

JAMES H. CONE, SR.

James Cone was born on November 25, 1926 to William Earl & Pearl Cone in Newburg, Arkansas in Izard County. The youngest of five brothers and one sister, Cone graduated from Melbourne High School at 17 in 1944, and joined the Army Medical Corps. He was assigned to the Pacific theatre and served on troop ships for wounded soldiers throughout the war. Following the war, Mr. Cone was educated at Harding University and the University of Oklahoma's engineering school.

Mr. Cone's first job was with Roten Construction in Melbourne, Arkansas and he was the site superintendent for the then new Melbourne High School. He then spent several years in the construction industry working on a variety of commercial construction projects primarily as a superintendent.

Mr. Cone made the decision to found James H. Cone, Inc., with a loan for \$500 in working capital to start his new company. Ironically, the rest of the note was used to pay off an old partner's debts with the defunct construction company in which he had been a minority partner. He started the firm in a one room office located on 2nd street in downtown Little Rock.

The company's first project was an addition of a garage bay at the now W-R Glass company in Searcy. In the following months and years, Mr. Cone worked on a new Gymnasium for the Hickory Ridge school district, and a new manufacturing facility for Kraft Foods in Yellville.

Some of the earliest projects in Little Rock included the Ozark National Life building on University & Lee, the Walker Tennis Complex, the Giraffe House at the Little Rock Zoo, and several buildings at the Arkansas State Fairgrounds. Among Mr. Cone's first employees were Doyme Fowlkes and I.C. Jackson, which stayed with the company approximately 30 years until their retirement. In addition, several of the major construction firms in Arkansas today were founded by men Mr. Cone trained throughout the years.

Under his leadership, the company established strong relationships with business and community leaders throughout the state and built a wide range of prominent buildings including over 17 different projects for UAMS totaling over \$70 Million, over \$28 Million on 9 different projects for UCA, multiple projects for Harding University, over 50 banks across the state, the Arkansas Vietnam Veteran's Memorial, and the Arkansas Revenue Building.

As a devout Christian, faith was something which was at the center of Mr. Cone's life. He was a member of Pleasant Valley Church of Christ and served as a deacon, and as an elder for 30 years. In addition, Mr. Cone was a strong supporter of both mission work, and Christian education.

He served on the board of directors for World Christian Broadcasting, Southern Christian Home, Central Arkansas Christian School, Harding University, Ibaraki Christian College, and the Christian Chronicle.

Family was at the center of Mr. Cone's life as well. He was married to his wife, Bonnie (also a native of Izard County) in 1952, and they were married for almost 50 years. During that time, they had three children, Annette Herrington (husband Phil), Jimmy (wife Andee), and Maria Henry (husband Paul). In addition Mr. Cone is also survived by six grandchildren.

James Cone lived a life of Christian service in which he built a company around the principals of value, quality, and integrity. His lifelong commitment to these principals helped him found a company that is one of the pillars of the construction industry in Arkansas.