



Julian N. Cheatham

1911-1988

His steady, quiet strength became an essential quality of everything he supported. Family, church, business and professional organizations all benefited from Julian Cheatham's devotion. Even though he helped lead one of the best known companies in the world and gave his time and money generously to his community, he was a modest man who considered himself fortunate and never sought the spotlight. He enjoyed his family and the simple pleasures of life.

Born in Concord Depot, Virginia, on September 8, 1911, he was the seventh of eight children born to Sallie Franklin (a descendent of Benjamin Franklin) and Walter Beverly Cheatham. His strength of character built upon sharing the responsibility of helping to manage his family's Virginia farm after the death of his father when he was only a child.

In 1929, he entered Virginia Polytechnic Institute (now Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University) participating in the Reserve Officers Training Commission. He studied business administration and, in 1933, received his B.S. degree and a commission as a reserve second lieutenant, United States Army.

Since 1927, his eldest brother, Owen, had operated a small lumber business in Augusta, Georgia. Julian wanted to join his brother in the venture, but the Georgia Hardwood Company was barely supporting itself. Instead, Julian went to New York City, landed a job at Western Union's main cable office in Manhattan,

and furthered his studies in the evenings at Gaines School of Business Administration.

By 1935, Owen's business was strong enough to support a full-time representative for sales and he asked Julian to come to Augusta and be the one to develop sales. Julian found that the best markets for sales were the furniture manufacturers throughout the Southeast, the British government and, by late 1940, the United States military. The government was stocking supplies to build military training camps. In later years, Julian remembered proudly that the Georgia Hardwood Lumber Company probably sold more lumber to the government than any other company. His efforts resulted in his appointment as sales manager for the Georgia Hardwood Lumber Company.

After his graduation from college, Julian continued his military service in the U.S. Army Reserves and he was called for duty in World War II. Like many young men of his era, he felt it was an honor to defend his country. He entered the Army in March, 1942, as a first lieutenant and served most of his time in World War II as a captain in the Tenth Infantry Regiment, Fifth Infantry Division. His first overseas assignments were in Iceland and England. His combat experience began at Utah Beach in Normandy, France and he served with distinction in General George Patton's famed Third Army, spending more than a year in combat. That tour included the Battle of the Bulge. He was released from his final station in Winberberg, Czechoslovakia in May, 1945, and was discharged with rank of major the following December. He was proud of the military service he gave to his country. The true rigors of his military service were barely evident in later years, when for instance, he wanted no part of any proposed recreational camping,

making always the same comment, "No, I got enough of that in the Army."

After he finished his military service he returned to Augusta and resumed his career in the lumber business. Like many companies, Georgia Hardwood grew rapidly during and right after World War II. In 1946 sales reached \$24 million and, in order to expand, the company issued public stock at \$8.20 a share. The Pacific Northwest was emerging as a land of greatest opportunity for the wood products industry and Georgia Hardwood Lumber Company, moving west, became Georgia-Pacific Corporation.

In 1947, Julian married Alyce Roberts of Augusta, Georgia. They celebrated 40 years of marriage and had three children – Thayer, North and Sallie. In 1949, Julian established a Midwest division of Georgia Hardwood Company in Chicago; and, in 1954, when the branches were consolidated, he moved to Tacoma. After a year there, he relocated to Portland when it became the permanent headquarters for Georgia-Pacific Corporation.

With substantial timber holdings all over the United States, Georgia-Pacific expanded from lumber and plywood production to gypsum, chemicals, pulp and paper. Julian Cheatham's steady nature and ability to see the overview was an integral part of the leadership in the climb Georgia-Pacific made to its pinnacle of international stature. He became vice president in 1947, and though his responsibilities were many, a major focus was always lumber sales and later, exports. When he retired in 1973, he was an executive vice president and a director of one of the largest and best-known corporations in the world.

He was loyal to those who helped him along the way. He maintained a strong and active relationship with Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, supporting their Forest Products Research Center and their School of Forestry and Wildlife Resources. In 1983, he was given the highest honor the University can bestow, the William H. Ruffner medal.

During his career, his interest in wood products and forestry was a major focus. He was president of the California Redwood Association; a director of the Western Wood Products Association; the National Forest Products Association; the Redwood Inspection Service and the World Forestry Center.

As a founder of the World Forestry Center, Julian Cheatham nurtured a seed of an idea into a fully developed educational institution. As a director, a vice president, president and chairman of the board, he participated almost daily in the Center's evolution.

Julian Cheatham was grateful to the Portland community where he felt he led

the fullest life possible. He also felt very strongly that one must give back. Consequently, he was president of the Board of Trustees of the Oregon Episcopal School; member and chairman of the review committee of the Oregon Community Foundation; elder at First Presbyterian Church of Portland; member of the board at the Portland Art Association; an active member of Rotary International; Portland Chamber of Commerce and the Arlington Club.

He enjoyed golf and, though his game was consistently good, he always enjoyed working on his skills. He traveled extensively throughout the world. He was particularly concerned with the care and support of his immediate and extended family. There are many stories of an ill or injured relative who received daily phone calls from Julian; and was often referred to as the "heart of the Cheatham clan" because he was always available and dependable. He was steady, strong, farsighted and dedicated. He was an unassuming hero of the wood products industry, his community and his country. He is missed.