

Retired Professor, Administrator Noyes Dies, Services to be Announced by Waller

Contributed by Elaine F. Pugh
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Charles E. Noyes

OXFORD, Miss. - Charles E. Noyes, retired University of Mississippi professor and administrator, died early Saturday (Aug. 30) at his home in Oxford. He was 91.

Noyes, professor emeritus of English, is widely credited with providing invaluable assistance within the UM administration during and after the university's tumultuous integration in 1962.

Arrangements are pending and will be announced by Waller Funeral Home of Oxford.

UM Chancellor Robert Khayat described Noyes as being "among the most loved people at Ole Miss."

"Chuck Noyes established extraordinary relationships with students, staff, faculty and alumni for more than 50 years," Khayat said. "Blessed with a keen mind and a clever wit, he was known among his students for his life-enriching teaching style and within the community for his remarkable personal relationships. He devoted most of his retirement years to attracting financial support for the library. He was a bright, funny man who quietly gave most of his personal resources to the university. He will be missed and fondly remembered as a loyal son of the university."

Noyes came to the university in 1953 as a member of the English faculty, specializing in restoration and 18th century English literature. Until he retired in 1982, he taught at least two courses per semester, except in 1963-64 when he served as provost. He later held the UM posts of acting vice chancellor, associate vice chancellor and director of the summer session.

During integration, Noyes composed speeches for then-Chancellor J.D. Williams.

"Chuck Noyes was an excellent administrator - efficient, hard working, understanding, dedicated, loyal," said Gerald Walton, UM provost emeritus and Noyes' former student who followed in his mentor's footsteps. "He had a remarkable understanding of all of the university; he could make tough decisions, and he provided invaluable assistance to the chancellor. He was, in my opinion, the best prose stylist ever to work at Ole Miss."

Noyes was born in Natchez and spent most of his youth in Memphis, where he attended Rozelle Grammar School and Central High School. He completed both bachelor's and master's degrees at the University of Missouri, and his doctorate was from the University of Texas. He gained membership in the prestigious academic honorary Phi Beta Kappa as a junior at Missouri.

Before to coming to Ole Miss, he taught at the University of Missouri and the University of Tennessee.

He co-authored a critical biography of Christopher Smart, an 18th century poet, and published articles on Samuel Johnson, James Boswell and David Hume.

Noyes served in the U.S. Army Air Corps from 1942 to 1946, attaining the rank of major. His service included the post of assistant chief of staff of the Third Army Airways Communications Wing, headquartered at Anchorage, Alaska.

Survivors are a son and a daughter: James C. Noyes of Nashville, and Helen Noyes Linzey of Florence, Ala.; nine grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Noyes was preceded in death by his wife, Ruthie Marie Smith Noyes, and daughter, Marie Noyes Hartwick.

Noyes remained faithful to Ole Miss throughout his retirement years. In 2006, he notified UM officials that he had designated a bequest to benefit the university. He was a noted benefactor of the J.D. Williams Library and was for many years membership chair of Friends of the Library support group, serving alongside his longtime colleague and friend John Pilkington, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of English.

"I've known Chuck Noyes since he came here in 1953," Pilkington said. "He's been a splendid administrator, a fine teacher and a loyal friend. He leaves his mark upon the university."

The university honored Noyes with membership in the UM Alumni Hall of Fame in 1991, and his former student David Arnold of Yazoo City honored him by establishing the Noyes Library Endowment.

The family has requested that memorials be directed to benefit Friends of the Library, P.O. Box 473, University, MS 38677.