

A black and white photograph of a man, A.L. Burruss, sitting in a large, dark, upholstered chair. He is wearing a dark suit jacket, a white shirt, and a patterned tie. He has short, dark hair and is wearing glasses. He is smiling broadly, showing his teeth. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

“This book is a genuine contribution to Georgia history...”

—President Jimmy Carter

A.L. BURRUSS
THE LIFE OF A GEORGIA POLITICIAN AND A
MAN TO TRUST

MARGARET BENNETT WALTERS

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THE LIFE OF A GEORGIA POLITICIAN AND A
M A N T O T R U S T

by
MARGARET BENNETT WALTERS



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For my husband, Steve, and my daughter, Jacqueline.

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FOREWORD

A. L. Burruss established his business, served on the county commission, and rose to prominence in the General Assembly during a golden age of Cobb County's history. The arrival of the aircraft industry during World War II triggered Cobb's population explosion. As cotton fields turned into subdivisions, the county experienced unprecedented prosperity. The role of the politician in this era of rapid growth was to build the infrastructure necessary to sustain a high quality of life. Burruss and his generation of remarkable statesmen seemed uniquely qualified to do just that.

Cobb County, Georgia was blessed throughout the late twentieth century by a succession of gifted leaders who found creative ways of serving local needs. As Margaret Walters points out, A. L. Burruss came from relatively humble origins and was not a Cobb countian by birth. But he arrived at a time when opportunity abounded for imaginative, hard-working young people. With his best friend, Chet Austin, he built Tip Top Poultry into a highly successful business. Then, he turned to politics, winning an election in 1964 to Cobb's first five-member county commission. After a term on the commission, he won a seat in the Georgia House of Representatives, which he held until his death in 1986. During the 1970s and 1980s A. L. Burruss and his colleague Joe Mack Wilson dominated the local legislative delegation and funneled state dollars to Cobb County for a host of worthwhile local projects.

Among his many contributions, Burruss proved to be a great friend of higher education. His name is properly enshrined at Kennesaw State University in the A. L. Burruss Business Building and the A. L. Burruss Institute of Public Service & Research. We can all be grateful that the Burruss Institute saw the need for a book-length biography and that Professor Walters was chosen to take on the task. Now, we have a work that will remind future generations of A. L. Burruss's distinguished service and will challenge us all to emulate the virtues of honor and integrity that were the hallmarks of his career.

Thomas A. Scott
Professor Emeritus of History
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In addition to the early readers of my manuscript, I am very grateful to those who knew A. L. Burruss personally and let me interview them. In

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I am most grateful to my family. This book could not have been written without the love, encouragement, and support of my husband, Steve Walters, and my daughter, Jacqueline Walters.