

# John Dwight Patterson

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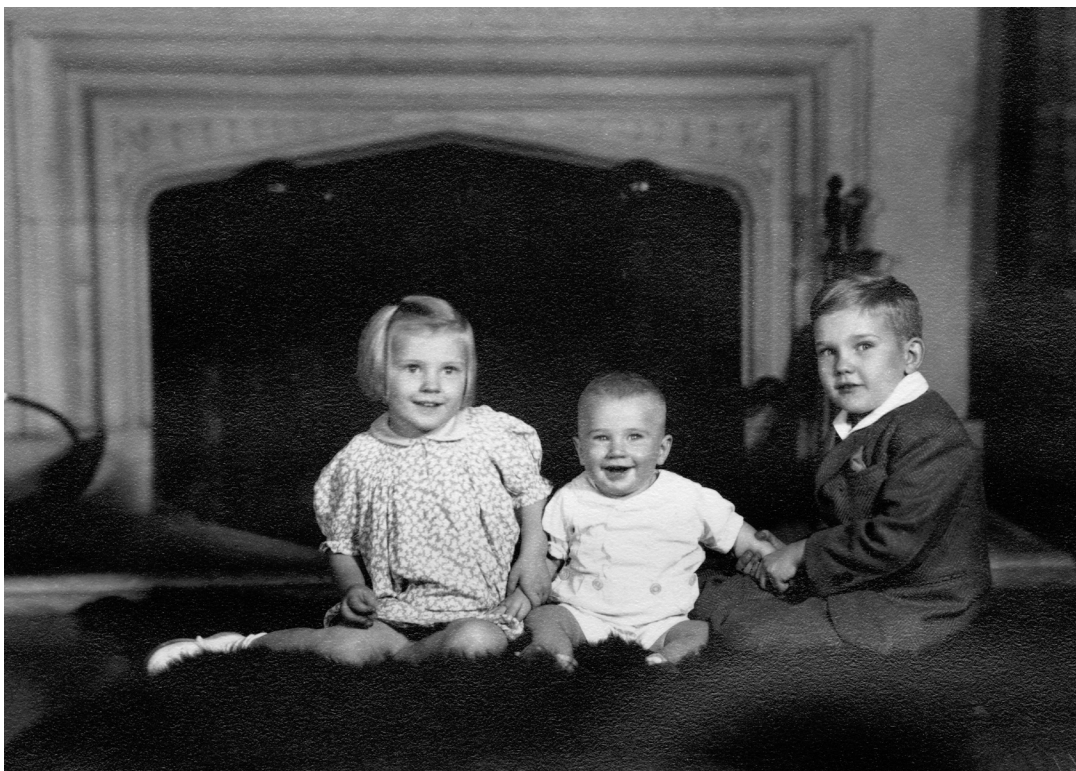


**D**wight was born February 24, 1941, in Birmingham. He lived up to the Patterson tradition by being a model student, natural athlete, Eagle Scout, acolyte and leader. He attended Lakeview grammar school and Ramsay High School, having many of the same teachers as his older brother and sister. At a young age Dwight exhibited entrepreneurial instincts unusual in a Patterson by selling eggs around the neighborhood. The fact



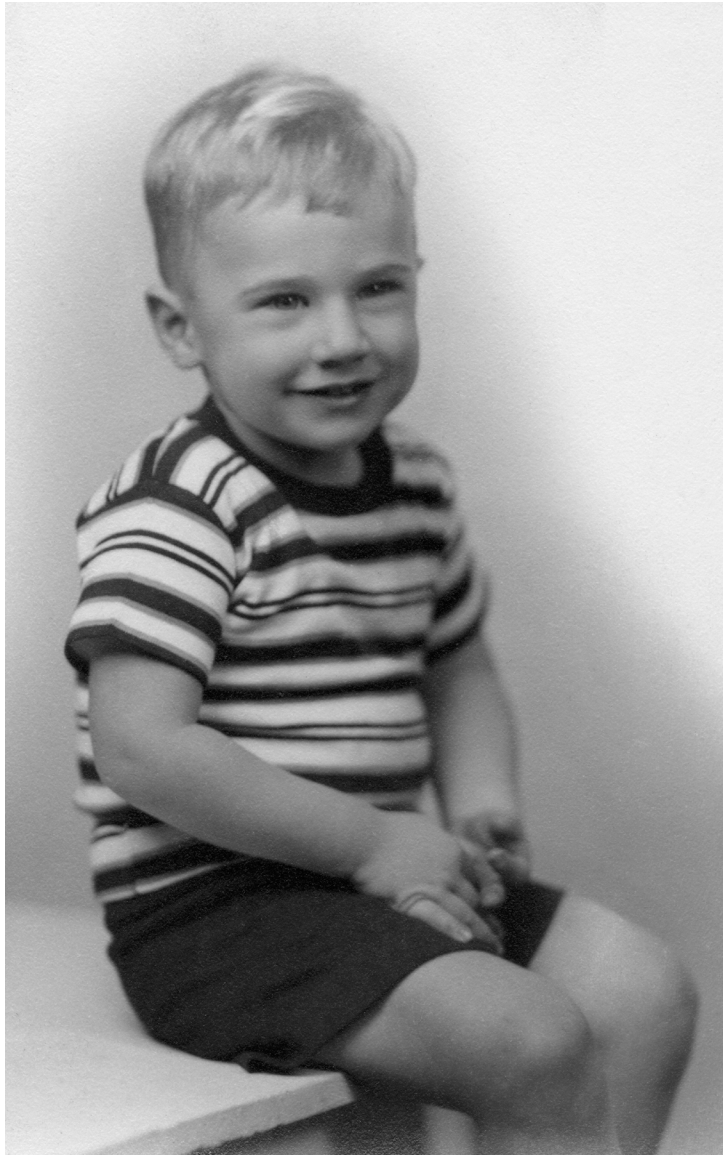


*Presumably something he ate*

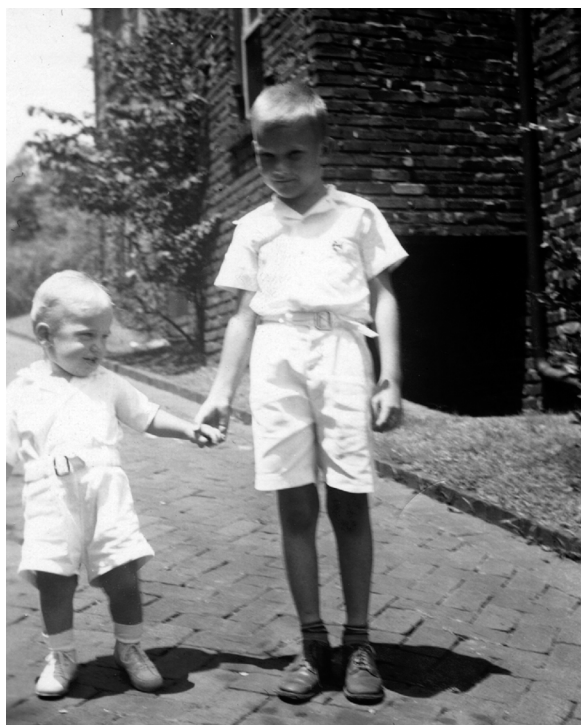


*You better learn to walk, big guy,  
'cause there's another brother about  
to arrive who's gonna take your place  
in the baby carriage.*





that his father's chicken yard was maintained by Clifton, the yardman, meant that all Dwight had to do was gather the eggs and pocket the revenue. He had a small safe with a combination lock for storing his earnings, and his envious siblings tried to take the moral high ground with regard to crass commercialism by temporarily nicknaming him "Mr. Money-Bags-Under-The-Eyes".



*January 1947:  
Probably at the  
time standing on  
the garbage can  
lid in front of the  
kitchen window  
seemed like a  
perfectly natural  
place to pose for  
a photo.*

*August 1942  
George initiates  
Dwight into the  
art of descending  
the driveway  
without tripping  
and falling, a skill  
Dwight mastered  
much more  
efficiently than  
Richie.*





*Dwight first got in with the fast crowd via the Cub Scouts. Known members of this infamous den include Bobby Colvin, George Barber, Tim Prewitt, Kingman Shelburne, and Luther Cale.*

Clifton Temple, who did yard work and a variety of tasks around the house, was a remarkable man who played an important role in the development of all the Patterson children, and Dwight may have enjoyed the closest relationship with him. Clifton was a multi-talented, wise and generous man who had played baseball for the Birmingham Black Barons in his youth and who was a pillar of the community at his church. He seemed able to accept his role as a “servant” without any loss of dignity, and Dwight like his siblings regarded him with awe and complete respect and affection. His presence in the family life was probably as responsible as the parents’ liberal beliefs for the absence of racism in the children.

Dwight was a Boston Red Sox fan and an avid follower of the Birmingham Barons, a AA farm team for the Red Sox. He had a subscription to *The Sporting New* so that he could follow the statistics of his favorite players, and he played Little League when the first teams were organized in Birmingham. His team won the league pennant, but he did not make the All Star team that went all the way to the Little League World Series. At some point he decided to bat left handed, despite the skepticism inevitably expressed by his mother who probably viewed the decision as another example of “wrongheaded” stubbornness on his part.

In grammar school Dwight had a reputation for having a temper, and the fight he had with Frank Falkenburg in the seventh grade may be the only recorded instance of a Patterson engaging in fisticuffs. Dwight’s “temper” was probably rooted in the moral indignation which has motivated and complicated his life ever since. He inherited his father’s idealism, but purified it in the crucible of his own psyche. Any crippling traces of resignation were removed so that he has preserved his commitment to social justice despite all manner of obstacles. As a teenage he was regarded by his



peers as a paragon of moral virtue. His high school fraternity brothers or football teammates who drank and smoked and committed all sorts of other unspeakably immoral acts were nonetheless his friends. They must have known that even though he disapproved of their behavior, he accepted them and liked them because he also saw their good qualities. They in return accepted his judgments as an indication of how special he was and admired him for it.

Dwight was an active participant at the Episcopal Church of the Advent to which the

*Dwight generously lets Richie drive the red firetruck in the backyard presumably because he is suitably attired.*



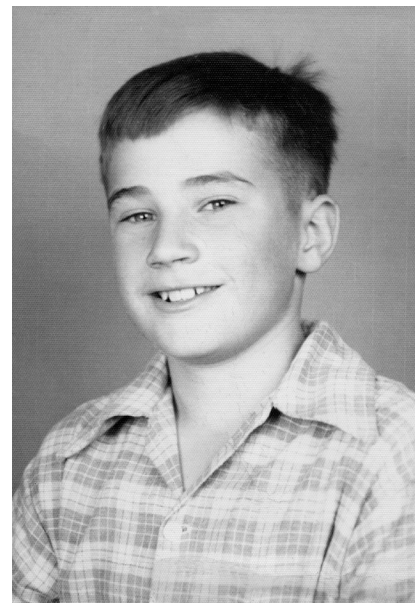




First Grade 1948



January 1947



Second Grade 1949

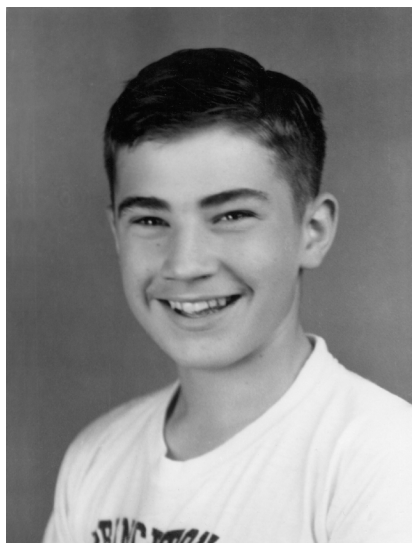


January 1953: Making a fashion statement on the front lawn seems to be something of a family tradition.

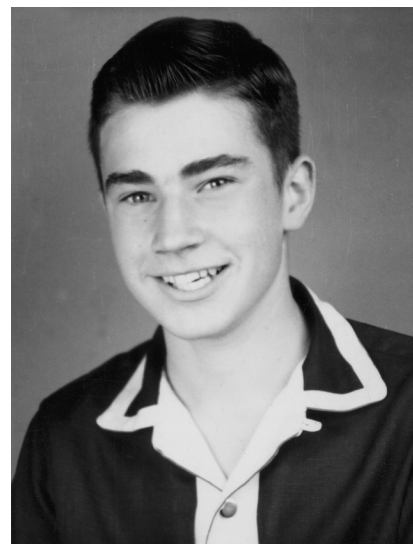
family belonged. When Charlotte and Richard decided they had had it with Sunday school at the Episcopal church and defected to the Methodist church for a few years, Dwight remained loyal to the Episcopal church as did George. As an acolyte, member of the Young People's Service League and member of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew, Dwight had the benefit of the tutelage of The Rev. John C. Turner. Mr. Turner combined the sweetness of a man whose favorite hymn was "Jesus Loves Me" with the sophistication of a minister who had studied at Sewanee

*Knicker suits were fashionable but wearing each leg a different length may have been a personal touch.*

Sixth Grade 1953



Seventh Grade 1954







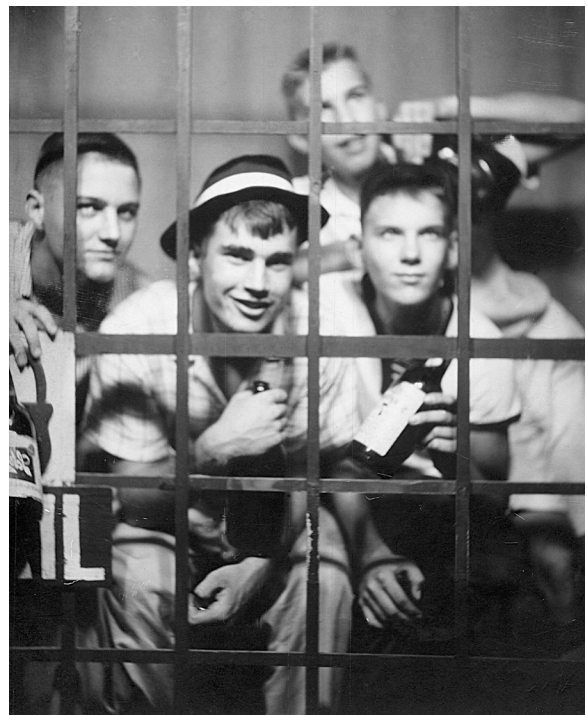
*Lakeview Grammar School Class of 1955. It is perhaps indicative of something that Dwight wrote the names of all his classmates on the back. Dwight's best friends, Luther Cale and Richard Green, are next to him on the top row.*

and in England. He was the perfect complement to the booming voice and imposing presence of his superior, Bishop Carpenter, and more than anyone or anything else was responsible for the religious beliefs which have sustained Dwight all his life. He combined profound and sincere Christian beliefs with a joyful sense of humor

*Taking his cousin Bill for a spin in the 48 lb. aluminum runabout powered by a 7.5 hp motor at Lake Martin*



*Dwight and Richard boozing it up in jail at the Tallassee Fair with Richard Green and Bill Patterson*





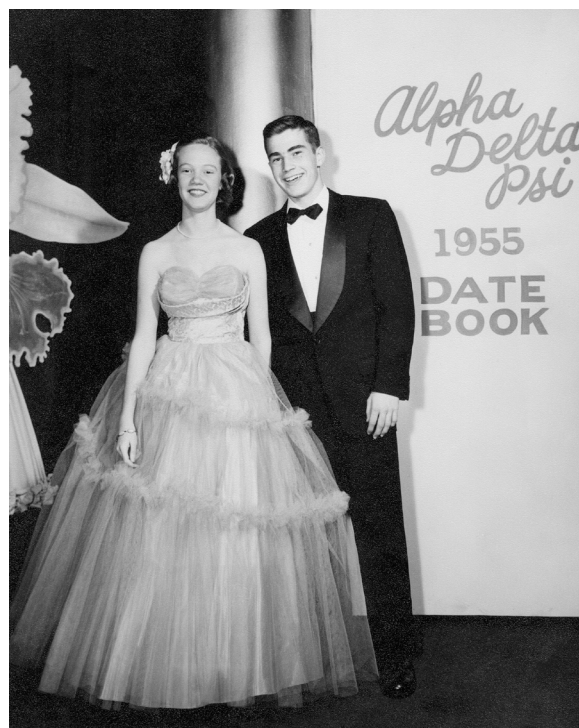


May 11, 1958: In the pulpit at The Church of the Advent, where he was an acolyte and President of the Young People's Service League

and an obvious affection for all the members of his parish. Only he could have called Dwight "Duh" (short for Duh-wite) and have it be an expression of respect and affection.

Dwight's Boy Scout troop was a source of great friendships and real adventures. On one of his earliest weekend camping trips the scouts discovered the corpse of a man who had hanged himself in the woods. This went way beyond the snipe hunts and ghost stories around the fire which usually spiced up the outings, but Dwight

*For his first of a series of sorority and fraternity "leadouts" every December and June, Dwight escorted Martee McPherson.*



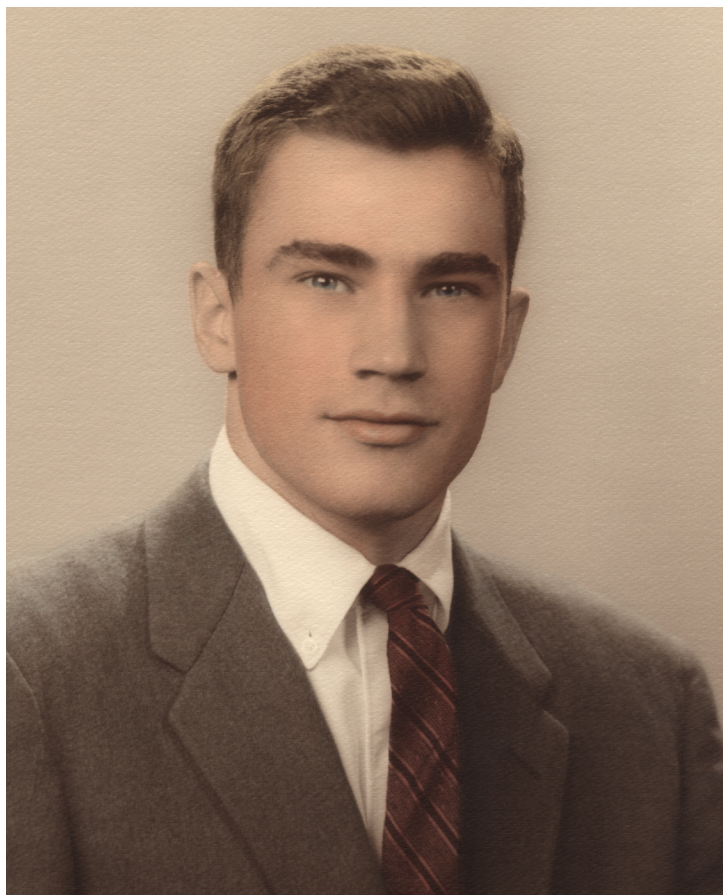
was not deterred. In the seventh grade during Spring break the troop went to the Okefenokee Swamp, and in 1957 he and Richard went to a national jamboree in Valley Forge with other members of their troop.

At Ramsay Dwight played football and ran track. He was quarterback of the freshman team, but became a blocking back when the coach switched over to a single wing offense. He was elected president of the student body and garnered every possible academic honor. He considered going to Sewanee, but decided instead to follow George to Princeton. He graduated from Princeton in 1963, majoring in politics with an emphasis on American political theory. He received an ROTC commission upon

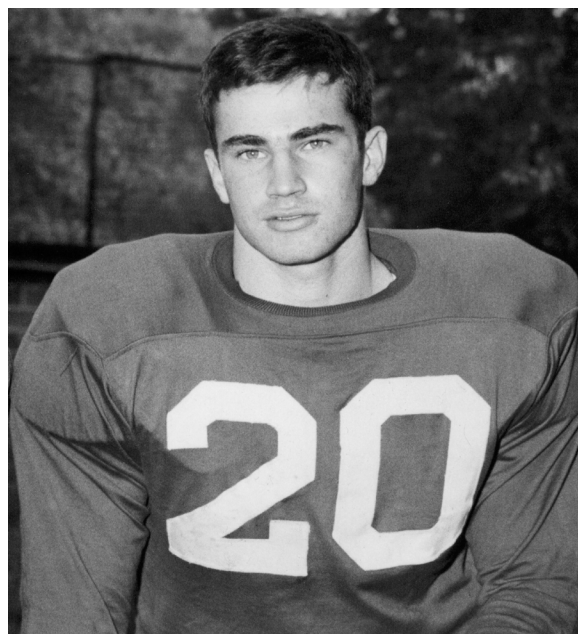
*Eagle Scouts Dwight and Richard with the Birmingham troop at the National Jamboree in Valley Forge*







*Dwight began his football career as the quarterback for the "B" team; but in his Junior year the team switched to a single-wing offense, and he moved to blocking back.*



*President of the Student Body, National Honor Society, Harvard Book Award, Varsity Football, "B" Team Baseball & Track, Head Marshall, Key Club, Voted Most Outstanding*

*No one would ever have described Dwight as a party animal; but he always knew how to have a good time, and he had excellent taste in ladies.*



*Celebrating the end of his senior year in high school with the Brotherhood of Phi Sigma Tau, for which he was vice-president*





graduation and served in the Army in Germany for two years.

After the army he worked with VISTA in Goldsboro, N.C., for two years as part of the War On Poverty. He then went back to school to study computer programming in an attempt to develop a more tangible basis for a career. He married Margaret Pittman from Columbia, S.C., in February of 1969, and they moved to Dallas where she was a graduate student at SMU. He and Peggy have three children: Margaret Elizabeth (born December 12, 1972), John Dwight, Jr. (born February 13, 1975) and Harriet Abigail (born May 21, 1976), all of whom eventually followed in their Dad's footsteps by going to Princeton.

Dwight worked primarily in customer service with several different computer companies until the recession and the chaotic conditions of the computer industry persuaded him to turn to teaching instead. He supplemented his income by working in retail sales while getting started as a teacher and spent many years teach-

*Dwight with his Princeton roommates Bill Lucas, Randy Ravelle, Duffy Hughes, Hilton Smith and Mike Rediker*

*Dwight trained at Fort Sill, OK, and was then stationed in Schweinfurt, Germany for two years.*







*Christmas Day 1972: Celebrating a new addition to the furnishings for his home in Dallas*

ing math at a public high school in Dallas.

In 1997 Dwight expressed his attitude towards teaching in a video interview for a project his nephew Tristan was shooting:

*The students in the neighborhood that I teach have traditionally done very poorly in math and that's limited their opportunity to qualify with college boards and other things. Given my druthers I want to teach math in a way that it really is useful to them. I want them to know how to use computers; I want them to be able to use the concepts and think with the concepts. At the same time I have to face the fact that there are people in the 10th and 11th grade who can't subtract. And that means when they get to that point someone has to love them enough to teach them what they need to know.*

When the Y2K crisis created a renewed demand for COBOL and FORTRAN programmers, Dwight was lured back into computer work, helping to debug systems for the city of Dallas.

Dwight and Peggy were divorced in 1986. Peggy became the first woman in Texas to be ordained as an Episcopal minister and subsequently moved to Delaware to become the Dean at the Cathedral Church of St. John in Wilmington.

Dwight has been active in local politics and involved in community affairs particularly



*Peggy and Elizabeth*

in the area of public education. In 1972 he became a neighborhood precinct chairman and election judge for the Democratic Party and served in that capacity for 12 years. He also shared Peggy's interest in the Dallas Council of Churches. Their home was in an older neighborhood and as more younger people moved





# To Continue Service to Our Neighborhood



Pol. Adv. Paid by Dwight Patterson

Re-Elect  
**DWIGHT  
PATTERSON**  
Democratic Precinct Chairman  
Vote May 4  
Robert E. Lee School  
(Delmar at Vanderbilt)



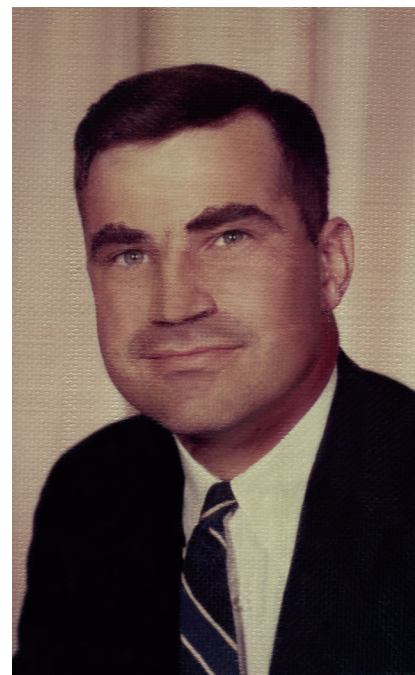
into the area the neighborhood organized to stop thoroughfare expansion and encourage plans for mass transit (which eventually developed into DART).

As part of their neighborhood involvement they attended meetings of a group called the Alliance for Integrated Education. This group was large but had its legs cut out from under it by a School Board directive that prohibited school district employees from belonging. As a small group the Alliance focused on its Board as the decision maker. With Dwight as chairman this tri-racial group suggested four points to solve the desegregation crisis. The board believed an integrated community was a

positive idea and input from different groups provided a strength in decision making.

Peggy would host coffees for political candidates, and Dwight passed out sample ballots that increased voter turnout. The federal judge accepted the four points of the Alliance for Integrated Education. One of the points was that naturally integrated neighborhoods did not have to bus elementary school children. Dwight's neighborhood qualified because it blended Anglo and Hispanic family. This eventually made the property values for homes there triple in value.

As the desegregation plan took place, Dwight served on a committee for the Dallas

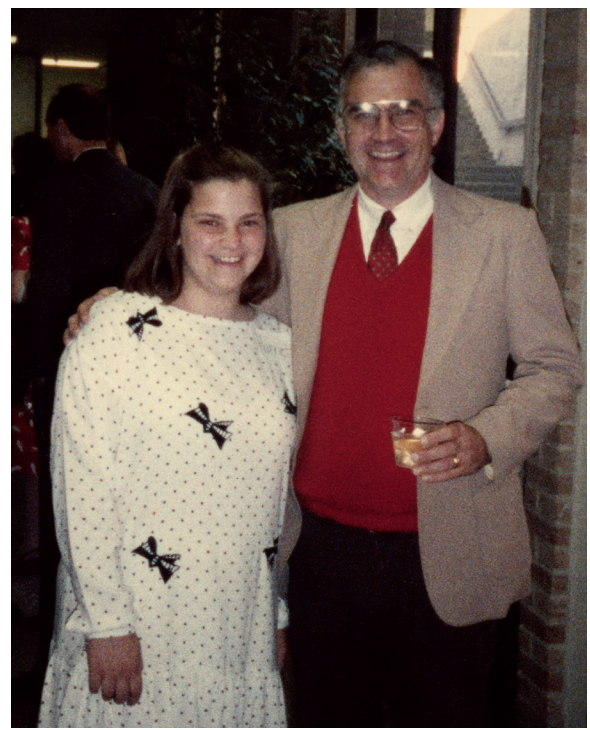






*Visiting in Birmingham 1978*

Council of Churches. The only project for the year was to work for a “smooth transition.” on the Desegregation Plan. As a result he got a telephone call saying that the caller would make sure his child was bussed across town. Since his oldest daughter, Elizabeth, was only 3 years old , he had no children in school. Although Dwight was immune to intimidation, he was quite sensitive to the fear and uncertainty caused by the Bus Plan. Rather than have the group make statements which might serve to aggravate tensions, they worked behind the scenes



*Confirmation Day 1988*

and encouraged others to help ease the process. Eventually the school board election process changed to a “single member” district plan, which meant a neighborhood only voted for one member. The result was the inclusion of Blacks and Hispanics on the Board. Several members of the Alliance for Integrated Education became School Board members. Dwight and Peggy’s children had good experiences in the public schools, and Dwight found it very gratifying to see his own children benefit from his and Peggy’s idealistic community service efforts.

