citizen-Times, 9 Feb. 1958, 3 Dec. 1974.

Raleigh News and Observer, 3 Dec. 1974.

University of North Carolina at Greensboro, *Alumni News* 63 (Winter 1975).

Additional Resources:

Finding Aid for Virginia Terrell Lathrop Papers:

<http://library.uncg.edu/info/depts/scua/collections/manuscripts/html/Mss045.htm> ^[17]

Virginia Terrell Lathrop in WorldCat: https://www.worldcat.org/search?q=au%3ALathrop%2C+Virginia+Terrell%2C&qt=hot_author ^[18]

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