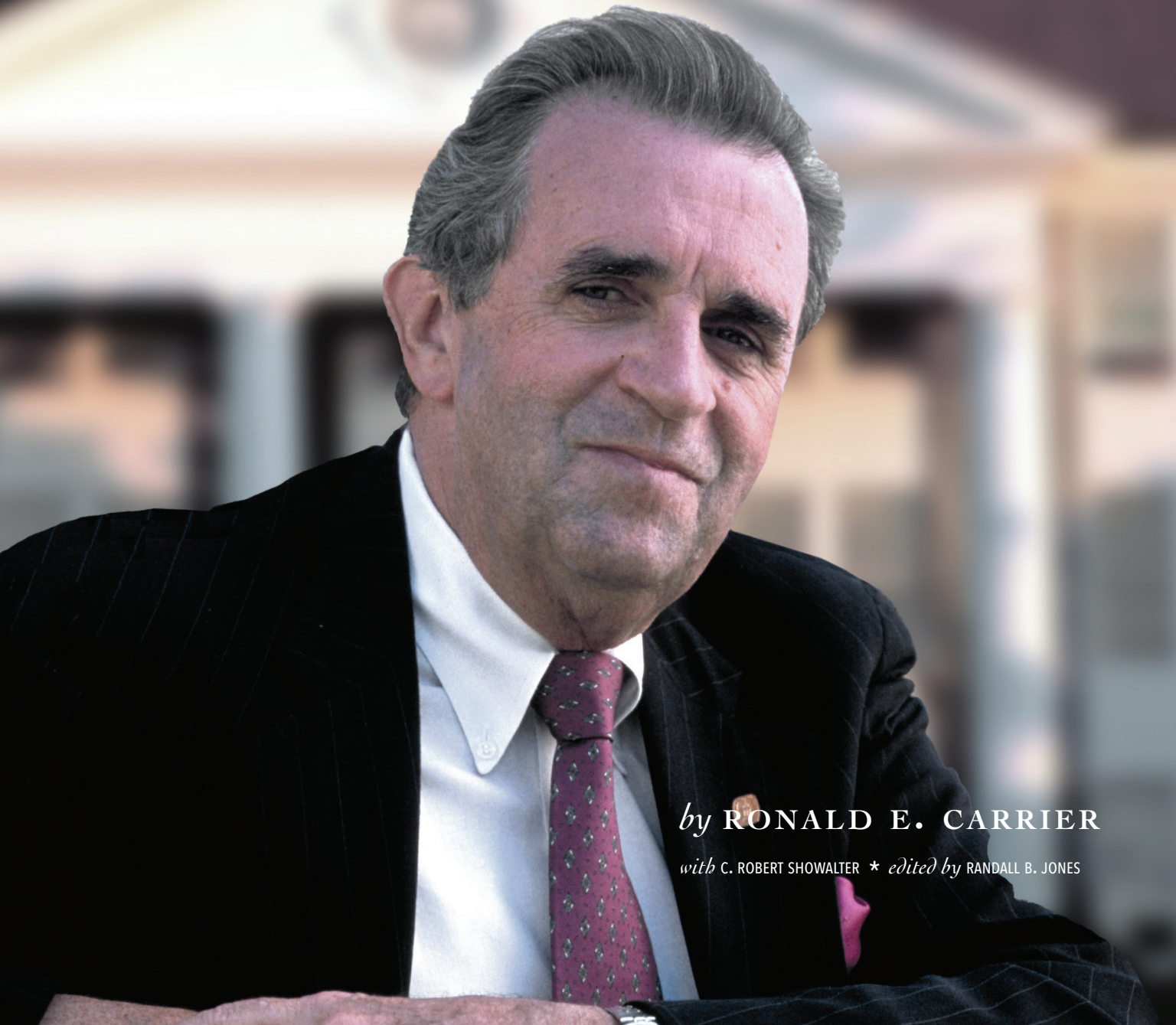




BUILDING JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

INNOVATION AND THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE



by RONALD E. CARRIER

with C. ROBERT SHOWALTER * *edited by* RANDALL B. JONES

BUILDING
JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY



BUILDING
JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

INNOVATION AND THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

by RONALD E. CARRIER

with C. ROBERT SHOWALTER * *edited by* RANDALL B. JONES

CONTENTS

FOREWORD PRESIDENT JONATHAN ALGER	vi
FOREWORD DR. LINWOOD ROSE, PRESIDENT EMERITUS, JMU	viii
PROLOGUE	xi
<hr/>	
PART ONE: BLUFF CITY TO HARRISONBURG	15
ONE: PREPARATIONS	17
TWO: "OLE MISS" TO MEMPHIS STATE	20
THREE: ACCEPTING THE PRESIDENCY OF MADISON COLLEGE	35
<hr/>	
PART TWO: MADISON COLLEGE TO JMU, 1971-1980S	44
FOUR: MADISON, 1971	45
FIVE: THE PLAN: A COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL UNIVERSITY	64
SIX: CHANGING THE CAMPUS CULTURE	83
SEVEN: CREATING SOCIAL AND EXTRACURRICULAR DIVERSITY ON CAMPUS	96
EIGHT: PHYSICAL EXPANSION & THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY	113
NINE: BUILDING INTERCOLLEGIATE AND INTRAMURAL ATHLETICS	129
<hr/>	
PART THREE: A UNIVERSITY FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY	163
TEN: PRELUDE TO AN IDEA: MY YEAR AT THE CENTER FOR INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY (1986-1987)	164
ELEVEN: TOWARD A NEW MODEL FOR UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION	176
TWELVE: A UNIVERSITY FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY	186
THIRTEEN: RESTRUCTURING AND RECALCITRANCE	198
FOURTEEN: GENERAL EDUCATION	209
FIFTEEN: CISAT AND MY FINAL SEASON	225
<hr/>	
PART FOUR:	
SIXTEEN: LEGACIES: THE ARBORETUM & STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER	
SEVENTEEN: THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION	
<hr/>	
EPILOGUE:	
EIGHTEEN: LIFE TODAY, 2017	
<hr/>	
APPENDICES	
ENDNOTES	
ABOUT THIS BOOK	
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	
ABOUT THE CO-AUTHOR AND EDITOR	
INDEX	

© 2017 by Ronald E. Carrier, C. Robert Showalter, and Randall B. Jones

The publication of this first edition of *Building James Madison University: Innovation and the Pursuit of Excellence* by Ronald C. Carrier with C. Robert Showalter is limited to 1,500 softcover and 500 Special Commemorative hard cover copies. The book was in the final stages of design and production when Dr. Carrier, JMU's fourth President, passed away on September 18, 2017, at age 85. As per Dr. Carrier's wishes, contributions made to reserve Special Commemorative hard cover copies of the book will go to support the "Ronald E. and Edith J. Carrier Scholarship Endowment."



FOREWORD

When I became the president of James Madison University in July 2012, I was keenly aware that I had big shoes to fill. In fact, a local artist developed a cartoon to that effect that still hangs in my office as a reminder. One of the large footprints in the cartoon belongs to Ron Carrier, whose name continues to be invoked every day at JMU—nearly twenty years after he retired from a long and successful presidency. His leadership put the university on a powerful trajectory of growth and change, even as it has stayed focused on a student-centered culture.

The university's vision statement today, in which we refer to becoming "the national model of the engaged university: engaged with ideas and the world," reflects and builds upon the powerful legacy that Dr. Carrier established. The nickname "Uncle Ron" was a reminder that the heart of the university was (and continues to be) all about relationships and the personal touch—relationships among faculty, staff, students, alumni, community members, and other friends and supporters of the institution.

James Madison University grew tremendously in size and stature under Dr. Carrier's leadership and has continued to grow substantially in the years hence, adding thousands of students, a wide variety of faculty and staff, new academic programs, and state-of-the-buildings and facilities. Dr. Carrier set in motion a dynamic, restless mindset that fueled a constant focus on the future, even as he stood relentlessly for the central importance of the personal touch at the heart of the educational enterprise. He has continued to be a mentor to me and other

institutional leaders on how to balance the need to focus on students and a strong sense of community with the need to stay competitive, current and relevant in an ever-evolving higher education landscape.

Like so many other people, when I first walked the campus at JMU I was struck by the tremendous care exemplified by the beauty and cleanliness of the landscape. Dr. Carrier once told me that if parents could see that the campus was well maintained, they would understand and appreciate that we would also pay close attention to the kind of environment we were creating for the children with whom they entrusted us. Even in challenging budgetary times when it might be tempting to pay less attention to the surroundings, I have always remembered that simple but profound insight.

As I talk to JMU alumni who are increasingly spread around the Commonwealth, the country, and indeed the entire world, they often invoke the names of individuals at the university who made a significant difference in their lives through personal attention and encouragement. Not surprisingly, Dr. Carrier's name is one that comes up over and over again. These conversations are a testament to the true "magic of Madison" as personified by the tireless efforts of Dr. Carrier, along with many other generations of people he has inspired with his boundless energy, enthusiasm, and dedication to excellence.



Jonathan R. Alger
May, 2017

Mr. Alger became the sixth president of James Madison University on July 1, 2012. He has previously held administrative posts at Rutgers University and the University of Michigan, as well as positions at the American Association of University Professors, U.S. Department of Education, and the international law firm of Morgan, Lewis & Bockius.



FOREWORD

For over thirty years I was a witness to the transformation of Madison College from a good, but unremarkable institution of higher learning, to an admired if not envied comprehensive university of considerable stature. The metamorphosis that occurred in Harrisonburg, Virginia was, as is often the case with transformation, the product of a bigger than life personality whose forward-looking leadership and ever-present personal will drove the enterprise to change.

President Ronald E. Carrier, only the university's fourth president, was on the one hand an irrepressible force unrelenting in his push for growth and excellence while on the other a highly personable figure who could charm anyone and anything in a down-home folksy manner, and it was that approachability that led to his popular moniker, "Uncle Ron." Dichotomous leaders like Ron Carrier inevitably generate audiences who love, admire and appreciate their charm while others fear or find distasteful the pace, pressure and disruptive demands they must confront. So it was at JMU.

Unsurprisingly then, Ron Carrier, President of James Madison University from 1971 to 2008, makes for an excellent study of organizational leadership. In those years there were euphoric times such as when bond issues for new buildings passed, new academic programs were approved, athletic teams posted "giant-killer" wins, and students graduated, and there were the challenging times of faculty/administrative discord, state instituted budget cuts, and premature loss of

student lives. Through the good and the bad Dr. Carrier always pressed forward with the persistence that dominated his character.

A lesson for any leader is to know one's purpose and to stay true to that purpose. Ron Carrier, in his twenty-seven years as president, never let staff, faculty, students, parents, legislators, or alumni forget that at JMU the student was #1. The message was simple: the University, as an institution, could never be greater than the students it served. It was Carrier's convincing ability to convert the message into an organizational culture that made all the difference. Twenty years after his retirement, and now in the sixth presidency in the University's history, that culture is as strong today as it was then. This is the mark of an accomplished leader.

In the 1980's, encountering a staff member working on a concrete footer for a campus construction project, President Carrier exhorted the man to work faster to accomplish his task. The man replied, "Dr. Carrier, Rome wasn't built in a day!" To which Carrier replied without hesitation, "I wasn't in charge." That short real-life exchange typifies the Ronald Carrier years at JMU. There was always something to do to make the University better and there was never enough time to get it all done.



Linwood H. Rose
President Emeritus
May, 2017

Dr. Rose began his professional career at Madison College in 1975 and began reporting directly to President Carrier as his Assistant and Director of Special Projects in 1982. He held numerous administrative posts including Executive Vice President and Acting President before being named President of the University in September, 1998. He retired from the Presidency in June, 2012.



PROLOGUE

I grew up in rural east Tennessee, the youngest son of a mother with an eighth grade education and a father whose formal education ended with the third grade. My parents put little emphasis on education. Beyond the Bible, I doubt our home had more than a handful of books, if that. Education however, would be my ticket out of Bluff City, my hometown, as it was for two of my nine siblings. Education opened the world to me and became my career. Several months after earning my Ph. D. in economics from the University of Illinois, I began my academic career as an economics professor at Mississippi. A few years later I entered the administrative side of university life when I became Provost at Memphis State University and then Vice President for Academic Affairs. Those steps led to my biggest professional challenge. At age 38, I became President of Madison College, then a modest-size school in Harrisonburg, in the central Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.

In January 1971, when I arrived at Madison, it was known mostly as a state teachers college for women, with a few more than 4,000 students enrolled. During my twenty-eight years as President, working with a team of highly motivated and capable administrators, faculty, staff, and students, we transformed Madison College into James Madison University. When I stepped down as President in 1998, JMU was nationally recognized as a major regional university of more than 14,000 students, a faculty of 789, and a newly established, innovative College of Integrated Science and Technology.

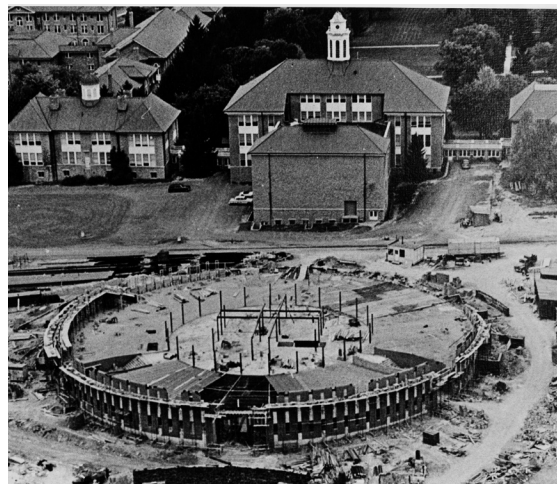
Now, nearly twenty years since leaving the presidency, I retain a campus

office, today in the Carrier Library. I feel at home on campus, among students, even now in the middle of my ninth decade. As President, I always made it a point to get out of my office and walk about the campus so I could chat with students and listen to their ideas, aspirations, and concerns. My avuncular style and familiarity with students earned me the nickname “Uncle Ron.”

I continue to enjoy talking with students. Taking time today to stroll around and watch or mingle with students as they make their way across the plaza outside Carrier Library, I encourage them to speak from time to time with a friendly “Hello.” Some students, puzzled, politely acknowledge the old man with bushy, gray eyebrows greeting them and move on. But there is, as there always is, a student whose curiosity gets sparked, who will engage in conversation. When I introduce myself as “Dr. Carrier,” some students make the connection between the Carrier Library and my name. Either way—whether they make the name link or not—I still get a deep satisfaction from interacting with students. Witnessing their exuberance and the transformative experience education has in a person’s life heartens me. Throughout my career in education—from classroom to President’s office—I kept my sights on the student. The student ultimately is the reason any undergraduate college or university exists. That notion shaped my educational philosophy, and it guided our steps as we created a student-centric institution. There is a reason Madison earned its reputation as a school where “the student is king.”

One afternoon in early September 2016, while in my office in Carrier Library, I could hear the staccato drumming of jack hammers and rock drills and the labored hum of earthmoving machinery, all in preparation of the site for a new campus dining facility where Gibbons Hall once stood. From my office window I could see billows of dust from the construction dissipating against a late-summer blue sky. My thoughts returned to a spring afternoon in May 1964—when I first discovered that there was a Madison College, during a stopover in Harrisonburg while I was in route from Memphis, Tennessee, for business and family fun in Washington,

DC. That May evening all those years ago, with my wife, Edith, and our children, we drove about the campus, entering through a driveway near where the Music Building now stands. During our quick tour of the campus, I recall driving by a construction project for a round building made of red brick, the only one then on campus made of brick, a departure from the bluestone of the older buildings. It



Gibbons Hall during its construction in 1964, when Edith and I on a trip to DC, with our children, discovered Madison College.

was Gibbons Hall, as I learned much later, under construction. In 2016, I stood at the window watching the dust clouds rising from where it once stood.

Turning back to the quiet of my office, the observation of the Greek philosopher Heraclitus came to mind, “Nothing endures but change.” Many would say “change” was the operative word of my presidency. When I arrived at Madison College, the so-called Age of Aquarius was dawning on the campus, a time marked by student restiveness and old-guard administrative resistance. The college was poised for great change. You could sense it on the campus. In 1971, I could envision Madison College becoming a regional comprehensive undergraduate school and more, providing a new model for Virginia. During my twenty-eight years as President we worked hard to achieve that vision, that goal.

This book tells that story—along with some of my early history and personal anecdotes—as it recounts and explains how we transformed Madison College into JMU during the Carrier era. During my presidency—a tenure spanning the terms of four U.S. Presidents and eight Virginia Governors—I shook hands with about 60,000 graduating students. I hope this book gives them insight into the significance of the bigger story they took part in. But this book is also aimed at current students and their parents, faculty and staff in the twenty-first century who wish to understand the foundations of JMU, the institution they are now shaping, and the legacy to which they are contributing.

Witnessing the construction and demolition of Gibbons Hall, bookends to the beginning and end of my career, is a vivid reminder that change endures, which may explain one reason I am a futurist, always concerned that the future would arrive before I anticipated it. Within the swirl of continual change that characterized my presidency of Madison College and James Madison University, we gave life to a legacy that endures. I see it today on campus, and it gives me great satisfaction and pride. Buildings come and go as JMU continues its growth and expansion, dynamically and innovatively pursuing and attaining excellence.



A new dining hall under construction in late summer 2017 on the footprint of Gibbons. (Courtesy Frank Doherty)



PART ONE: BLUFF CITY TO HARRISONBURG

OVERVIEW:

This short section covers my early life in Bluff City, Tennessee, my experiences as an undergraduate at East Tennessee State College (now University), and my graduate school years pursuing a doctorate in economics at the University of Illinois. Following those preparations, Part I traces the arc of my early career as a teacher and later administrator, a path that ultimately brought me to Madison College. My life experiences prior to Madison College were formative in shaping my world view, which in turn had direct impacts upon my decisions and ideas about Madison College and JMU.



ONE
PREPARATIONS

Some memories linger over a lifetime, as a thread through one's destiny. My earliest takes me back to when I was nine years old. On a hot morning in the summer of 1941, only six months before the U.S. entered World War II, my 19-year-old brother Lavon and I are hoeing the one-acre of tobacco my father grows for our family's cash income. Tobacco is a labor-intensive crop, especially when practiced on a small scale as my father did during the Great Depression of the 1930s. After planting, the crop requires weeks of hoeing, debugging, topping, and suckering; then cutting and hanging the leaves to cure before hauling to market. Lavon and I have spent hours untangling and digging out the creeping, invasive Morning Glory vines and Bermuda grass that strangle the plants in my father's plot. After a morning of tedious, hard, sweaty work, Lavon walks over to a nearby fence and in one swift blow breaks his hoe handle against it.

"I'm sure not doing this *kind* of work for the rest of *my* life," he exclaims.

I look on, stunned.

Although I did not fully understand, he was helping me grasp a theory of adversity I later articulated: If something gets bad enough, most people will do something to change it. Some people act, some react, but a decision gets made. Some choices, I realized while I was still young, playing baseball and basketball, limit further opportunities; other (better) choices advance toward a goal. And if those choices led to a defeat, I also learned how to accept defeat, to refrain from interpreting failure as a personal rebuke. I took it in stride, kept practicing, and went back to the games.



Smith's Drug Store in Bluff City, shown here in 1946, was where one met the bus to travel to Bristol, Kingsport, or Johnson City. In my childhood and teens during the 1950s and '40s, when I thought Bluff City nowhere, I longed for the bright lights of nearby "real" cities. (Courtesy Sullivan County Public Library, Thomas Memorial Branch Library)

In the so-called game of life, education, in time, appeared to me a positive, effective way to change an untenable situation. At the very least, it can mitigate adversity. At its best, education can give the individual a platform for self-realization and actualization and lead to a better life and employment, as well as enhance one's personal sense of responsibility.

I saw the improvements education brought in Lavon's life—as it would in my own.

Within two months of his outburst, rather than await the draft, Lavon joined the Navy and fought in the South Pacific during World War II. When he returned to civilian life (and a grateful family) after the war, he attended college under the G.I. Bill, earning a degree that took him away from tobacco fields and Bluff City. With his own economic gains and generous spirit, Lavon, in the years to come, financially assisted me in my own efforts to earn a graduate degree.

Lavon's story was not unique. Through the federal benefits of the G.I. Bill, thousands upon thousands of veterans received professional training or earned degrees at universities and colleges throughout the nation during the 1940s and '50s. That broad influx of educated men and women helped to transform American society and boosted the importance of a college degree as an integral part of the American dream and middle-class life. As the WWII generation engendered a new generation of sons and daughters, these Baby Boomers and, later, their children and grandchildren, sought a college education.

After I pursued a doctorate degree, I made higher education my career. It's how I got from Bluff City to Harrisonburg and Madison College in 1971.

Life in Bluff City

Bluff City is perched alongside the Holston River in eastern Tennessee. In my childhood and teens during the 1930s and '40s, I thought Bluff City was nowhere, and I longed for the bright lights of nearby "real" cities like Kingsport, Johnson City, or Bristol.

The youngest of six children born to James and Melissa (née Miller) Carrier, I also had five half brothers and sisters because my father was a widower, thirteen years older than my mother, with five children when she married him. Our small house grew even fuller when my grandfather came to live with us and shared a bedroom with a brother and me. A single bathroom served our entire family's needs. Talk about early life-long lessons in contingency planning—you better know how to organize and negotiate when you have thirteen people sharing one tiny bathroom. (At least we had indoor plumbing.) The close quarters caused remarkably little tension. Extremely well organized, Mama assigned specific responsibilities to each of us, and we carried out our duties and chores to keep our home running smoothly. Her efficiency and our cramped quarters taught me

to collaborate, respect the rights of others, and minimize conflicts. I honed early basic skills—organization (thanks to Mama's modeling), negotiation, and the art of compromise.

We kept a large garden, growing practically everything we ate. Mama cooked and canned on a coal stove. We stored potatoes in our root cellar and we had a milk cow; chickens for eggs and meat; and hogs for bacon, hams, tenderloin, fatback, and lard for cooking. We all worked in Daddy's tobacco field at the edge of town to help bring home the four or five hundred bucks it would earn at market. Daddy would then pay off some debts and buy a few things for the house. Incidentally, years later, when I served on the board of the Universal Corporation, one of the world's leading tobacco companies, I was the only board member who had directly experienced the difficult labor of growing and curing tobacco.

In the Bluff City of that era you saw little actual currency—one reason why my father raised tobacco for cash. Retail was sparse. A combined hardware-general store and a farm and meat market served the town. Daddy operated a grocery store when married to his first wife but gave it up during the Great Depression—depressed himself over the inability of his many customers to always pay for their groceries. He then went to work as a meat cutter, a house painter, a plumber, and a farmer—almost anything to make a living. For a number of years he served as a substitute rural mail carrier and also contracted with the post office to meet the 4:30 a.m. train to pick up the day's mail delivery for the Bluff City area. The contract included a late afternoon pick up of the day's outgoing mail pouch at the post office. He would take the pouch to the railway station and hang it on a mail crane, a pole close to the track and fitted with a device to hold the pouch so that it could be caught by a mechanical arm that extended from the mail car of Southern Railway's "Tennessean," a streamliner that sped by the Bluff City station at 50 miles per hour every evening about 6 p.m. During my high school years Daddy frequently delegated this late-afternoon responsibility to me. I always feared that some evening I would arrive at the station platform with the mail only to see the last car of the train disappearing around the curve on its way southward—the mail pouch still in my hand. I never let that happen.

I don't think that I ever thought much about money—having it or not having it. I never owned a bicycle but had some skates. A community gathering place other than the church was Banty's Confectionary with its juke box and pinball machine. Banty's sold hotdogs, hamburgers, potato chips—no French fries—toasted cheese sandwiches, ice cream cones, milkshakes, Grapettes, and Nabs. After basketball games, Coach Charles Fleming would give us 30 cents for a post-game snack. We would have a hotdog, a bag of chips, and a Coke or Dr. Pepper and think we were big shots.

You could get almost every necessity you needed in Bluff City, with most places

within walking distance from our home. A movie theater opened in the late 1930s with evening shows and a Saturday matinee. I saw *Gone with the Wind* and *Sgt. York* there and held hands with a girl for the first time. When she decided on a new boyfriend, it didn't break my heart but it definitely put a crimp in my confidence.

Mama always seemed to know our whereabouts, and every time I came home her first question was "What have you been into now?" (She persisted in asking that question until she died at age 88.) I generally knew better than to be "into" anything—not because she would punish me physically, but because disappointing her hurt far more than a spanking. When I did get into something, I was careful to not get caught. Easier said than done in a small town where every adult was an "Aunt" or an "Uncle," if not by blood or marriage, then by respect. These aunts and uncles certainly limited the venues for me to get into trouble. I knew that "Aunt Vera," "Uncle Fred," and "Uncle Arthur" would notify Mama if I got out of line. "Aunt Ethel" was the telephone operator. No one knew a number, they just picked up the phone and said, "Ethel, ring me Jim." Aunt Ethel, I thought, knew almost everything that happened in town.

Collectively, these watching, caring aunts and uncles helped to frame my values. None of us ever had any philosophical discussions about values, but we learned about honesty. We were not going to steal from Uncle Ryden's store, nor slip into the movie theater free, nor get out of paying Banty for hamburgers or hotdogs. We also learned to respect older people and would look after them when we could be helpful. Even when we played Halloween pranks, such as turning over outhouses, we avoided damaging anything. We tipped them over so that family members could easily set them back up—we knew they would be in a rush the next morning.

Our home was the hub of a life bounded by school, church, and friends. Sundays were special. Our church, Bluff City United Methodist, served as both a



Behind me is the church where I spent much of my formative years. Our family's house stands (left) beside it. Throughout my life, I could return home and sleep in the same room where I was born. This photo was taken in 2010, accompanying an article I contributed to the Johnson City Press titled "You Can Always Go Back Home." (Courtesy Lee Talbert/Johnson City Press)

religious and a social center for our community. Mama invested heavily in the work and outreach of our church and very early on encouraged my involvement in its activities, frequently expressing her desire for me to become a minister. By nature gregarious, I enjoyed greeting congregants as they arrived for Sunday services, often helping older members

find their places in the sanctuary. I sang in the church choir, and by age fifteen I led our worship services, introducing the hymns, conducting responsive readings including the Apostle's Creed, and reading the scripture passages preceding the sermon—almost everything but preaching. Those experiences honed my communication and public speaking skills, for which I always remained grateful.

Church attendance was mandatory—both morning and evening services. On occasion Mama took us to the Baptist church for Sunday afternoon events and sometimes to the black church where I learned a deep appreciation for black Gospel music and spirituality. Although segregation was still in force, I had many African-American friends and playmates alongside my white ones and developed an egalitarian view of humanity. As an integrated group, we frequented swimming and fishing holes in the nearby Holston River.

Our church and school shaped my recreational activity in Bluff City. In my teen years I organized parties and athletic events as part of our church's community outreach. Athletically talented and inclined, in the seventh and eighth grades I put teams and basketball games together on several outside courts in town. The Bluff City High School grounds, which included a baseball field, abutted our yard—the only thing separating me from the building where I attended classes. I spent hours on that ballfield building friendships and chasing the same dreams many boys have of making it to the major leagues. Those dreams didn't last but the friendships did.

Sports were about the only thing that motivated me in school. A lackluster student, I acted the classroom smartass, serious only about playing basketball and baseball. I had no interest in studying or "book learning." I was completely content to just get by, thereby gaining a reputation as a poor student, confirming the low expectations of teachers. But there wasn't a lot of motivation to study. In our community, few people went to college. Of the thirty-eight graduates in the class of 1951 at Bluff City High School, only six of us went on to college—myself, surprisingly, in that number. Despite my lack of rigor for study, my peers elected me class president each year in high school, reflecting an opinion of me, I think, as someone who wanted to get things done. An optimist from my early years forward, I tended to see problems as challenges rather than troubling obstacles. Classmates knew if issues arose, I would speak up for our interests.

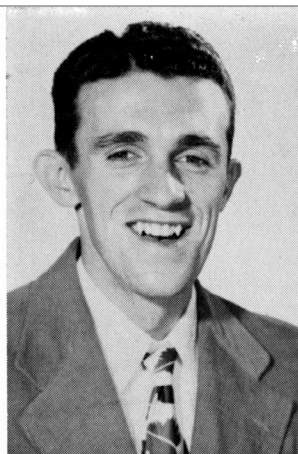
My attitude and direction regarding academics began changing at the end of my junior year, when it became clear I was, in fact, not "getting by" but would quite likely be ineligible for graduation with my class. That's when my mother stepped up. Our home life may have set little regard on achieving a higher education, but Mama and Daddy wanted us to do better than they had and also do what people expected of us—in this case, completing high school. Mama found a summer school about eight miles from Bluff City. Each morning I drove

*My senior class photo
in the school's 1951
yearbook.*

RONALD "RIGGS" CARRIER

"Doing what comes naturally."

Glee Club, '48-'51; President of Class, '47-'49;
Commercial Club, '49-'50; F.F.A. Club, '48-'51; "B"
Club, '49-'51; President B Club, '50-'51; Basketball,
'48-'51; Baseball, '48-'51.



with several friends to the school in Blountville, Tennessee. Students came from all over the area to make up credits during the summer session. As a group, we were low scholastic achievers, most of us athletes. Principal John Henry Pierce did not know me personally, but I found out later that my Bluff City High School coach Charlie Fleming, who knew me rather well, told him that I had a lot of good qualities and strong potential.

Mr. Anderson took an interest in me; he challenged me to take studying seriously. His higher expectations of me—and my desire to fulfill them—effected a change. My work under his tutelage that summer marked a major turning point. I actually learned how to study, and even more importantly, I grew to enjoy the experience of learning. Thereafter I did not disappoint either myself or my teachers. When the summer school session ended, I had earned a 98 in math, a 99 in English, and a 96 in history. Back at Bluff City High School for my senior year, I studied, seriously, and came away with equally good grades.

My high school graduation came ten years after Lavon's declaration that hot morning in the tobacco field that he would change his life and get out of Bluff City. Facing an imminent draft into the military, as mentioned, he enlisted in the Navy. Early in his Navy tour, higher-ups selected him for an Officers Training School program at Duke University, elevating him to commissioned officer status. After discharge from the Navy, Lavon used his G.I. Bill benefits to, again, enroll in Duke University, where he earned a degree in mechanical engineering. Following graduation, he became chief engineer at North American Bemberg, a textile manufacturing company (later North American Rayon Corporation) in Elizabethton, Tennessee.

I saw that Lavon's hard work had gotten him into a solid and enjoyable career. Now fully cognizant of what he meant that morning in the tobacco field and encouraged by his example, I understood that getting an education was, indeed, important. After a successful senior year playing basketball and baseball

while maintaining excellent grades, I garnered an invitation from the coaches at East Tennessee State College (now University) to attend school there and play basketball and baseball. I eagerly accepted and enrolled in the college in September.

East Tennessee State College (ETSC)

My first year at ETSC as a student-athlete, our freshmen basketball team ended the season undefeated. The varsity team also invited me to travel with them, occasionally subbing me in during a game. But I had no future in professional athletics, I could tell. In June, after completing my freshman year, I decided to give up organized sports for the next year. Although I achieved the honor roll each quarter of my freshman year, I simply wanted to concentrate intensively on my studies and learning. To offset the athletic scholarship, Lavon paid for my undergraduate education at ETSC (and later supported my graduate work at the University of Illinois). For my sophomore year I committed myself to getting a good education; the field of economics particularly attracted me and ultimately became my major. For the first time in my life, studies took full priority and importance over playing basketball or baseball.

I lived at home during my sophomore year—commuting each day about eleven miles to the campus, while also remaining quite active in our church. For my junior year I returned, as I had as a freshman, to dormitory living and greater involvement in campus life. Two students were typically assigned to each dorm room. That year a Japanese student enrolled at ETSC. In 1954 strong anti-Japanese sentiment in the U.S. still lingered in some quarters, biases that would likely complicate life for any student from Japan attending an American college. Before the term began, ETSC president Dr. Burgin E. Dossett Sr. summoned me to his office.

"I am assigning "Mickey" Yasukawa to room with you. I think that you can handle it," he said.

I already had a roommate, so the addition of Mickey (Minoles) meant three of us resided in one dorm room. Through our time together at East Tennessee State, Mickey and I became close friends. He returned to Japan and went on to a successful television and movie career. He also authored seventeen books. (As president of Madison, I extended an accommodation for his son to attend JMU for a year on an informal basis.) Edith and I visited Mickey and his family in the autumn of 1993.

While a junior, I became progressively more active in East Tennessee State's campus life. In 1954, several friends and I started the first national fraternity on campus, Sigma Phi Epsilon. President Dossett initially rejected our request to bring a national fraternity to the campus. ETSC only admitted local Greek organizations. Several months later, I asked for another meeting with the



Minoles "Mickey" Yasukawa (second from right) and me (third) during my junior year in college. We are clearly preparing to swing the world by the tail. (Author's collection)



Edith and I with Mickey during a visit we paid to him in Tokyo in 1995. The photo is from a popular Japanese magazine that published an article about Mickey, a national television celebrity, and his former American college roommate from Tennessee. (Author's collection)

President, this time taking with me his son, who was active in Sigma Phi Epsilon at the University of Tennessee. We left that meeting with his approval to start ETSC's first national fraternity on campus; shortly thereafter, the newly formed chapter elected me vice president.

In the spring of my junior year I ran for president of the Student Government Association for my senior year. I won the election as did another very active student, Edith Johnson, who was elected secretary and who would soon become increasingly important to me. As SGA president, I worked hard—installing several chapters of national fraternities on campus and forming a number of dormitory organizations designed to facilitate dialogue between students and the administration, thus enabling students to participate in the college's policy-making decisions.

One experience during the year forged an early understanding of the dynamics involved in student participation in campus decision-making. The occasion concerned a female student who had misinformed her dormitory housemother about her weekend plans. Upon the student's return to campus, college officials promptly expelled her. The incident led to a protest as students amassed in front of the penalized student's dormitory to show support for her. Three of my friends and I joined the rally. After a short while, as President Dossett and his staff appealed to the students to disperse, I asked my friends to scatter among the crowd and then to follow my lead.

Approaching President Dossett, I asked if he would meet with me the next morning to discuss the penalty that had been levied on the young woman. He agreed. I then asked if I could address the protestors. He gestured for me to speak. I did so, relaying to everyone that President Dossett would meet with me to discuss the penalty. I requested that the protesting students return to their dormitories. My three friends, mingling amidst the crowd, immediately and loudly endorsed my plan. They encouraged the students to likewise support my "good idea" and go back to their dormitories.

The next morning at 8:30 sharp in President Dossett's office, I told him that the students considered the penalty far too severe. Expulsion from college represented a serious, career-damaging sanction—too draconian a response to such a moderate student infraction. Rescind the penalty of expulsion and allow the student to return to campus and her classes, I suggested, recommending instead she be suspended for the summer. After a long silence, President Dossett picked up his telephone and called the Dean of Women, asking her to join us. When she arrived, he announced, "Ronald and I have agreed to reinstate Martha and impose a penalty of suspension for the summer session." Dean Ella Rowe, who never cared much for me, gave me a look that revealed whom she now saw as the bigger problem.

Shortly thereafter, another incident incited campus protest when the college

Edith Johnson was secretary of the SGA at East Tennessee State when I was SGA's president, when this photo was snapped. Our lifelong partnership began by carrying out duties and plans for the SGA. Our romance bloomed after a few school terms during my senior year. (Courtesy of East Tennessee State University's Archives of Appalachia)



adjudicated a student without any consultation with his peers. This led me to organize a student council for the purpose of ensuring peer involvement in campus judicial actions. That same year we also established an international student organization. These experiences as president of the SGA in many ways laid the groundwork for some of the policy changes, specifically relating to giving students a voice in campus issues, that I would later implement at Madison College.

During my senior year as president of the SGA, I became active in the national SGA, which elected me president of its southern region. A broadening experience, it exposed me to the interests and concerns of students across the United States as well as to issues relating specifically to international students. I attended national SGA conferences at the University of Chicago and Iowa State University. The national SGA board requested that each region hold a conference to discuss the various issues of students on campuses. ETSC SGA secretary Edith Johnson and I collaborated on organizing a conference. We sent all of the colleges and universities in the southern region, including the black institutions, an invitation to send delegates to East Tennessee State College. Eight black students responded that they could attend the conference. It was 1955, and ETSC was segregated. In the previous year, the Supreme Court had handed down its *Brown v. Board of Education* decision that ruled segregation in public education unconstitutional. The ruling ignited the animosity of whites throughout the South and in other parts of the country against school integration and African-Americans. It also signaled that segregation in other realms of public life would be tested—as it soon would by a brave woman named Rosa Parks in Montgomery, Alabama, who that year would refuse to give up her seat on a public city bus to a white citizen.

The ETSC Dean's office summoned me to explain why I had invited black students to the regional SGA conference.

"Where are these students going to stay and where will they eat?" the Dean inquired.

I deferred on a response and told him that I would get back to him. I then quickly recruited a number of good friends who agreed to share their dormitory room with a black student. With Secretary Johnson's assistance, we also arranged for them to eat in the college dining facilities. The African-American representatives were welcomed to the conference, and I recall no troubling reactions from any white students. The conference, in effect, introduced racial integration to the East Tennessee State campus.

Toward the end of my sophomore year, I had decided law school would be my next step. My interest in politics led me that way. Already I had volunteered with the local Democratic party in Tennessee's Sullivan and Washington counties, working for Frank Clement's governor's campaign as well as those of several local politicians. A law degree would best prepare me, I thought, with the necessary background to further my political interests. Competing with this idea was my growing interest in the field of economics. By my senior year, as my academics concentrated more in that discipline, my economics professor Dr. Lloyd Pierce began mentoring me. He asked me to assist him with some classroom teaching and several of his research projects.

Dr. Pierce, who happened to be the son of my high school principal, became a valuable adviser and opened an alternative to the pursuit of a law degree. As my graduation approached, he helped me obtain a scholarship and teaching assistantship the following autumn at the University of Illinois in its graduate economics program. The offer from Illinois forced me to make a decision, because the University of Tennessee had also extended to me a scholarship to attend law school. During the summer following my graduation with a Bachelor of Science degree in economics from East Tennessee State College, I taught several classes with Dr. Pierce, earning my first paycheck as a college teacher. The experience changed my life. Toward the end of that summer, I told Dr. Pierce I wanted to teach. The enjoyable stimulation of continued learning and the relationships with students as a teacher drew me to a classroom career. Additionally, there was considerable appeal in the typical academic calendar—summers off (so I thought!) and a long break during the Christmas holiday.

At East Tennessee State College a tradition held that the faculty recognizes one outstanding senior each year. At its May meeting the year I graduated, the faculty could not choose which of two students to honor. They reconvened one week later and, in an unprecedented move, announced that not one, but two students would be recognized for their outstanding achievements—Ronald Carrier and Edith Johnson, my SGA partner. She was, indeed, impressive. In addition to her SGA

duties, she was the president of her sorority Sigma Theta Kappa, a cheerleader, and honorary captain of the all-male ROTC unit on campus.

She was also beginning to captain an earnest part of my life.

Along with all of the pursuits of my senior year, I found myself spending more and more time with Miss Edith Johnson. I had set a busy agenda for the SGA, and Edith, an exceedingly efficient and well-organized SGA secretary, always stood ready to help. Pinned to a good looking pre-dental student, she was a beautiful, vivacious, and charming young woman. Initially, conscious romantic attraction seemed not to be a part of our relationship. Moreover, I assumed that Edith was spoken for, and so I made no attempts to break up her relationship with her boyfriend, Frank. Yet to all of our friends it appeared obvious that we were made for each other; Edith and I just didn't seem to know it or overtly admit it anyway.

Late one spring afternoon I took Edith to lunch at a restaurant near campus. Returning, we stopped by a picturesque lake close to the Soldier's Home adjoining the college, and down by the lake we had our first kiss. One week later, following graduation exercises, Edith returned to Frank his pin. Several days later when Frank and I crossed paths, he just glared at me. "You are the last person on this campus that I thought Edith Johnson would have been interested in," he sneered.

That summer, Dr. Lloyd Pierce, hired me to help teach a course in economic education. Edith resided at her parent's home in Johnson City. At every opportunity, I borrowed my brother's car to drive to Edith's home for visits. Our romance, so long dormant, suddenly blossomed. In mid-July I asked her to marry me and gave her a ring. Six weeks later, on September 7, 1955, we married in a small ceremony in the Bluff City Methodist Church where I had been a lifelong member. In addition to the officiating minister, two people attended our wedding: my brother, Lavon, as best man, and Edith's sister, Lois, as maid of honor. No reception followed our wedding. We departed the church and went directly to the hospital in Johnson City where my mother was a patient. Soon after, we journeyed to Urbana-Champaign and the University of Illinois, traveling in a 1954 Pontiac station wagon Lavon loaned us.

University of Illinois

In Urbana-Champaign we moved into part of a small private home that an older lady leased to students. An unsatisfactory arrangement for a recently wed couple, we soon relocated to a university housing unit, available to graduate students. The building, a reconditioned prisoner-of-war barracks, served as our home for the next four years. Our apartment consisted of two small bedrooms and a kitchen, with a coal-fired pot-bellied stove for heat. Edith cooked our meals on a two-burner hotplate. She earned money typing papers for graduate students—and eventually my master's thesis. (For my dissertation, I hired someone else to ease Edith's burdens.)

Our first child, Michael Lavon, was born in July 1956. A year later, after completing a master's thesis titled "The Economic Impact of the Taft-Hartley Act," the University of Illinois awarded me a Master's of Science degree. I briefly considered getting a teaching job, but Edith convinced me to continue my studies for a Ph.D. "We have come this far," she urged, "why not go ahead and get your doctorate?" Meanwhile, Linda Lois, our second child, arrived in January 1959.

As my graduate work progressed, I found another mentor in one of my professors, Dr. E.B. McNatt. "E.B.," as he was known on campus, took me under his wing, even having a second desk installed in his plush office to provide me with a very comfortable workspace. He arrived each morning and read the *Chicago Tribune*. His insights helped me immensely, and occasionally he would allow me to teach his junior-level course in labor relations and history.

In June 1960, I successfully defended my dissertation, a study of "The Impact of Trade Unions," earning my Ph.D. in economics. I was 27. That spring I accepted a teaching position for the coming autumn at the University of Mississippi in Oxford. Edith and I spent the early part of the summer in Urbana-Champaign where I earned some money teaching a class. At summer's end, we packed our few belongings into our Studebaker "Presidential," a car Lavon gave us, and left Urbana-Champaign for the journey to Oxford and Ole Miss, my first full-time job teaching as an associate economics professor. It was a thrilling new phase for both Edith and me.

On the way to Ole Miss we visited in Tennessee with our family and friends. One day at home in Bluff City, the phone rang. Daddy answered. The call originated from someone in my new department at the University of Mississippi. When the caller asked to speak with "Dr. Carrier," Daddy responded earnestly, "There ain't no doctor in this house!"

Soon we were off to Oxford where my credentials would be recognized.