



**Wednesday, April 17, 2019**

Mrs. Clara Mims Walker, the eldest of 12 children, recalled that her father, the late Lee M. Mims, sold five acres of the family's hill farm for \$52 to start her education at Normal Teachers College (as Northwestern State University was then called) back in 1918.



Mrs. Clara Mims Walker

She was determined and received her teacher's certificate after attending only a brief period. She accepted a job at the Lambertown School near Shamrock where she worked for \$60 per month and saved enough money to not only return to college, but to bring her sister Gertie along as well. Afterward, Gertie passed the state exam and the next fall found both sisters teaching.

By the following summer, the two sisters had saved enough money to return to college and take along their eldest brother. He, too, passed the state exam and began teaching. Thus the process continued until 10 of the family attended college, nine of whom received degrees.

Clara continued teaching until 1922 when she married Joe Walker and began teaching in Sabine Parish. There she became Supervisor of Adult Education for the Federal Government. She returned to Natchitoches Parish in 1943 and retired in 1960.

Two of the Mims brothers were outstanding high school principals in Lake Charles. W. C. Mims received his Bachelor's Degree from Northwestern in 1938, his Master's from Louisiana State University and his Doctorate from McNeese State University. He was a principal for 19 years, serving at Marion High School. He then went on to be Director of Elementary Education for the State of Louisiana. He also taught Education at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, AR. He married the former Annice Jones, who received her degree from NSU in 1940, and they had three children Judy, Richard and Beth, all of whom became teachers.



Mr. W. C. Mims

The other brother, John J., served the public school system for 38 years, the last 19 as principal at LaGrange High School in Lake Charles. He retired in 1972 and then worked eight years in the Education Center at Fort Polk. He married the former Alma Williams of Hornbeck, who was graduated from NSU in 1939. He completed his bachelor's degree in business administration in 1940. John died in November 1989 and the LaGrange High School Football Stadium was named in his honor in 1990. John and Alma's two children Donna and Charles were educators. Donna taught at Barb High School in Lake Charles and Charles earned his doctor's degree from the University of Texas and taught at Stephen F. Austin and later at the University of Georgia.

Miss Gertie Mims, who was second in line, passed away in 1947 while a member of the faculty at Southeastern Louisiana College. She completed her degree at Northwestern in 1923 and held several important teaching positions during her 24 years of service.



Mrs. Ruby Mims Cushing received her B.A. degree at NSU in 1935 and her M.A. from Southwestern Texas Teachers College in San Marcos, TX in 1945. She taught three years in Sabine Parish. After she and husband Dan moved to Texas, she taught at Skidmore, afterward moving to San Antonio in 1941 where she taught until retirement in 1966.

Mrs. Cushing lived with daughter Sally Barber for 20 years. She wanted to "make sure her grandchildren got a proper education." When the last was graduated from high school, she said her "job was done" and moved into a retirement community with her teacher friends. Her sister Irene joined her a couple of years later. Ruby died in 1995 at the age of 85.

Mrs. Ruby Mims Cushing

Irene Mims McCain received her B.A. from NSU in 1933 with a major in Math-Science. She received her Master's of Science Degree in Mathematics and Elementary Education from Texas. McCain often tutored undergraduate and graduate mathematics students. She died in 1999 at the age of 84 having lived a long, happy and meaningful life.

Mary Mims Cooper received her degree from Northwestern in 1936. She received her M.A. from Peabody College for Teachers in Nashville, TN. Her first teaching job was at Ragley, where she met and married Ralph Cooper. She taught in the Joplin, MO school until they started having children. After the kids were older, the family moved back to Ragley where she completed her teaching career there and at DeRidder. She passed away in December 1983.



Mrs. Mary Mims Cooper



Mr. Henry A. Mims

Henry A. Mims received a two-year diploma from Normal in 1929 and his bachelor's degree in 1931. His wife, the former Vernice Cutrer, receive her two-year diploma in 1924. They both earned their master's degrees from Stephen F. Austin. He served as a principal, coach and teacher in Sabine Parish Schools until his retirement in 1968. Their daughter Marilyn Mims Williams completed her Bachelor's at Northwestern and taught in Sabine Parish for a brief time before being employed by the Office of Family Services in 1957. She died in 1982.

Their son Ted Mims completed his Bachelor's and Master's degrees and plus 30 hours at Northwestern. In addition, he completed a Master's at LSU and a Ph. D. at the University of North Texas. His teaching and educational administrator career spanned 50 years which included teaching at the secondary and collegiate levels. He recently retired as head of the Computer Science Department at the University of Illinois at Springfield, IL.



Dr. Ted "Bussy" Mims

Jimmie Rae Mims Rains was graduated from Northwestern and received a B.A. from Our Lady of the Lake College in San Antonio in May 1960. In the course of completing her degree requirements, she took several correspondence courses from

Sul Ross State College in Alpine, TX. Over her career she was a librarian for the San Antonio Public Library, librarian at Highland High School in San Antonio and also at the Schertz-Cibolo School District. She is deceased.



Cecil C. Mims attended Northwestern State University prior to entering the ministry. He was a pastor at the Methodist Church in Trout, TX.

Although two other brothers, Herman E. and Roy Mims, did not attend Northwestern, they both had strong ties to the university. Roy's wife, the former Estel May Bell, received her bachelor's degree from Northwestern in 1940.



Mrs. Jimmie Rae Mims Rains

Mr. Cecil C. Mims

Herman married Blanche Lea Rains on Nov. 24, 1934 in Marthaville, and one of their four daughters, Mollie, studied nursing at Northwestern. The couple's oldest daughter Billie Joyce Mims was born in Marthaville in 1935.

Herman died in 1989 and Blanche in 1993.

Billie attended grades 1-7 in Marthaville after which the family moved to Jasper, TX. She graduated from Texas Women's University in 1959. She taught Home Economics in Carthage, TX for three years. She spent six years in Europe teaching for the Department of Defense schools in Paris and Toul, France. She also taught in Wiesbaden, Germany and Naples, Italy. She completed her teaching career in San Antonio in 1991, retired back to Jasper and died in 2018.

Billie's sisters Mollie and Jennie also attended grade school at Marthaville. Margaret was born in Jasper and all four girls graduated from high school there.

Mollie graduated from Northwestern in 1960 and retired after teaching Health Occupations and Biology for 21 years. Two of her children and one grandchild are currently working in the field of education. Mollie died in 2018.

The Mims legacy is truly an amazing and inspiring story. It is fascinating to trace how many of the Mims family went to college and graduated, and how many of their kids have also gone to college and graduated, and how many had careers in education. Now it is wonderful to see the tradition continue with the great-grandchildren.

It should serve as a great example to young people today that higher education is certainly within reach for all with the right amount of determination and commitment.