

## James W. Estes - After the War

After returning from the War, I stayed around home for two months then went to an electrical, radio and refrigerator school in Chicago, Illinois. I graduated after one year. They placed me in a job at Sears in Birmingham. I was to report to work on Monday after I got home on Friday. Well, I ran into Carl Aaron who was discharged from the Army that day. He said we should hitch hike to Jacksonville, Alabama and go to college.

We left early Saturday morning got to Jacksonville that afternoon, checked in a dormitory and stayed for 3 ½ years making good grades. I called Sears and told them I had decided to go to college to let me go. They said okay check with them when I graduated. Carl and I stayed for 3 years and went to summer school every summer. We had a great time. I dated the cafeteria manager for a year.

I went out for football my last year in 1948-1949 and tore my left knee up. I was sent to Birmingham for repair, but it was too far gone. I dropped out of college spring quarter and went to Cleveland, Ohio and got a job with Alco plant. I worked there a year and also double backed at the post office. I made good money at both jobs. I came home for 3 or 4 days and bought my dad a truck. I had saved up enough money to buy me a 49 used Buick.

I came back up to Cleveland and worked until January when the superintendent of Walker County called me one night and offered me the head football job at Cordova High School. I turned in my resignation and came home in February and went to work for Cordova. When school was out, I was offered a job at the Gasification plant as a Jr. Engineer. I took it and started dating the girl I had my eyes on for six months. We started dating regular. She was Peggy Clark, a senior at Walker County high school. I gave her an engagement ring before school was out. We set a date to get married June 5, 1953. I had bought a new Mercury. We got married and I had to trade down for a 1948 Fleet line Chevrolet. The president closed down our plant and I worked 6 weeks at the Gorgas Steam Plant as a guard. That job played out the first of summer, so I was without work and nothing was hiring in Jasper.

Her dad was out of a job that summer, so we got up into that 48 Chevy with her dad and went to Detroit, Michigan. I got a job at the Ford plant working 10 hours a day 7 days a week. Her dad got a welding job and left after 3 weeks and came back to Jasper. We stayed until September and the new superintendent called to see if I would take the Principal job at Lupton Jr. School. Boy did we jump on it. We loaded up in that 48 fleet line with a hole in the radiator and drove to Jasper stopping every 60 miles to fill up with water.

We had stored our goods at her house. We rented the rooms from Mrs. Johnson at farmstead. I started to Lupton in Sept. I was principal, lunchroom manager, and coach for 2 years. Keith was born the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year. I needed 5 hours for my degree, so we packed up and went to Jacksonville State that summer and got my degree.

While I was there, DeKalb County had two principals over here recruiting teachers and coaches for DeKalb County Georgia. They offered me 1,000 more than I was making so I signed a contract in year 1955 for GA. I was placed at Southwest DeKalb. We moved to Decatur on 2 pick-up trucks last week of August. It was hot. I taught math and broadcast the football game in 1955. I was named Head Track coach in the end of 55. I coached track and football 2 years then was named assistant basketball coach, giving me 3 sports to coach. We won the region in track my 2<sup>nd</sup> year. It was the first time in history for Southwest DeKalb to win a region sport.

I coached 3 sports and taught PE until 1968. I transferred to Walker in 1968, a new school, and was offensive coordinator for football, and coached tennis and track. We went to state one year in tennis. Keith was on the football team. He was a good tennis player and a good basketball player. I was head football coach in 1972-1973. This was our 2 years of transition from an all-white school to 90% black. It was a long 2 years. We won 2 games in 2 years, so I left and went back to SWD as offensive coordinator in football and assistant track coach.

I coached and taught PE until 1979. I was name A.D. until 1985 when I retired. We won many awards in football from 1973 to 1985 3 times finals

of state championship. They won the state in 1972. I had many memories my last year in sports. I met and talked with Coach Bryant 3 summers and met Coach Dodd and went to most of his games. Me and coach Butts were invited to his house.

Coach Bryant and staff used a lot of our drills and line plays. We had several outstanding football players who signed big scholarships. One even started a QB for Green Bay Packers. I retired in 1985. I have really enjoyed my life. We had 3 boys during these years. Peggy raised all three of them. I didn't get to be with them much because of my coaching responsibilities. They were all top students; all played sports and were good. All 3 went to college and graduated and have good jobs. All 3 are grown and have children. Keith has 3 with college degrees and one working, one finishing her master's degree and one looking for a job. Chad has one teaching and one with one year of college that decided to work. Jamey has 4 ages 12, 10, 6, and 2.