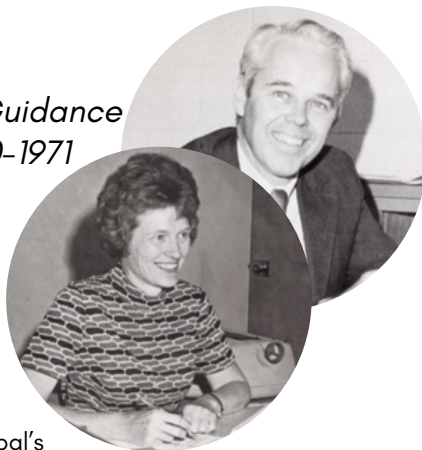


Life Legacy Award

Ted and Mary Jane Graves, Guidance Counselor and Registrar, 1970–1971

Ted and Mary Jane Graves served at Georgia-Cumberland Academy during the 1970–1971 school year, bringing with them a spirit of dedication that far outlasted their brief tenure. Ted worked as guidance counselor and taught youth guidance and American history, while Mary Jane served as registrar and principal's secretary. Their impact on students and colleagues was immediate and enduring.



Married on August 9, 1950, Ted and Mary Jane began a partnership that would span nearly six decades. Ted entered the Seventh-day Adventist ministry in 1953, first as a pastor and later as youth director in both the Georgia-Cumberland and Rocky Mountain Conferences. His passion for mentoring young people eventually led him into education, where he felt he could make the most meaningful difference.

When the Graves family arrived at GCA in 1970, Ted's previous work in the Georgia-Cumberland Conference helped him connect quickly with students. His approachable nature and genuine interest in young people made him a trusted mentor from the start. Mary Jane's warmth and efficiency in the registrar's office made her equally beloved.

Former students recall Ted as a compassionate, fatherly figure who always made time to listen. Dave Everts, '71, remembers him as "kind, compassionate, and wise . . . non-judgmental and able to relate to students on our level."

Cheryl McGhee Rogers, '71, who worked for Mary Jane in the registrar's office, remembers her as "a joy to work for . . . always with a sweet smile" and someone who made a lasting positive impact on her life at GCA.

Elder Ted Graves passed away on January 3, 2009, after a courageous battle with cancer. Mary Jane, now 97, continues to live in the home she and Ted shared near Mount Pisgah Academy and remains in remarkably good health.

The Graves' legacy is one of kindness, wisdom, and unwavering dedication. Their lives remind us that mentorship often happens in the quiet moments through listening, encouragement, and steadfast presence. For these reasons, the Class of 1971 has chosen Ted and Mary Jane Graves as their recipients of the Life Legacy Award.