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June 4, 2014

Dr. Garland Allen's Life Filled with Academic and Athletic Successes

BOILING SPRINGS – Gardner-Webb University Professor Emeritus, Athletics Hall of Famer and two-time National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) National Golf Coach of the Year Dr. Garland Allen passed away Tuesday, June 3 at the age of 91.

Allen began his tenure at Gardner-Webb in 1961 when the institution was still a junior college. During his first year, he served as an academic counselor. He taught history in 1961 and 1962 and served as the acting chairman of the religion department from 1962-64. He began his 27-year golf coaching career in 1962, a post he maintained until his retirement from the University in 1989.

While his achievements in Gardner-Webb athletics were substantial, his commitment to higher education was also monumental. Born in Tuckerman, Ark., Allen was the son of a self-taught farmer and veterinarian. Without the benefit of a traditional classroom, his father studied books and went to Little Rock, Ark., where he took and passed the Arkansas State Veterinarian Examination.

At just 16 years old, his call into ministry was apparent, and he was ordained as a Baptist preacher. Although he graduated with a teaching degree from Ouachita College (Arkadelphia, Ark.) in 1944, he enrolled in Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., where he met his wife, Mary Evelyn Garrison, who was a native of Lincolnton, N.C. There, he also added to his already impressive education with a Bachelor of Divinity degree plus his master's degree. He continued on to earn a Doctorate in Church History there, where he minored in Old Testament and Historical Theology.

Allen had several teaching experiences prior to arriving at Gardner-Webb College. In addition to teaching at Southern Baptist Junior College—now Williams College—in Walnut Ridge, Ark., he also taught English and history in Millington Public High School near Memphis, Tenn. While living in that area, he attended Memphis State University and earned a Master of Arts in European History.

His tenure at Gardner-Webb began in 1961 and continued beyond his retirement through participation in the Bulldog Club. Allen once said personal relationships with both students and faculty through the years have brought him much satisfaction and enjoyment. He firmly

believed the reason for his golf teams' success was personal relationships among the players, a quality he stressed.

The legendary Allen set the bar very high during his tenure as Gardner-Webb's head golf coach, directing the program to nine appearances in the NAIA National Tournament.

The crowning moment came during a two-season stretch in the 1970s—with Gardner-Webb capturing NAIA National Championships in 1976 and again in 1977.

The Bulldogs held off rival Elon (N.C.) in 1976, firing a score of 1193 at the Alamance Country Club in Burlington, N.C., to beat the Fighting Christians by one stroke. The following season, Gardner-Webb cruised to a 10-stroke win over Sam Houston State, shooting an 1190 at the Bay Valley Country Club in Bay City, Mich.

Allen was honored as NAIA Coach of the Year in 1976 and 1977, and was inducted into the Gardner-Webb Athletics Hall of Fame on Nov. 6, 1993. Also a professor emeritus of religion and history, Allen retired from Gardner-Webb in 1989.

Soon after, the Garland H. Allen Golf Scholarship was established by the Gardner-Webb Bulldog Club in his honor.

A testament to Allen's prowess as a coach, his golfers were named NAIA All-America nine times. Five of his former golfers – Terry Florence (1998), Jimmy Franklin (2000), Wayne Myers (2004), Steve Sherman (2001) and Zim Zimmerman (1991) – joined Allen in the Gardner-Webb Athletics Hall of Fame.

In 1990, he was named *Professor Emeritus*, the year after he retired from Gardner-Webb. "I never regretted being in education—never for a minute," he once shared. "This is a challenging time. One of the reasons I managed to stay young was because of continuing my association with like-minded people who are genuinely dedicated to the welfare of the students."

Allen leaves behind his wife of 65 years, Evelyn Garrison Allen; two children Susan and William Henry; and multiple grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The couple has resided in Boiling Springs for more than a half-century and have served actively at Boiling Springs Baptist Church.

Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University's purpose is to advance the Kingdom of God through Christian higher education by preparing graduates for professional and personal success, instilling in them a deep commitment to service and leadership, and equipping them for well-rounded lives of lasting impact, Pro Deo et Humanitate (For God and Humanity).