

Weldon Wesley Boone

The following is a newspaper article written by Bill Dressler for the Hinton Daily News. Bill was a good friend of Weldon's and he gathered quite a bit of information from him to write this article.

“It has been a pleasure to talk with my former Biology teacher, Mr. Weldon Wesley Boone, who taught in Hinton High School, and was principal for many years. His many students certainly remember the names of many flowers and trees by the excellent way he taught them.

Mr. Boone and his wife, Gladys, (The former Miss Gladys Parker) are enjoying a wonderful retirement. He enjoys gardening and he will soon be playing his favorite game of bridge. He has won trophies at many tournaments by his excellent playing. Mr. and Mrs. Boone were blessed with a daughter, Mrs. Suzanne (Boone) Keffer, who is a teacher in the Hinton High School. Her two children are Miss Kathryn Dayle (Kayo) Isner, who attended Marshall University for two years, and is now in training for an L.P.N in the Summers County School of Practical Nursing. Her son, David Wesley Isner, is a junior in Hinton High School. Mrs. Gladys Boone's father, Mr. Newton B. Parker, was a conductor for the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad for many years. Her family lived in Hinton when she was a small girl, and later moved to Huntington, WV.

Mr. Weldon Wesley Boone, educator, was born at Ronceverte, WV April 20, 1906, son of Mr. Wesley Roselle Boone and Mrs. Kathryn Edith (Whanger) Boone. He attended grade schools in Greenbrier County and graduated from Greenbrier (Ronceverte) High School in 1924. He entered West Virginia University in 1925, and received his A.B. degree in 1929, M.S. degree in 1935, principal's certificate in 1944, and for the past two summers had been working on a Ph.D. degree. He also attended the University of Minnesota during the summer of 1958.

Mr. Boone started his teaching career at Herndon High School (Wyoming County) in 1929, and from 1930 he served as teacher and principal in Summers County as follows: 1930 -1942 teacher of biology, Hinton High School; 1942 – 1946 principal Sandstone High School; 1946 – 1947 teacher of biology, Hinton High School; 1947 – 1948 principal, Forest Hill High School; 1948 – 1958, principal Talcott High School; 1958 – 1959 principal, Sandstone High School; and 1959 to the time of his retirement in 1971 he was principal at Hinton High School.

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He became interested in plants in 1931 while traveling over West Virginia as a member of the West Virginia University Biological Expedition, under the direction of Dr. P.D. Strausbaugh. The following summer he traveled to the west coast as a member of a geology tour conducted by Marshall College, now Marshall University. He collected geological and botanical specimens, which he used later in his biology classes at Hinton High School. In 1933, at the suggestion of Dr. Strausbaugh, as a part of his graduate program, he made a survey of the plants in Summers County, which he added to from time to time. This survey resulted in the collection of more than 100 members, which served as the basis of the "Catalog of Plants" that follows. During the winter of 1934, he wrote a 29-page booklet on Native Trees of Summers County, designed especially for use in biology classes. All of his collections from Summers County and surrounding counties, western part of the United States, New England states, Canada, and Minnesota, numbering more than 1400 are deposited in the Herbarium of West Virginia University. He is also the author of "History of Botany in West Virginia".

People have often asked Mr. Boone about his ancestry in respect to the relationship to Daniel Boone. After considerable research, he has found some answers. He is a descendant of Squire Boone (Daniel Boone's father). Squire Boone's ancestors came from near Exeter, England, sometime before 1713 and settled in Pennsylvania. They were Quakers, and due to some differences with the Quakes, Squire moved to North Carolina. It is interesting to note that Squire had fiery red hair. Mr. Boone's ancestry is traced from an older brother of Daniel. His son, John, a nephew of Daniel, went with his uncle to Kentucky at the age of 19, in 1773. In 1774, he returned to York County, Pennsylvania, and later enlisted in the Revolutionary War. After the war, he settled in Monroe County, Virginia.

Mr. Weldon Boone's mother became a widow at age 35, when Weldon was but 5 years old. The oldest of 7 children, was a boy of 15, also small for his age, and the youngest child was born a short time after their father's death. His mother was intelligent and had sterling character. Due to her determination and strength, the five children who survived to adulthood, became college graduates, and three had advanced degrees. Three children are now living, including Weldon and his brother Rankin, who was a teacher and principal at Hinton High School. Rankin is a retired Army Colonel, living in Arlington, Virginia. His sister, Edith, (Mrs. W.C. McMillian) is living in Northridge, CA. For a period in the 1930s, she was a pharmacist for Puckett's Drug Store in Hinton. Her husband is a retired Army Colonel. Her oldest brother, Roy, was a school principal for a number of years, and retired as a Vocational Rehabilitation Senior Counselor in charge of the Wheeling office. His brother, Samuel, was an electrical engineer in Bridgeport, Connecticut,

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and his sister, Charlotte, at age 16, and his youngest sister Kathryn, age 10, both died in Hinton while attending school. They lived with his aunt, Mrs. D.F. Kean.

Mr. Boone named some of his students who impressed him or were best remembered at Hinton High School; Milton Arrington, Edward Garvey, Eleanor Meadows, Willie Weber, Jimmy Meadows, Billie Morrison, Mary Elizabeth Sullivan, Harrison Moore, Carrol Smithson, Jimmie Coste, Harold Beasley, J.C. Dillon, Jane Gum, Margaret Martin, Gordon Scaggs, John Herbert Swatts, Mildred Williams, Cody Burdette, Henry Kinney, Bill Ailstock, Ethel Humphries, Yolanda Coste, Earl Harvey, Charles Saunders, Jack Harford, Irene Weaver, Jim Doyle, Jurd Lipscomb, Tamara Hanifin, Don Bird, Leonard (Zip) Anderson, J.W. McCallister, Bill Dressler, Clotille Harford, Harold Neely, Bobby Dodd, Bill Stone, Jane Humphries, Elizabeth Huffman, George Saul, Sara Lawrence, Evelyn Brown, John McGlaughlin, Maybelle Adkins, Gordon Kinney, Bill Lindsay, George Quisenberry, Ray Woodrum, John McCormick, Seldon and Frances Plumley, Bert Kirk, Stoney Loomis, Richard Abbott, and Dale Ratliff.

In other high schools, he remembered especially Neil Rogers, Ted Rogers, Neil Webb, Junior Wood, and Eddie Love at Forest Hill. At Talcott, Libby Miller, Hershel Ward, Tommy Akers, Janet Bowden, Mary Bostic, Robert E. Via Jr., Dickie Campbell, Eddie Huston, Victor and Sterling Morgan, Marlene Jones, Lonnie Garten, Maxine Perdue, Norvin Hedrick, Fonda Whanger, B.J. Honaker, Darrell Mann, Benny Boone, Chubby Holloran, and Junior Buckland.

At Sandstone, Jerry Bowles, Larry Foose Jr., Jack Spencer, Conrad Graham, Ovid Graham, and Junior Fleshman. Connie Meador (Smith) attended grade school at both Forest Hill and Talcott. It is interesting to note that her brother, Freddie, also a grade school student at Talcott, was a good friend of J.L. Perry, Superintendent of schools. Mr. Perry knew him as a caddy at Willowwood. When Mr. Perry visited at the school, he always asked to see Freddie.

Mr. Boone's most terrifying experience occurred at Talcott. A boy brought a .38 pistol to school to sell to another boy for the purpose of shooting the principal and one of the teachers. The girlfriend of the boy who was to buy the gun, tipped Mr. Boone off and pledged him to secrecy. He called the boy into his office and took the pistol. Then he took the boy and the pistol home to the boy's parents. Later in the year, the would-be killer and his girlfriend committed suicide at her house.

At Sandstone, during the war years, the P.T.A. and entire community were involved in projects. There were pie suppers, etc., to make improvements to the

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school. The faculty was involved in the war effort by operating rationing programs, sugar for the Green Sulphur District. At Forest Hill and Talcott, active P.T.A. and community groups raised thousands of dollars for school improvements such as athletic fields, playground equipment, gym improvement, etc.

Mr. Boone was most fortunate at Hinton High School to have a faculty of exceptional quality and dedication, who went beyond the call of duty to have an exceptional school and with student activities of quality. Without mentioning any names, former students know who these teachers are, and what they accomplished. The person who influenced Mr. Boone in developing a philosophy of a principal's job was the first principal, Mr. C.N. (Coach) Gwinn. He was scholarly, all business, firm but fair, and showed no favoritism in the treatment of teachers and students alike.”

Mr. Boone's philosophy was:

“Hinton High School is not just a building and grounds: it is a laboratory where boys and girls develop their minds, express ideas, and equip themselves for a full life in a highly competitive world. It is our hope that the years you have spent at Hinton High have provided experiences which will prepare you, the graduating class, to meet the demands with which you will be faced. Have a life plan. It is your life. No one cares about your alibis. Everyone cares about your achievements. Your life plans will have many plans, home, and family plans, religious plans, recreational plans, and vocational plans. Don't rush into any of them. Consider them carefully.”

Weldon Wesley Boone died at his 10th Avenue home on January 31, 1989. He was 82 years old. He was laid to rest in the Greenbrier Memorial Park.

Weldon Wesley Boone – We salute you!

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**PRINCIPAL
MR. WELDON BOONE
A.B.M.S.
WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY**



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