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## Pillars Of Prairie View - John Milton Coruthers - 1929

Prairie View Agricultural And Mechanical College

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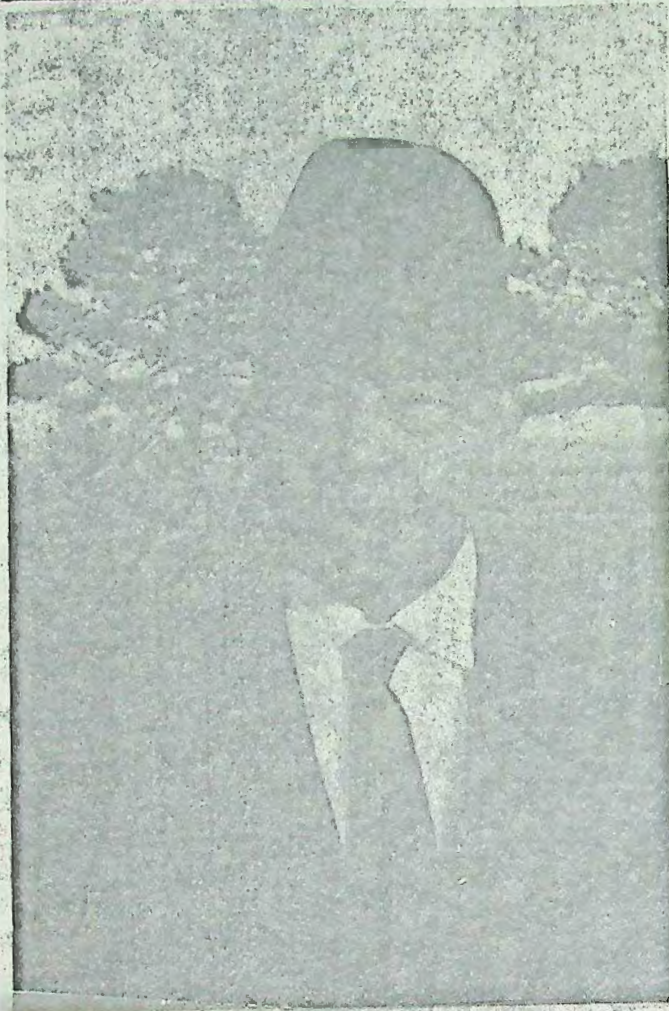
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## PILLARS of Prairie View



John Milton Coruthers was born, lived and worked on a farm in Bastrop County, Texas. When he was fifteen years of age his parents decided to sell their farm and move to San Antonio, Texas where there were better facilities for the children to attend school. After graduation from Douglass High School, in order to defray expenses of travel and tuition at college, he worked on the dining car over Southern Pacific Lines from San Antonio to El Paso, and return, during the summer months.

After entering school at Hampton Institute, Virginia, he decided to apply for work in order to help relieve his father financially since there were nine children in his family and six of them were girls. He worked in the school dairy, getting up at 4 a. m. in order to finish his work, shower, and attend classes on time. He made

good grades while working for his Bachelor's Degree.

Later he entered the University of Wisconsin where he succeeded in getting a fellowship and worked in the laboratory with dairy products--processing varieties of cheese and manufacturing ice cream---along with studies for his Master's Degree.

His first work as a teacher was at Southern University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. That was a significant meeting for Coruthers' future, as a former schoolmate at Hampton was Director of the Agricultural Department where he was to work. But meanwhile, a still more fateful association had its inception at Southern University. From Gloster, Mississippi had come a Secretary, Susie E. Norwood, in quest of a successful career as Secretary and Registrar. They were married June 30, 1929.

Later he accepted work as

Director of the Agricultural Department at A&M College, Pine Bluff, Arkansas. He secured leave of absence one summer and taught in the Regional School for Home Demonstration and Farm Agents, sponsored by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, at South Carolina State College. He returned to A&M College for the Winter Session, and the following summer was appointed Director of the Regional School for Home and Farm Agents at Pine Bluff, Arkansas.

During a commencement program while at Pine Bluff, an usher brought a note requesting Mr. Coruthers to come to the President's office immediately. He was introduced to a Rosenwald Representative, and was told that the Rosenwald Foundation was giving grants to several Land-Grant Colleges for training teachers in Agricultural Economics, and that he had been highly recommended for one of the scholarships. He chose to study at Cornell University and was later awarded the Ph. D. Degree.

Mrs. Coruthers' Educational Training was as follows:

Elementary School - Cuney Elementary School, San Antonio; High School-Douglass High School, San Antonio; Bachelor's Degree-Hampton Institute, Virginia; Master's Degree-University of Wisconsin, Madison; Ph. D. Degree-Cornell University, Ithaca, New York; Post Doctoral Work-University of California, Berkeley.

He said the years he spent as a student were very rewarding in many ways, and he is very grateful for the education and associations acquired while attending the various schools. When asked why he returned to school when he already had his Doctor's Degree, he said he felt that during this era the world is sorely in need of people who will think as well as calculate, and the new ideas and methods of teaching should go a long way towards producing alert and rare human beings who are also skilled in their special fields. It is evident that years spent in school contain some benefits which might not be fully understood until after leaving school.

His teaching experiences were four years at Southern University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana; eight years at A&M College, Pine Bluff, Arkansas; and thirty years at Prairie View College, Texas-- a total of Forty-two years of teaching College classes. He was retired August 31, 1967, after living with a decision he made at the age of fifteen. He said recently if he had his life to live over he would still be a school teacher.

When asked what he considered the best qualities for a good teacher, he said he agreed with Foy D. Kohler's quotation which he thought was good advice for everyone: "Be firm, be patient, be persistent, and be polite."