

Cone, Laura Weil ^[1]

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by Gladys Avery Tillett, 1979

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Laura Weil Cone, civic leader and humanitarian, was born in Wilmington, the daughter of Solomon Weil and Ella Fishblatt. Solomon Weil, a graduate of [The University of North Carolina](#) ^[2], was a lawyer who practiced in Wilmington and later in New York City. Laura attended public school in [Wilmington](#) ^[3] and prepared for college at Dana Hall, Wellesley, Mass. After the death of Solomon Weil, his family returned to Wilmington. In 1907, Laura Weil entered the [North Carolina State Normal and Industrial School](#) ^[4] as a sophomore. Outstanding academically and in every phase of college life, she was graduated in 1910 with honors, serving as permanent president of her class. She taught in high school in Wilmington in 1911–12 and then returned to Greensboro, where she resided the rest of her life. Her first marriage was to David Stern, a lawyer. After his death, she married Julius W. Cone, president of the Cone Export Commission Company (a division of Cone Mills).

As a courageous civic leader, Laura Weil Cone exerted great influence in her community throughout her life. At the time of her death the *Greensboro Record* paid her tribute, saying that she was "a volunteer in many a community cause, and a civic worker who put her strength, her energies and philanthropy at the service of her community and its people, rich or poor, black or white."

It was said at the time of her death that she had brought to the halls of education "a clear and precise intelligence, a broad compassion and hard nosed judgment." These rare talents she applied for twenty-two years as a member of the board of trustees of The University of North Carolina, as a member of its executive committee from 1934 until 1953, and as one of the chief builders of [The Consolidated University of North Carolina](#) ^[5]. She was an active participant in the progress of Women's College, and repeatedly the college honored her service. Elliott Hall, the student union building, is in some measure a memorial to her, because it was made possible by her gifts and those of the Cone family. A high-rise dormitory was named in her honor and a portrait, presented by her daughter, Mrs. Edward Loewenstein, hangs in its halls. She served for nearly thirty years as a member of the board of [Bennett College](#) ^[6]; in 1961 a residence hall on its campus was dedicated in her honor. She made substantial contributions to Bennett College, and a library furnished with monies she contributed is named for her.

She was a member of the board of trustees of the Moses Cone Memorial Hospital where she died at the age of eighty-one after an illness of two weeks. She was survived by her daughter; a son, Edward T., a professor at [Princeton University](#) ^[7]; and three grandchildren, F. Sand Hetherington, Laura Loewenstein Freedlander, and Jane Loewenstein Delisle.

References:

Alumni News of The University of North Carolina–Greensboro.

Mrs. Edward Loewenstein, personal contact.

Additional Resources:

Timeline of UNC-G: <http://library.uncg.edu/info/depts/scua/exhibits/timeline/pages/1967.htm> ^[8]

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Origin - location:

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[University of North Carolina at Greensboro](#) ^[14]

From:

[Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press.](#) ^[15]

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