

WILLIAM ROE(BILL) BREWSTER,JR. 3rd President GMA 1st President Woodward Academy

Was born November 5, 1921, at Ft McPherson, Georgia. He was the oldest child of Col William Roe and Mildred Brewster, Sr. and the Grandson of Col John Charles and Lucile Woodward.

Bill was the product of influences from his Father and Grandfather. He began his education at GMA in 1920 in the 2nd grade when the Junior School opened. He graduated at the age of 15 but remained an extra year to study in the GMA West Point Annapolis preparatory post graduate course as he was too young to be accepted to any US Service Academies.

He qualified to go to the U S Naval Academy at 17 and graduated in the Class of 1942 as an Ensign. He was immediately assigned duty to a WWI Destroyer in the Atlantic Ocean during WWII. His duties included torpedo officer, gunnery officer, and Navigator experiencing a great deal of combat which upgraded him to the rank of Lieutenant.

He was awarded the Presidential Citation and Silver Star upon completion of what was considered a suicide mission taking his ship through a mine field and beaching the ship on Safi in French North Africa to unload combat troops. Bill's next duty was in the Pacific Ocean on a new Destroyer where he was awarded the Bronze Star for combat near Okinawa. He earned his wings as a Naval Aviator before he resigned from active duty at the end of WWII with the rank of Commander. He continued service in the Naval Reserves. Bill Brewster was a decorated Naval officer at the end of WWII. When the Korean War broke out, he went back on active duty in the Navy recruiting and training Naval Intelligence Officers in Atlanta. Two years later, he returned to GMA as the school's Superintendent.

Bill Brewster ended his Naval service after 20 years having earned the rank of US Navy Captain. While GMA was still a military school, he proudly wore his Naval uniform with his ribbons, medals, and what was referred to as the "scrambled eggs" on the bill of his hat which designated that he was

an officer. He was addressed as “Captain Brewster” even after GMA became Woodward Academy.

Bill married Kitty in 1945 and soon they moved to College Park where he taught math, science, aeronautics, and serve as the Dean of Students at GMA.

A NEW ERA of CHANGE began for GMA when he became President in 1961. Not only having experience as a teacher and an administrator, he also possessed skills as a businessman, an innovator, and a developer. He was truly a Progressive Educator who created a competitive college preparatory institution out of what had existed as a disciplinary military school for 60 years.

The most significant and important change was in 1964. He had the foresight to realize that military schools had become less popular with the sentiments against the Viet Nam War. Bill recommended to the Governing Board that the military program be discontinued, and girls be admitted. There were no private schools in the area for females. This proposal did not have the full support of the Board, many alumni, and not his father. With the help of his mother Mildred, they convinced a majority of members of the Board as well as his father Col Brewster that his idea would make the school competitive with other private schools in Atlanta and attract more qualified academic students. THE BOARD VOTED IN FAVOR OF his proposal which changed the destiny of the school. He asked that the school's name be changed to WOODWARD ACADEMY in honor of its FOUNDERS. This was a bold move on his part to go against the history of the school and his heritage. This change was not popular with some Board Members (who resigned), some alumni as well as some of the current cadet students.

After Bill was elected President of GMA, he REORGANIZED his administration with many current and capable employees giving them leadership positions as department heads. He hired new qualified people that shared his visions of improving and modernizing the school and its curriculum.

Knowing that GMA had financial struggled during its first 60 years, Bill's focus was to create an endowment and raise funds to improve the existing buildings as well as to build new modern buildings. He convinced the Governing Board that the tuition needed to be increased to provide more operating money. In 1962 He launched the first fund-raising campaign with a goal of \$ 1 1/2 million which would be used for continued improvement of the school. A second \$4 million drive took place in 1974. Both campaigns reached their goals.

He established a salary scale for the employees and teachers with merit increases to attract exceptional teachers. He also implemented scholarships to create academic excellence.

On May 27,1968, the Governing Board approved Bill's recommendation to implement a non-discriminatory admissions policy not based on race or religion to the Now Woodward Academy. The school was integrated in the fall of 1971.

Captain Brewster had shown his skills as a businessman, innovator, and fund raiser. He Now became the Developer. He renovated and modernized most of the buildings that existed, tore down old structures that had out served their purpose, and built over 20 new projects, new classrooms, faculty apartments, updated facilities and basically revitalized the College Park campus and added a satellite elementary school in Riverdale, Georgia as well as a 140 Apartment complex called Rugby Valley.

Captain Brewster had accomplished all his dreams and goals for our school. He was tired and young enough to take on new challenges. He left Woodward at the age of 58 with great emotions. He had earned a profound reputation in the Private School community and was contacted by Sea Pines Academy on Hilton Head Island and asked to work there for two years to save their school from debt. He was not afraid of challenges and was able to make their school solvent. Planning to enjoy his retirement on Jekyll Island, he was next contacted by one of my Classmates from GMA '65 asking him to do the same job for Frederica Academy on St Simons Island. Both schools exist now because of his administrative skills.

My Dad was small in stature compared to his Father or Grandfather but had a BIG HEART. His first love was his family, this school, and the Navy. He was extremely handsome man, had a wonderful sense of humor and dry wit, a true people person, and a Southern Gentleman who earned the respect of all that knew or met him. He was designated as the last President of GMA but the First President of Woodward which was his greatest honor. He died on August 26,2012 at the age of 90.

Kathryn KITTY BREWSTER was instrumental in helping Bill develop the Academy. She was his greatest advocate and supporter throughout his life. She had many responsibilities when she became the First Lady of the school. She oversaw ordering and distributing all the books and school supplies each year through the bookstore. Kitty took considerable pride in making the campus beautiful and attractive. She supervised the landscape crews and approved new projects performed by them especially on new construction. She worked with the Food Service checking the weekly menus to make sure they were not repetitive and were well balanced. She planned the menus and hosted all the formal dinners for special visitors and prospective donors for Bill's fund raising and building campaigns. She continued the roll as the school's hostess overseeing social events and cadet dances. She was highly creative and helped to make tasteful decisions in decorating new construction with interior colors, furniture, and decor when buildings were completed. She was a beautiful woman who accompanied Bill to major events. They were a handsome couple. Kitty and Bill together remade GMA into Woodward Academy.