

Life and Times of Houston Cole

LD
2596 c. 3
.C65x
L5
1989



The biography, *The Life and Times of Houston Cole*, has been produced and distributed under the auspices of Friends of Houston Cole Library.

Copyright © 1989
Friends of Houston Cole Library
Jacksonville, Alabama
Printed By
Higginbotham, Inc.
Anniston, Alabama
36201

ii
iii
iv
v



Dr. Houston Cole
HOUSTON COLE LIBRARY
JACKSONVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY
JACKSONVILLE, ALABAMA 36265

AUTHORS



CHAPTER ONE
Randall Cole is a Circuit Judge in Fort Payne, Alabama, and is a nephew of Houston Cole.



CHAPTER TWO
Larry J. Smith is Student Financial Aid Director at Jacksonville State University.



CHAPTER THREE
Opal R. Lovett served as photographer of Jacksonville State University from 1950 to 1986.



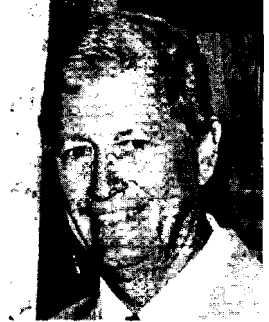
CHAPTER FOUR
Dr. Theron E. Montgomery was President of Jacksonville State University from 1981 to 1986.



CHAPTER FIVE
Miriam Higginbotham was Dean of Women at Jacksonville State University from 1965 to 1986.



CHAPTER SIX
Julia Kingston was Alumni Director at Jacksonville State University from 1967 to 1981.



CHAPTER SEVEN
Rudy Abbott is the winningest baseball coach in Alabama. He still coaches the Jacksonville State University baseball team.



CHAPTER EIGHT
Opal A. Lovett taught English and speech at Jacksonville State University from 1958 to 1986.

Contents

| Chapter | | Page |
|---------|--|------|
| | Preface | vii |
| One | The Early Years | 1 |
| Two | Traveling in the High Lane: 1939-1942 | 11 |
| Three | The Fine Art of Public Relations | 19 |
| Four | Two Decades of Academic Progress | 27 |
| Five | Speakers and Dignitaries Flood Campus | 37 |
| Six | Creation of Alumni Association Recalled | 63 |
| Seven | Athletic Program Was A Winner | 73 |
| Eight | Three Major Accomplishments Recalled | 119 |
| Nine | Honors and Accolades of the Officer D'Academe | 131 |



Jack Hopper

Preface

If a person ever put his brand on something, Houston Cole stamped his “HC” in big letters on Jacksonville State University. He, more than any one other person, made the institution. This biography of Houston Cole is therefore largely the history of Jacksonville State University.

Granted, he had a lot of good help. In fact, hiring people and then coaxing them into achieving more than they thought possible is one of Dr. Cole’s greatest attributes. With the exception of his nephew Randall Cole, Dr. Cole hired all of the writers of this book. He also hired his immediate successor, Ernest Stone.

A very intelligent man, he is more well-read than most scholars. I have told him numerous times he missed his calling. . . he is really a frustrated journalist. He devours *The New York Times* and several state papers daily, keeps statistical information for his public speeches, for private conversations with peers, students, and anyone else he can question for first-hand information.

I first met Dr. Cole in the early 1960’s while I was assigned coverage of the Alabama Legislature for *The Birmingham News*. He impressed me with his ability of getting financial support for Jacksonville State College.

He offered me a position at the college but I wasn’t sure I wanted to leave the newspaper business. He doesn’t accept “no” very well. Finally — after he raised the salary — I accepted and began employment at the college. It was the best decision I ever made.

Working with Dr. Cole for four years — before his retirement at age 70 — was a fascinating period of my life. As a college president, he had the total respect of his peers. He turned down several offers of the presidency at much larger institutions during his earlier years.

Jacksonville State and Northeast Alabama are very fortunate he didn’t leave the institution. His mark will be here forever, and it

is most appropriate that the campus center of knowledge, the 12-story library, proudly bears the name Houston Cole Library.

One of the key areas in which Dr. Cole excelled that led to the growth of Jacksonville State was his public relations ability, especially his expertise in public speaking. His longevity as moderator of the television program, "What's Your Problem?" on the then WAPI-TV in Birmingham, was of great value to the college. This Sunday afternoon program, which included two well-known ministers, played a significant role in the growth of Jacksonville State University. Not only did the parents and grandparents of prospective students watch the program, the students themselves also watched.

Houston Cole has earned the prestige he enjoys. He has received more honors than anyone I am associated with and he deserves each and every one.

My association with Houston Cole has been and is a delightful experience and treasured memory. He is a friend and I'm grateful he talked me into accepting a job at Jacksonville State.

Jack Hopper

Vice President for Institutional Advancement
Jacksonville State University



“Come, friend, seek herein the mind of man, the product of his toil, the stirrings of his spirit, the beauty of his love, the culmination of his dreams. Look deep into this mirror and find thy true self.”

Welcoming all those who enter Houston Cole Library are the inspirational words penned by Dean Lawrence Miles for his friend and colleague Houston Cole, President Emeritus, Jacksonville State University. Cole and Miles reminisce together as they recall the dedication of the library and the establishment of the Hall of Fame for Teachers housed in the library.



Dr. Cole's first teaching job was at Hawkins School.