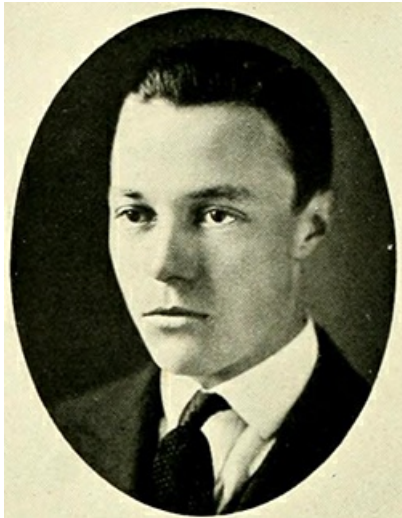


Ruffin, William Haywood ^[1]

Ruffin, William Haywood

by William S. Powell, 1994

8 Feb. 1899–28 Feb. 1988



Photograph of William Ruffin Haywood from his 1921 college yearbook. Image from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

^[2]William Haywood Ruffin, textile ^[3] manufacturing executive, was born in Louisburg, the son of William Haywood and Sally Johnson White Ruffin. He attended Porter Military Academy in Charleston, S.C., and was graduated from The University of North Carolina ^[4] in 1921. During World War I ^[5] he enlisted in the Students Army Training Corps and was in officer training school when the war ended. Nevertheless, he was commissioned second lieutenant in the reserve.

Ruffin's lifelong career with Erwin Mills ^[6] in Durham ^[7] began almost immediately after his university graduation in 1921. He spent the first few years working at various places in the mill to learn every phase of textile production, beginning with weaving. Moving into administration in 1923, he became assistant to the secretary and treasurer and worked closely with William A. Erwin ^[8], cofounder of the mills. He was promoted to secretary and assistant treasurer in 1941 and to vice-president and treasurer in 1942. In 1948 he became president and treasurer.

Even after Erwin Mills were merged with Burlington Industries ^[9], they retained their original name, and although Ruffin became a vice-president of the new firm, he continued as president and chairman of the board of directors of Erwin Mills. Based on the 1892 foundations laid by William Erwin and Benjamin N. Duke ^[10], the Erwin Mills grew to eight plants, seven in North Carolina and one in Mississippi.

Ruffin served on the board or was a director of such firms as Wachovia Bank and Trust Company ^[11], General Telephone of the South East, and the Durham and Southern Railway ^[12] and was a member of the Durham board of Woodward, Baldwin, and Company of New York City. He was president of the North Carolina Cotton Manufacturers Association ^[13], the North Carolina Industrial Council, the National Association of Manufacturers (the first native southerner to hold that post), and others. A member of the Episcopal church ^[14], he also held numerous public offices at the local and state levels.

In 1929 he married Josephine Craige Klutz of Salisbury, and they became the parents of two sons and a daughter: William H., Jr., Josephine B. (Adamson), and Burton Craige, who died at age twenty-one.

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"William Haywood Ruffin, Jr." *Yackety Yack*. Buffalo, N.Y.: Baker, Jones, Hausauer, Inc. 1921. 98. <http://library.digitalnc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/yearbooks/id/546> ^[2] (accessed January 28, 2013).

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