



W. R. BANKS <sup>7</sup>

W. R. BANKS OUR PRINCIPAL  
Pioneer Leader and Educator  
in Texas

Willette Rutherford Banks was born in the Northeast Georgia hill town of Hartwell Aug. 8, 1881, the son of J. M. and Laura Banks. He overcame many handicaps to become a great center for the Atlanta University football team, a varsity debater, a leader in the Y.M.C.A. and editor of the college paper. His college ca-  
rrier was to give him the faithful and brilliant companion of his life, Glovinia Virginia Perry, and the supreme intellectual stimulation of studying with W.E.B. Dubois, who remained a life long friend and confidant.

His record and family contacts in the C.M.E. Church, 1909-1968, brought him the Presidency of Texas College in Tyler in May of 1915 where his brilliant talents as an administrator attracted national attention. Ten years later, Southern leaders in the Educational awakening suggested W. R. Banks to the President and Board of Directors of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas to be the seventh Principal of Prairie View A&M College.

Believing that Prairie View College must serve the State of Texas at the point of her greatest need, W. R. Banks worked tirelessly on many fronts to make his foundation contacts overcome the provincialism that might limit the opportunity of his people. He built eight capital buildings and a model farm, the Library still bearing his name; he built his staff with foundation scholarships; he got his college accredited by the Southern Association in Dec-

ember of 1934. Indeed Texas became his campus and every Negro "his" student. For 20 years he guided the destiny of Prairie View and potentially the State of Texas for Negroes, from 1926 to September, 1946, when he retired to a cottage which was to shelter his last years. After the death of his beloved wife in 1963, his retirement from the national stage became complete. The boards of many colleges including his Alma Mater, the quiet precincts of the foundations, the National meetings of the State Teachers and the Negro Land-Grant Colleges were to see the figure of this tall gaunt determined man no more. The quiet retreats of the aged were to serve as places of memory and rest. But death is gentler than life. Early in the morning of Oct. 16, 1969, in his eighty-eighth year, Willette Rutherford Banks was called to his maker.

Those who cherish his memory and survive the touch of his life are legion. He left behind two brothers and a sister, A. J. Banks of Washington, D.C.; Jabe Banks of Philadelphia, Pa., and Mrs. Martha Ann Craft, of Hartwell, Ga. a host of other relatives, and devoted nephew, Inman White of Palestine, a graduate of Prairie View. His hand is upon Prairie View, and Texas College, and Fort Valley and Kowaliga - and they will stand silent and bereft in their sorrow.

According to the 22nd Amendment to the Constitution, 10 years is the statutory limit of time any person can serve as president.

*R. D. City News Oct. 23, 1969*



## W. R. Banks, Ex-Head Of Prairie View A&M, Dies

Funeral rites of Willette Rutherford Banks, Principal Emeritus, Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical College, Prairie View, Texas, were held at College Auditorium Sunday, Oct. 19, 1969 at 3 p.m. with interment at the Prairie View Memorial Park.

Program

Presiding: Dean G. L. Smith

### PRELUDE

SONG: "Give Me Jesus". . . . . Betty Grant

THE HOLY SCRIPTURE. . . . . The Rev. W. Van Johnson

INVOCATION. . . . . The Rev. Lee C. Phillip

OBITUARY. . . . . Dr. A. L. Campbell

### STATEMENTS-

President A. I. Thomas, Prairie View A&M College

Dr. E. B. Evans, President Emeritus, Past President

Mr. Thomas Gray, The Alumni Association

Mr. O. J. Thomas, "Mr. Banks, a man of the People, Faculty, and Community"

SONG: "Life is Like a Mountain Railroad" . . . Gladstone Adderley

EULOGY. . . . . The Rev. I. B. Loud

Pastor, St. Paul United Methodist Church  
Dallas, Texas

### POSTLUDE

### HONORARY PALLBEARERS

DR. A. I. THOMAS

DR. BENJAMIN MAYS

DR. E. B. EVANS

DR. P. E. MATLOCK

DR. E. M. NORRIS

DR. H. A. BULLOCK

DR. H. D. PATTON

MR. L. A. POTTS

COL. WEST A. HAMILTON

MR. O. J. BAKER

MR. C. L. WILSON

MR. G. L. SMITH

MR. O. J. THOMAS

DR. ALLEN HANCOCK

MR. MACK HANNAH

DR. J. L. BROWN

### ACTIVE PALLBEARERS

PERSHING RIFLES

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The family gratefully acknowledges all condolences and expressions of sympathy.