This book is a genuine contribution to Georgia history. It tells the story of A. L. Burruss, who, in the years after World War II, was one of the leaders in moving our state forward both economically and politically. I, personally, valued his friendship and support for my state and national campaigns. When I was governor, he skillfully served as my floor leader in the House of Representatives. His remarkable life and accomplishments deserve recognition.

—Jimmy Carter
39th President of the United States, 76th Governor of Georgia

Margaret Walters has given us a biography of Al Burruss all should read. It shows there are public servants who serve for all the right reasons—not for private gain but the public good. Al Burruss was a giant among us during very difficult times and is sorely missed today. Walters writes convincingly and truthfully about how AI could bring different people of varied political persuasions together for the common good—a trait sorely missed today. As I travel around Georgia and especially Cobb County I see the handiwork of Al. We and the generations to come are his beneficiaries.

—Roy Barnes
80th Governor of Georgia

The dominant characteristic of some exceptional leaders is a superior intellect, and Al Burruss was as "bright as a new penny"; for some it is a heightened energy level, and AI had a full measure of this gift; for still others, a commanding presence is the foundation that draws us to them, and when Al walked into a room, all eyes were upon him. But our very best leaders are, at their core, good, decent people. Al Burruss was such a leader. Al liked people; he cared about them; he wanted to help them. And because we knew this, he had our complete trust. When I think about Al, as often I do, a certain bittersweet and gentle smile spreads across my face. When you read this wonderful book by Margaret Walters, I bet one comes to yours too.

—P. Harris Hines
Justice, Supreme Court of Georgia

$13.95

Cover photo courtesy of the Burruss Family
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A.L. BURRUSS
THE LIFE OF A GEORGIA POLITICIAN AND A MAN TO TRUST

by
MARGARET BENNETT WALTERS
For my husband, Steve, and my daughter, Jacqueline.
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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
Kennesaw State University
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