

Dr. Gabriel Francis Marion Cummings (1861-1910)

Dr. Gabriel Francis Marion Cummings was born in Cummingsville, Van Buren County, Tennessee on May 4, 1861 to parents Gabriel Marion Cummings and Martha Lenora Morgan Cummings. He came to Rockmart in the late 1880's to provide medical care for the community. Dr. Cummings arrived in Polk County with deep roots already established in the area. His mother's parents were Joseph Dossett Morgan and Martha Ann Payne Morgan. Although they were deceased and buried in the Van Wert Cemetery prior to Dr. Cummings' arrival, they had settled in the area before 1840. His grandfather farmed and was a member of the large Morgan family, early settlers in the Paulding County, later Polk County, area.

Dr. Cummings studied medicine in Van Buren, Tennessee under his maternal uncle, Dr. Isaac Clinton Morgan. Interestingly Dr. Morgan, from the Polk County, Georgia area ended up spending his medical career in Dr. Cummings' home county of Van Buren County, Tennessee while Dr. Cummings, a native Tennessean spent his career in Dr. Morgan's home county, Polk County, Georgia.

Dr. Cummings graduated from the Atlanta Medical College with honors and for a brief time returned home to Cummingsville, Tennessee to practice before coming to Rockmart.

Coming to Rockmart as an eligible bachelor, that status changed when he met and married a local schoolteacher, Mollie Nettles. They would become the parents of seven children the youngest of which was a set of twins, David Lawrence and Annie Laurie Cummings. David Lawrence remained in Rockmart throughout his life and was well known in local circles by his nickname "Punch". Annie married Thomas Randall and remained in the Rockmart area her entire life also. She will be remembered as a teacher at both Aragon Elementary School and Goodyear Elementary School where she was known affectionately as "Miss Randall" by second graders.

Dr. Cummings' involvement in the community went beyond his medical practice. He was a Methodist, Mason and a chairman of the Polk County Democratic Executive Committee.

Dr. Cummings practiced medicine in Rockmart until his death in 1910. He and his wife share a double marker in Rose Hill Cemetery. Six of their seven children are buried nearby with their spouses. Myrtle Minora, Woodson Victor, William Marion, Gabriel Denny, David Lawrence and Annie Laurie are all buried in Rose Hill. Mattie Lee, the first born who died as a toddler is buried in the Cummingsville cemetery in Tennessee. Dr. Cummings was a valued and prominent citizen of Rockmart and left a legacy of subsequent family members who also served the community well.

We celebrate Dr. G. F. M. Cummings' life and contributions as Rockmart marks 150 years.

Sources: "Rockmart Centennial Magazine", 1972

"The Heritage of Polk County, GA 1851-2000", 2000

"Polk County, Georgia, The First One Hundred Years", 2012

Dr. Thomas Edward Cummings (1931-1993)

Dr. Thomas Edward Cummings followed in his grandfather's footsteps and became a physician. Raised in Rockmart, he was the son of David Lawrence (Punch) Cummings and Cloeathe Lee Cummings. He graduated from Rockmart High School in 1948 serving the class a Vice-President. Advancing to Emory University, he graduated and entered Emory University School of Medicine graduating in 1956. His internship and residency were served at Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta. Military service followed in the United States Navy as a Lieutenant Commander aboard both the USS F.D.R. and the USS Saratoga.

In 1961, thirteen years after leaving Rockmart as a newly minted high school graduate, Dr. Cummings returned to the community and began his medical practice. In 1966, Dr. John Atha joined the practice. Their partnership continued until Dr. Cummings' death.

Besides practicing medicine and becoming a member of various Medical Associations, he also served the community as a member of the School Board. Like his grandfather, he was active in the Methodist Church serving as Chairman of the Trustees Official Board. A family man, he and his wife, Joan were the parents of three daughters.

Dr. Cummings died in Rockmart on August 26, 1993 after a bout with cancer ending thirty-two years of medical practice. His friend and partner, Dr. John Atha delivered the eulogy at his funeral service.

We remember with gratitude Dr. Cummings' service to the community as we celebrate the city's 150 years.

Sources: "Rockmart Centennial Magazine, 1972

Findagrave.com, obituary

"The Yellow Jacket", 1948

William F. (Bill) Cummings (1929-2014)

Another grandson of Dr. Gabriel Cummings who served the local community well was Bill Cummings. Bill was raised in Rockmart and was the son of David Lawrence (Punch) Cummings and Cloreathe Lee Cummings. But unlike his brother, Dr. T. E. Cummings, he chose education as a career path rather than medicine. He retired after thirty years of teaching in the local Polk County School District. Beyond the local level, he twice served as President of the Georgia Association of Educators, a statewide organization. He also served his alma mater, the University of West Georgia, as a member of its Board of Trustees for twelve years.

In addition to his education career, Bill served twenty-six years as the State Representative in the Georgia House of Representatives representing our area. During that tenure he served as Chairman of the Retirement Committee and as a member of the powerful Ways and Means Committee as well as the Appropriations Committee. To honor that service, a portion of Highway 101 between Rockmart and Rome was designated as the "Bill Cummings Highway" after his death.

Bill was a member and former elder in the Rockmart Church of Christ. He was married to Jenna Lee Wilson Cummings also a long-time educator in the Polk School District.

Both Bill and Jenna Lee died in 2014. Plans are to have their ashes interred in Rose Hill Cemetery at a future date.

We remember Bill and Jenna Lee Cummings as the city celebrates 150 years.

Source: Obituary, Alvis Miller and Son Funeral Home website.

Compiled by: Rockmart Sesquicentennial 2002
Rose Hill Cemetery Tour Committee