

# A Biography of A. Davis Ford, Our School Namesake



## A. Davis Ford

Astute businessman. Church philanthropist. Dedicated family man. Landscaper. Humble servant. All these roles characterize A. Davis Ford, long-time administrator with Conroe ISD, for whom Ford Elementary was named. A. Davis Ford served Conroe ISD for 24 years, until his retirement in 1977. During those years, he taught typing, bookkeeping, and commercial law in high school. The last 19 years of his association with the district, he served as its business manager. Though always quick to give credit to the three superintendents under whom he served, Ford's business acumen served the school district well.

Perhaps his ability and desire to most effectively and efficiently manage the district's financial resources for the benefits of students arose from his acquaintance with financial hardships during his youth. Davis' mother died when he was only four, leaving his father, at 34, to shoulder the parental responsibilities of raising four children alone during the depression years. Though their financial situation might best be described as "dirt poor," Davis' father persevered and saw all his children educated and functioning as responsible adults, taking their places in society.

Ford attended Sam Houston State University in Huntsville. Ford's relationship with the university continued well beyond his graduation. Grateful to the university for the opportunity to learn and develop the skills he would need in life, Ford helped establish the SHSU Alumni Association, even supporting it with a personal no-interest loan during a difficult period. In 1998 the alumni association recognized Ford and six others as "extraordinary" Friends of the University, crediting the individuals as living examples of the university motto—"The measure of a Life is its Service."

While attending SHSU, Ford met Wauline Robinson, a fellow student who would become his wife and helpmate for over 60 years. Together they raised three children, all of whom graduated from Conroe High School.

Seeing his father's struggles to raise his children alone during the country's depression years helped develop Ford's appreciation for family values. He often

said the he almost felt sorry for those who did not know his father and share with him his love of family, his high sense of duty and his near reverence of our country. He believed strongly that strong families are essential to strong communities and a strong nation.

Those lean years growing up also developing Ford's strong work ethic and an entrepreneurial spirit. To feed his own growing family, he at one time owned and managed a food market in Houston. He also worked at the Houston Ship Channel during the war years.

Ford's teaching career started in Pasadena, Texas. While working there, though, he remained in touch with friends in Conroe who ultimately helped him to seek a job with Conroe ISD and relocate to Conroe.

The retired Conroe educator was known for devoting his time and talents to helping others off the job as well. Recognized for his skills in landscaping around his own home, he willingly assisted others in his neighborhood who called upon him to help with their landscaping needs.

Feeling like he had been blessed throughout his lifetime, Ford also felt a great responsibility to share his financial resources with his church and others. Though never one to talk about his church philanthropy, he was known to lend his support beyond his own church to smaller churches of church missions that he heard were in need of some financial support.

His children would tell you that he was a man of few words. He was also a humble man, one always quick to share credit for his accomplishments with those for whom and with whom he worked with. Throughout his life, he was a man of his word. If he said he would do something, it was a good as done.

Ford's philosophy of life and service was reflected in comments he made at the ceremony announcing the name of Ford Elementary in his honor. "Perhaps everyone feels the he was born 'in the best of times' as Charles Dickens wrote, but I am so grateful that the Lord let me live during these good years when a man's word was his bond; when he aimed to be a good citizen; when he accepted his responsibility to the church, the school, the community, and his family."

Ford felt greatly honored by having a school named after him, often saying that a school with all its influence and potential is the highest monument for which a school person can be remembered.

A. Davis Ford lived until the age of 90, passing away in 2003.