



## NEVILLE'S FATHER

CHARLES DAVIS FRIERSON JR.

b. 1/12/1907 *Jonesboro, Craighead Co., AR*

d. 12/26/1970 *Jonesboro, Craighead Co., AR*



V.

## CHARLES DAVIS FRIERSON JR.'S LIFE

Neville's father, **Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (1907–1970)**, was a distinguished lawyer, banker, and farmer in northeastern Arkansas in the middle of the twentieth century. He was also a quintessential civic leader in his time and place, and he was deeply imbued with a sense of community service. He lived his entire life in Jonesboro, Arkansas.

Charles Davis Frierson Jr. was born on January 12, 1907, in Jonesboro, Craighead County. He was destined to become the third in a line of Frierson lawyers engaged in the political life of Arkansas.

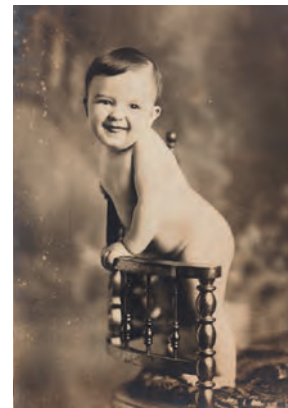
Charles Davis Frierson Jr. was the oldest of the two children of **Charles Davis Frierson Sr. (1877–1947)** and **Charlotte Martin Gallaway (1878–1968)**. His sister and only sibling, **Margaret Frierson (1912–1990)**, was five years his junior.<sup>1</sup> Neville's aunt, Margaret Frierson, married Francis Adams Cherry (1908–1965), a native of Oklahoma. Francis Cherry became a judge in Jonesboro and later served as governor of Arkansas from 1953 to 1955.<sup>2</sup> He was Neville's only uncle. Their three children are Neville's only first cousins.<sup>3</sup>



*Charles Davis Frierson Jr. at age two, standing on the wooden plank walkway in front of his Cherry Avenue home in Jonesboro in August of 1909. This photograph depicts Charles's introduction to the sport of hunting.*



*Charles Davis Frierson Jr. in 1907.*



*Charles Davis Frierson Jr. at nine months old.*

*Charles Davis Frierson Jr. at age four in 1911. This photograph is printed on a postcard, on which is handwritten "Merry Christmas to Grandmother." It is signed, "Charles Jr., Dec. 25, 1911."*



*A 1922 photograph of Charles Davis Frierson Sr. (age forty-four), Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (age fifteen), and Margaret Frierson (age ten). They are standing beside their East Cherry Avenue house.*



*Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (age seventeen), summer of 1924.*

In 1913 Neville's father entered the public schools of Jonesboro and attended there for the next twelve years. During his high-school years, he was a good student, an excellent athlete, an enthusiastic hunter, and an Eagle Scout.

In 1924, at age seventeen, Charles Frierson Jr. was selected as the only Arkansan on a forty-eight-man team of Boy Scouts representing the United States at the second International Boy Scout Jamboree in Copenhagen, Denmark.<sup>4</sup> The first such jamboree was held in London, England, in 1920.

To participate in the 1924 event, Charles Frierson Jr. was away from Jonesboro for two months. He traveled by rail and ship, visiting New York as well as the capitals of Europe. The American team won over teams from thirty-seven other countries, and the team was awarded the King's Cup by Sir Robert Baden-Powell (1857–1941), founder of the Boy Scout movement. After returning to Jonesboro in September 1924, Charles wrote a long and interesting account of his trip. It was published in *The Jonesboro Evening Sun*.<sup>5</sup>



*Charles Davis Frierson Sr. (age forty-eight) and Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (age eighteen), January 1, 1926. I do not think Charles Jr. ever went hunting again after his father died in 1947.*

In 1925, at age eighteen, Charles Frierson Jr. graduated from Jonesboro High School, where he had begun a teenage courtship with a classmate, **Margaret Alice Purifoy (1908–1973)**, who was sixteen months his junior.



Charles Davis Frierson Jr.  
(age eighteen) off to college at  
the University of Arkansas.

Like his father and mother before him, Charles Frierson Jr. enrolled in 1925 at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, 285 miles west of Jonesboro, in northwestern Arkansas. Charles Jr. joined the Kappa Sigma Fraternity, even though his father encouraged him to join the Kappa Alpha Order.<sup>6</sup> Shortly after he arrived at the University of Arkansas, Charles met Margaret Jewell (1909–1998), a sixteen-year-old junior at the university. According to an autobiographical account written by her in 1989, she dated, fell in love with, and went steady with Charles Jr. during his first two years at college.<sup>7</sup>

During his second year at the University of Arkansas, Charles Frierson Jr. joined a sophomore class Greek secret society called T. N. E. (Theta Nu Epsilon). In her 1989 autobiography, Margaret Jewell Mullen related a T. N. E. escapade that she and Charles undertook in

1927.<sup>8</sup> Using flowery prose, she also wrote a chapter entitled “Watching Him Run,” which was about Charles competing in an April 1927 track race.<sup>9</sup> Margaret Jewell moved to Oregon after her 1927 graduation, and she and Charles never saw each other again.

Charles Frierson Jr. was an athlete and campus leader during his junior year at the University of Arkansas. He is depicted often in the university’s annual yearbook, called the *Razorback*.<sup>10</sup> In April 1927, he was elected president of his junior class. The *Jonesboro Evening Sun* reported, “He received one hundred and fifteen votes against his opponent’s fifty-three, which is quite a distinction for Charles, and indicates that he is popular with his fellow students.” He was defeated in the race for president of his senior class.

In the spring of 1927, Charles Frierson Jr.’s high-school girlfriend, Margaret Alice Purifoy, graduated from Jonesboro College. That summer Margaret Purifoy created a photo album with pictures of herself and her friends. The album includes an iconic (at least in the Frierson family) photograph of Neville’s parents-to-be and their friends at the end of that fabled and legendary summer.\* In the photograph, there are seven people sitting in a 1918 Model T touring car, owned by twenty-year-old Charles Frierson Jr. The large tire on the running board is probably an old truck tire and was likely put there as a joke.

\*One Summer: America 1927 is a highly acclaimed history book written in 2013 by Bill Bryson (b. 1951).



*Charles Davis Frierson Jr. and friends: (back seat, left to right) Howard Little (1907–1991), age twenty, who became a Jonesboro attorney; Mary Elizabeth Mitchell (1907–2001), age twenty; James Patrick (1907–1981), age twenty; Irene Sanderson (1906–1997), age twenty-one; (front seat, left to right) Edith Diamant (1909–1980), age eighteen, who lived until early 1927 in the Frierson House at 1112 South Main Street; Margaret Alice Purifoy, age nineteen, Neville’s mother; and Charles Davis Frierson Jr., age twenty, Neville’s father. James Patrick and Irene Sanderson married in 1931 and are the parents of Neville’s childhood friend Suzanne Patrick (1936–2017).*



*Charles Davis Frierson Jr.*



*Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (age twenty) and Margaret Alice Purifoy (age nineteen) in Charles Jr.’s Model T Ford in 1927.*



*Charles Davis Frierson Jr. swimming at Camp Frierson, near Jonesboro, in July 1927.*



*Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (right) and John Dupree Eldridge Jr. (1909–2002) (left) in the winter of 1929–30. They are standing in front of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool, constructed in 1922–23. The pool is over two thousand feet long and sits between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument; it is part of the National Mall.*



*The small duplex apartment where Margaret Alice Purifoy and Charles Davis Frierson Jr. lived until sometime in 1933. They lived in the north apartment, which is on the right above. While living there, their first child, Charles Davis Frierson III, was born on July 5, 1932. The duplex still exists.*

In the fall of 1929, Charles Frierson Jr. entered the Law School of George Washington University in Washington, D.C.<sup>11</sup> During that year, he lived in Foggy Bottom, just west of the White House.

For his second year of law school, Charles Frierson Jr. returned to Fayetteville, where he graduated from the University of Arkansas Law School in the spring of 1931. After graduation he was admitted to the Arkansas Bar and joined his father in the practice of law. They formed the firm Frierson and Frierson, a partnership that continued for the next sixteen years.

Also in 1931, at age twenty-four, Charles Frierson Jr. married his high-school sweetheart, Margaret Purifoy, in a grand ceremony at the First Baptist Church on October 2. His best man was his first cousin Thomas Whitsett Hughes (1902–1989) of Memphis, and the maid of honor was his nineteen-year-old sister, Margaret Frierson. For their honeymoon, the newlyweds drove to Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, and New York.

The newlywed Friersons' first home was a small duplex apartment on Angelus Street, southwest of downtown Jonesboro. Their first child, Charles Davis Frierson III, arrived on July 5, 1932. In 1933 they moved to a modest two-bedroom house at nearby 823 Park Avenue. The house was acquired in exchange for a legal fee owed to Charles Frierson Jr. The Friersons expanded the house and lived there for more than thirty years.



*A photograph from the 1950s of the house where the Friersons lived from 1933 until 1965.*



*Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (age twenty-seven) with his son Charles Davis Frierson III (age two), September 1934.*

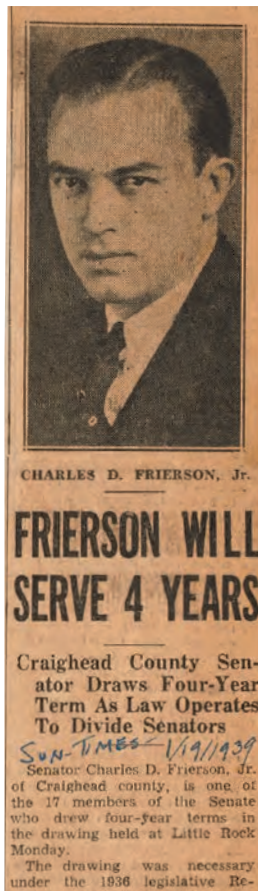
In 1934, at age twenty-seven, Charles Frierson Jr. was selected to serve as the city attorney for Jonesboro. It was a position to which his father had been selected twenty-seven years earlier, and to which his son would be selected twenty-six years later. All three of the Charles Friersons served four-year terms as the city attorney for Jonesboro, Arkansas.

On June 1, 1936, Neville, the Friersons' second child, was born at St. Bernard's Hospital in Jonesboro.



*Neville Frierson, almost one year old, with her father, May 1937.*





*Charles Davis Frierson Jr. was one of seventeen senators (out of the thirty-five elected in 1938) to draw a four-year term of office. He served as an Arkansas senator from 1938 to 1942.*

*James Gordon Frierson welcomed in 1940 by his older brother, Charles Davis Frierson III (almost age eight), and older sister, Neville Frierson (almost age four).*

In 1938, at age thirty-one, Charles Frierson Jr. was elected to the Arkansas State Senate. It was a position to which his grandfather **James Gordon Frierson (1837–1884)** had also been elected, at about age thirty-three, in 1870. There are thirty-five state senators in Arkansas, and it is a part-time job. Charles Jr. was an active legislator; one of the first bills he introduced sought to legalize the operation of motion picture shows on Sundays. The bill passed by twenty-five votes to three on January 19, 1939.

On April 9, 1940, the Friersons' third child, James Gordon Frierson (1940–2015), was born. James was to become a lawyer, like his brother and three generations of Friersons before him. He graduated with an economics degree from Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, received his law degree from there in 1965, and earned his MBA at the University of Arkansas in 1969. For thirty-four years, James taught at the College of Business at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Tennessee. In 1977 he was named a distinguished faculty member. Over the course of his career, he published five books and over three hundred journal articles, mostly on the subject of employment law. James Gordon Frierson died at age seventy-five, on September 25, 2015, in Elizabethton, Tennessee. For many decades, he lived with the effects of Crohn's disease, a chronic inflammatory bowel disease.



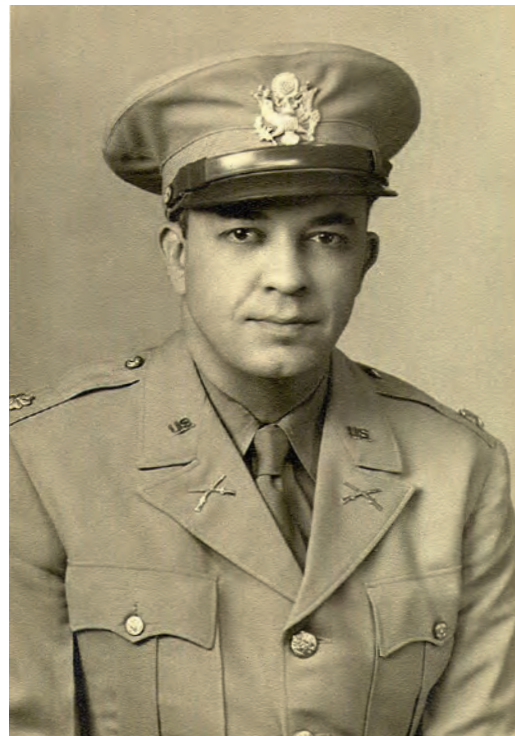
In spite of the Great Depression (1929–39), the decade of the 1930s was, in some respects, a halcyon one for the Friersons in Jonesboro. Charles Frierson Sr. and Charles Frierson Jr. were contributing to the civic life of the community, and their families were healthy and expanding. They had a successful law practice and a number of investment opportunities, including the Mercantile Bank and considerable farmland.

In March 1942, Charles Davis Frierson Jr. entered the United States Army at age thirty-five. Having been in the Army Reserve, he was given the rank of lieutenant and assigned to the Military Intelligence Division of the Army. He was first based in St. Paul, Minnesota, and in July 1942, he was transferred to Omaha, Nebraska, where his family came to visit in August of that year. His wife and three children spent extended time in Omaha during the summers of 1943, 1944, and 1945. The family also got together for Christmas each year. Charles was promoted to the rank of captain on December 18, 1942.

On April 4, 1944, Captain Charles Frierson Jr. received his promotion to the rank of major. In a congratulatory letter to him, his father wrote in April 1944: *“You are the first Frierson I know of that got in the face cards. Most of them have been buck privates, lieutenants, or captains at the most.”\**

In July 1944, while still in Omaha, Charles Frierson Jr. wrote a letter in which he related his history for the previous twenty years, the period between 1924 and 1944. This rare autobiographical account was written on the twentieth anniversary of his trip to the International Boy Scout Jamboree in Denmark.<sup>12</sup>

Charles Frierson Jr.’s principal and most memorable assignment during World War II (1939–45) was the investigation of Japanese fire balloons, weapons launched against the United States in late 1944 and early 1945.<sup>13</sup>



*Major Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (age thirty-seven), 1944. He is wearing the epaulets of a major designated by a gold oak leaf.*

\*A face card is an important person, a star, or a big shot.

After more than three years in the Army, Charles Davis Frierson Jr. returned in late 1945 to his family and law practice in Jonesboro. Just a little over a year later, in January 1947, his father, Charles Davis Frierson Sr., died of a heart attack. It was a life-changing moment for forty-year-old Charles Jr. That same year, he joined the

board of the Mercantile Bank, the bank his father had been president of since he gained a controlling interest in 1944. In 1947 Charles Jr. was also selected to succeed his father as chairman of the Democratic Central Committee of Craighead County. Thus, the Friersons, father and son, led the Democratic Party in Jonesboro for forty-three years, from 1927 to 1970.

On May 26, 1947, Margaret Purifoy and Charles Frierson Jr.'s last child, Cherry Purifoy Frierson, a member of the early Baby Boomer\* generation, was born.



**Like Father, Like Son—New Chairman Of Central Committee**  
*Sun Mar 17-47*

**Late Chairman's Son Selected To Be His Successor**  
*Sun Mar 12-47*

*Top: Charles Davis Frierson Jr. with Herbert MacAdams (1915–2001), March 1947. They would become rival bankers, heading the two largest banks in Jonesboro in the 1950s and 1960s.*

*Right: Charles Frierson Jr. with his four children, c. 1952: (left to right) Charles Davis Jr., Cherry Purifoy, James Gordon, Neville, and Charles Davis III.*



*\*Baby Boomers are people born in the post–World War II period between 1946 and 1964.*

The 1950s was a particularly busy decade for Charles Frierson Jr. He created a major law firm, became a serious farmer and a bank executive, and was deeply involved in the political and civic life of his community. In 1951 Charles Frierson Jr. organized a new law firm, Frierson, Walker, and Snellgrove. His partner G. David Walker (1910–1989) was a Helena, Arkansas, lawyer with whom he had served in the Intelligence Corps in World War II. The other partner was J. Frank Snellgrove Jr. (1921–2008), a local lawyer whose office was already in the Frierson Building in Jonesboro.

By the 1950s, Charles Frierson Jr. had also become an avid farmer. He and his father had bought land during the Depression and World War II. In June 1952, the family's land holdings were mentioned in a Mid-South Gas Company publication, announcing that Charles Frierson Jr. had been named to the company's board of directors:

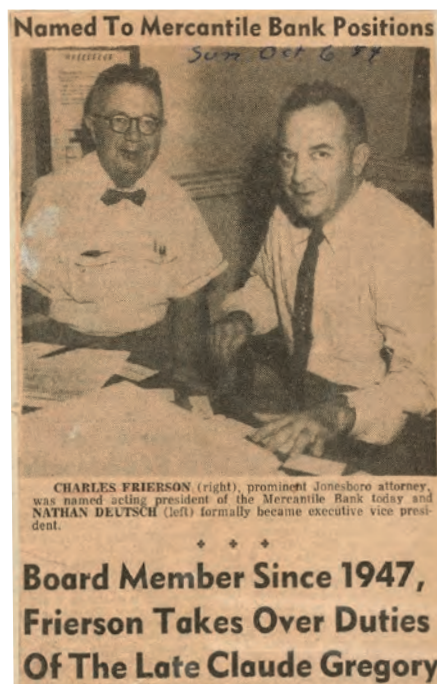
*"In addition to his large law practice, he finds time to superintend the operations of wide farming interests. He owns 3,200 acres of land in Craighead, Poinsett, and Lawrence Counties. He says it includes some of the best and some of the worst land in the State."*

The year 1952 was also a busy one because Charles Frierson Jr.'s brother-in-law, Francis Cherry, was elected governor of Arkansas in the fall of that year. The Frierson family, with their deep roots in Arkansas politics, was certainly a force in the election of Governor Cherry. In fact, Charles Frierson Jr. served as Cherry's campaign manager.

On March 27, 1953, the local newspaper announced that Charles Frierson Jr. would begin developing six acres of an eighty-acre Frierson farm near his home in Jonesboro. He said that the development would be a new residential section and further development would come later, depending upon demand.

In September 1954, Claude Gregory (1893–1954), president of the Mercantile Bank in Jonesboro, died. As a bank director and a major shareholder, Charles Frierson Jr. was named president of the bank two weeks after Gregory's death. Charles led the bank for the next sixteen years.

*A newspaper account announcing that Charles Davis Frierson Jr. would head the Mercantile Bank, October 6, 1954.*



In the 1950s, as agriculture became more mechanized, the foremost community initiative throughout the South was attracting industry to build manufacturing plants and create jobs. From his position as a leading lawyer and banker in Jonesboro, Charles Frierson Jr. worked tirelessly to build the city's infrastructure and court Northern industrialists. He was remarkably successful. In 1960 *The Commercial Appeal*, the Memphis area's leading newspaper, presented him with its first Distinguished Service Award and named him Industrial Man of the Year. The newspaper called him "Mr. Northeast Arkansas."<sup>14</sup>

On the personal front, the 1950s was a time of transition, especially for Charles Frierson Jr.'s two oldest children. Charles Frierson III graduated from Arkansas State College in Jonesboro in 1953, after which he joined the military to serve in the Korean War (1950–53).\* He left for Korea in December 1953, a few months after a truce was signed on July 27, 1953. Charles III represented the sixth generation of Frierson men to participate in a major American war:

<b>Captain William Frierson Jr. (1733–1803)</b>	<b>American Revolutionary War (1775–83)</b>
<b>Captain Moses Gordon Frierson (1775–1813)</b>	<b>War of 1812 (1812–15)</b>
<b>Lieutenant James Gordon Frierson (1837–1884)</b>	<b>American Civil War (1861–65)</b>
<b>Private Charles Davis Frierson Sr. (1877–1947)</b>	<b>World War I (1914–18)</b>
<b>Major Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (1907–1970)</b>	<b>World War II (1939–45)</b>
<b>Lieutenant Charles Davis Frierson III (b. 1932)</b>	<b>Korean War (1950–53)</b>

*The Frierson family in December 1953, as Charles Davis Frierson III was leaving for Korea.*



\*The Korean War, fought during the Cold War (1947–91) on the Korean peninsula, was a war between North Korea, supported by China and the Soviet Union, and South Korea, supported by the United Nations. About 300,000 Americans served in Korea, and just under 40,000 Americans were killed.



*Charles Davis Frierson III and Carolyn Rhea  
at their wedding on November 28, 1954.*



*Neville Frierson and John Henry Bryan Jr.  
at their wedding on August 24, 1958.*

On November 28, 1954, twenty-two year-old Charles Davis Frierson III married his college sweetheart, Carolyn Rhea (b. 1933), in Tuckerman, Arkansas. In 1957 their first child—and Charles Davis Frierson Jr.'s first grandchild—Sandra Rhea Frierson (1957–2005), was born. Although she was born with a congenital heart defect, Sandra lived a productive and courageous life until her death at age forty-seven, in 2005. Her extensive genealogical work was highly useful to me in preparing my wife's family history.

Neville and I graduated from Southwestern at Memphis (now Rhodes College) in the spring of 1958. After three years of courtship, we married on August 24, 1958, at the First Presbyterian Church in Jonesboro.



*Charles Davis Frierson Jr.'s new home, built in 1965.*

In the 1960s, Charles Frierson Jr. continued to pursue his occupations and civic endeavors with the same intensity and success he had in the 1950s. One notable change, however, was his decision to build a new house for himself and his wife. At age fifty-eight, with his children grown, he built a one-story brick home next to Charles Frierson III's home on the family farm. The house was just a block away from where he had lived for thirty-two years.

Today that 1965 Frierson home is part of a four-house compound, where nine of Charles Frierson Jr.'s descendants live. The four houses sit on about twenty-five acres of what was once an eighty-acre Frierson farm in Jonesboro.



*Charles Davis Frierson Jr. standing in his living room in Jonesboro at Thanksgiving 1970. It was exactly one month before his fatal heart attack on December 26, 1970. Margaret Alice Purifoy Frierson, who was at that time recovering from a heart attack, is seated.*

Between 1957 and 1970, Charles Frierson Jr. had six grandchildren, the last of whom was his namesake, Charles Frierson Bryan (b. 1970), who was born six months before his grandfather's death.

In 1966 and 1967, Charles Frierson Jr.'s two youngest children, James Gordon Frierson and Cherry Purifoy Frierson, both married. James married Kay Lynn Coleman (b. 1944) of Jonesboro on December 23, 1966. Cherry married William Allen Hester (b. 1947) of Jonesboro seven months later, on July 28, 1967. In June 1967, Charles Frierson Jr. wrote an irate letter to the editor of the major Memphis newspaper, *The Commercial Appeal*, which had declined to announce his daughter Cherry Frierson's impending wedding. The letter was a rare expression of anger and revealed Charles Frierson Jr.'s strong sense of family pride.<sup>15</sup> Cherry Frierson and Allen Hester divorced in 1991.

After Charles Davis Frierson Jr. died in 1970, his thirty-eight-year-old son, Charles Davis Frierson III, worked on the creation and naming of Lake Frierson and Lake Frierson State Park, north of Jonesboro. Charles Frierson Jr. is, thus, the eponym of two important recreation areas near Jonesboro.<sup>16</sup>

In 2007, at the age of seventy-five, Charles Frierson III wrote a somewhat intimate portrait of his father, who had died thirty-seven years earlier. He called his recollections "My Impressions of Dad."<sup>17</sup> Since I knew my father-in-law quite well for about twelve years, I have also written a recollection, entitled "My Memory of Mr. Frierson."<sup>18</sup>



*Charles Davis Frierson Jr. at age sixty-three with four of his grandchildren. The photograph was taken in March 1970, ten months before his death: (left to right) Margaret Purifoy Bryan, age six; John Henry Bryan III, age nine; Elizabeth Montgomery Bryan, age four; and Terry Lynn Frierson, age eight.*



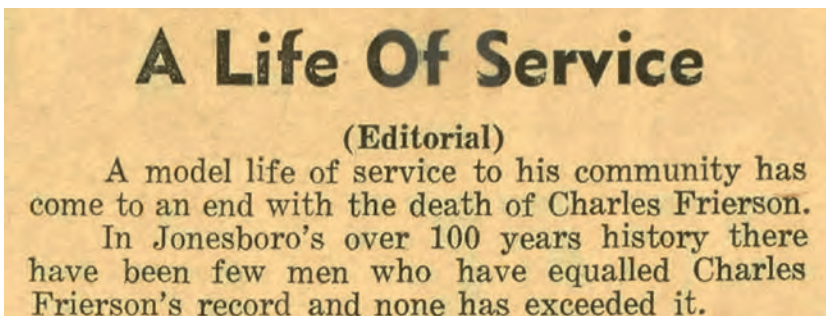


*The Frierson family at Thanksgiving, 1970: (back row, standing, left to right) Charles Davis Frierson III, William Allen Hester, Cherry Purifoy Frierson Hester, Kay Lynn Coleman Frierson, James Gordon Frierson, John Henry Bryan Jr.; (seated, left to right) Sandra Rhea Frierson, Carolyn Rhea Frierson, Margaret Alice Purifoy Frierson, Charles Davis Frierson Jr., Elizabeth Montgomery Bryan, Neville Frierson Bryan, Charles Frierson Bryan, Margaret Purifoy Bryan; (front row, seated on the floor, left to right) Terry Lynn Frierson and John Henry Bryan III.*

The last visit that Neville and I had with her father, Charles Frierson Jr., was during the 1970 Thanksgiving holiday in Jonesboro. Somewhat dimly now, I recall that after taking a family picture, he gathered the adults together for some rather morbid comments about the future deaths of him and his wife. After that he pointedly told me, as an aside, that he did not plan to leave anything in his will to Neville, for he was confident that I could take care of her.

Charles Davis Frierson Jr.'s fatalistic sense that Thanksgiving was probably due to angina attacks that he had been suffering but not mentioning. Unfortunately, in those days, treatments for such heart disease were not as advanced as they are today. It was just one month later, on Saturday, December 26, 1970, that Charles Frierson III called his sister Neville in West Point to tell her that her father had just died. He had a massive heart attack while at work at the Mercantile Bank at 2:30 that Saturday afternoon. He certainly "died with his boots on." Neville and I left immediately for Jonesboro to be with her family.

As Charles Frierson Jr. had requested, there was no funeral service; he had often characterized funerals as barbaric. There was simply an interment service at the Oaklawn Cemetery. His obituary and portrait, as well as an editorial about him, appeared on the front page of the *Jonesboro Sun*<sup>19</sup> on Sunday, December 27, 1970, the day after he died. By today's standards, Charles Frierson Jr. died young; he was sixty-three years old at his death. Nonetheless, he left an extraordinary legacy, best recorded in the opening lines of the editorial written upon his death. It is entitled "A Life of Service."



## CHARLES DAVIS FRIERSON JR.'S LIFE

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### 1. MARGARET FRIERSON, NEVILLE'S AUNT

**Margaret Frierson (1912–1990)** was the younger sister and only sibling of Neville's father, **Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (1907–1970)**. Margaret was named for her grandmother **Eudocia Margaret Martin (1846–1927)**. Like her niece Neville, Margaret Frierson was not given a middle name. Since Neville's mother had no siblings, Margaret Frierson occupies a unique place in Neville's family history.

I remember Margaret Frierson Cherry as a charming, gracious, beautiful, and talented woman. She sang "Wedding Prayer" and "O Perfect Love" at Neville's and my wedding at the First Presbyterian Church in Jonesboro, Arkansas, in 1958.



*Neville's aunt,  
Margaret Frierson Cherry,  
c. 1950.*

Margaret Frierson was born on August 21, 1912, while her father, **Charles Davis Frierson Sr. (1877–1947)**, was serving as chancery judge for the 12th District of Arkansas. At that time, the Frierson family was living at 115 East Cherry Avenue, in the house Charles Frierson Sr. built in 1902. In 1927 Charles Frierson Sr. purchased his boyhood home, the Frierson House, which had been built in 1883–84 by his father **James Gordon Frierson (1837–1884)**. Margaret was fourteen when she moved with her family into the Frierson House.



*Margaret Frierson in 1920, at age seven or eight, with her dog, Flash.*



*Margaret Frierson at about age fourteen in high school.*

After twelve years at public schools in Jonesboro, Margaret Frierson graduated at age seventeen, in 1930. Like her parents and her brother, she went across the state to enroll as an eighteen-year-old student at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, Arkansas.



*Margaret Frierson at age nineteen at the University of Arkansas, 1931.*

Margaret Frierson had an active social and extracurricular life at the University of Arkansas. In November 1933, during her senior year, she was elected campus queen. Shortly thereafter, her picture appeared in hundreds of newspapers across the nation. Her election as campus queen occurred just as the Associated Press was perfecting the wire photo.

**MISS FRIERSON QUEEN  
OF ARKANSAS CAMPUS**  
*Commercial Appeal*  
Dec. 8, 1933  
Jonesboro Student Chosen at  
Annual Election

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark., Dec. 7. —Margaret Frierson of Jonesboro, vice president of Chi Omega and president of the University Woman's League, today was announced as university campus queen. Miss Frierson will preside over all social events at the university during the coming year.

She is the daughter of former Judge and Mrs. C. D. Frierson of Jonesboro, and a niece of Misses Roena and Marjorie Galloway of Fayetteville. Last night she was honored by election to membership in the Octagon Club, which is open only to honor senior women students.

Miss Frierson has been a leader among women students for the past three years. She is a member of Rootin' Rubes, secretary of senior class; chaplain of Sigma Alpha Iota, musical sorority; chairman of the women's vigilance committee, member of Lambda Tau, English fraternity; and member of the Blackfriars, dramatic club. In other years she held office of treasurer of the junior class, treasurer Woman's Athletic Association while a junior, secretary of the sophomore class, secretary of Chi Omega in 1931 and treasurer in 1932.

Her campus honor came by a substantial majority student vote over the following candidates representing various groups and who placed as follows: Mary Alice (Pooly) Pendleton, Shreveport, La., Tri Delta; Vivian Tatum, Booneville, Pi Beta Phi; Lorene Vinson, Rogers, Kappa Kappa Gamma; Isabel Storms, Tulsa, Carnell Hall; Pauline Friddle, Fayetteville, town; Virginia Cate, Fayetteville, Delta Gamma; Mary Helen Beasley, Texarkana, Zeta Tau Alpha.

**Arkansas Campus Queen**  
*COMMERCIAL APPEAL* Dec. 8, 1933



The election of Miss Margaret Frierson of Jonesboro as campus queen at the University of Arkansas, was announced yesterday. She was chosen by a popular vote of the students.

Miss Frierson is president of the Women's League, vice president of Chi Omega sorority, and a member of several other student groups. Last night she was honored by election to membership in the Octagon, honorary club open only to senior honor students.

*On December 8, 1933, this article appeared in the Memphis newspaper, The Commercial Appeal. It announced the selection of Margaret Frierson as the campus queen at the University of Arkansas. The photograph "went viral" and was published in newspapers all over the United States.*

Margaret Frierson got congratulatory letters from around the country, but one particularly memorable one came from her father:

*Dec. 8, 1933*

*Darling Little Queen: —*

*We are so proud of you that I can hardly keep sober.*

*For our sweet little girl to wind up her University career in such a blaze of glory is something we had not counted on. While we knew she was a queen we doubted the ability of the average collegiate to appreciate her.*

*When I heard they were entering you as a candidate, I told your mother you ought to have it because of your general qualities as an all-around fine girl, but that I presumed the student body would pick out someone who was a better “four flusher”<sup>\*</sup> and politician than you. However, I did not appreciate fully the intelligence of the student body, and I apologize to the University for my lack of faith.*

*The thing we are proudest of is that you have won recognition by being your own sweet, square little self.*

*“Sister Honey” splurge all you want to and send the bills to Dad. I want you to shine as queen.*

*If you want to give your supporters a banquet or spread, do so, and wire for the money. Get yourself all the pretty clothes you need.*

*Love, Dad*

In 1934 Margaret Frierson graduated from the University of Arkansas with a degree in music and English. During her senior year at the university, she met a law school student named Francis Adams Cherry (1908–1965), a native Oklahoman, on the dance floor. They married about four years later.

<sup>\*</sup>Four flusher is a pejorative term applied to someone making empty boasts. It was first used in the nineteenth century and is derived from the game of poker, in which a flush is a poker hand with five cards in one suit. Four cards in one suit is a four flush, a useless hand that sometimes leads to a bluff—thus, an empty boast.

The Frierson-Cherry wedding announcement appeared in *The Jonesboro Evening Sun* on Wednesday, November 3, 1937, just one week before the actual ceremony. In addition to noting the accomplishments of the betrothed couple, the newspaper announcement said:

*This announcement will be read with unusual interest by a wide circle of friends throughout the southwest. Miss Frierson belongs to one of the oldest and most prominent families of the state, both her paternal and maternal ancestors have played important roles in the development of Arkansas. Mr. Cherry comes from a prominent family of Oklahoma and has made many friends in Arkansas during the past several years.*

*The bride-to-be, who is a striking brunette, is a very charming and talented young girl, possessing a delightful personality that has won her a host of friends.*

After a week of prenuptial parties, the wedding of Francis Adams Cherry and Margaret Frierson took place at the First Presbyterian Church in Jonesboro at five o'clock in the afternoon on Wednesday, November 10, 1937. No invitations were issued. The newspaper simply said that all friends of the couple were invited. Family participants in the wedding were Margaret Frierson's sister-in-law **Margaret Alice Purifoy Frierson (1908–1973)**, one of two matrons of honor; Margaret Frierson's aunt **Margaret Bell Callaway (1885–1964)** and her first cousin Corinne Frierson Hughes (1912–2000), who were two of five bridesmaids; and her brother, Charles Davis Frierson Jr., who was one of five groomsmen. The *Jonesboro Daily Tribune* reported on Thursday, November 11, 1937, that the wedding was one in which “simple dignity predominated in a setting of deep solemnity.”

In *The Jonesboro Evening Sun* on November 11, 1937, there was special attention given to the bridal attire worn by Margaret Frierson:

*The bridal gown was a beautiful period model of ivory satin fashioned with an empire front that was gathered to the high neckline, which was finished with a row of dainty flowers made from seed pearls. A Queen Anne collar of Alencon\* lace rose in court fashion. . . .*

*The beautiful bridal veil of illusion fell in billowy folds to the end of the court train from a cap of illusion that was held in place by a high peaked coronet. . . .*

*The bride's slippers were of ivory satin and she carried a sheered ivory satin muff to which a single white orchid and a shower of lilies of the valley were attached. She carried also the same point lace handkerchief that her mother carried while plighting her nuptial vows.*

\*Alencon (“ah-lahn-sawn”) lace is a needlepoint lace with a floral design on a sheer net background. The lace originated in Alencon, a city west of Paris in Normandy, France.



*Margaret Frierson in her bridal gown at her wedding on November 10, 1937, at the First Presbyterian Church in Jonesboro, Arkansas. This photograph appeared in The Jonesboro Evening Sun on November 11, 1937.*

After their marriage, Margaret Frierson and Francis Adams Cherry lived for most of the next eighteen years in Jonesboro with Margaret's parents in the Frierson House at 1112 South Main Street. They had three children, all born in Jonesboro. Haskille Scott Cherry III (1940–2007) was the firstborn; Charlotte Frierson Cherry (b. 1942) came next; and their last child was Francis Adams "Sandy" Cherry Jr. (b. 1947).



In the fall of 1952, Francis Adams Cherry was elected governor of Arkansas. At the time, Margaret Frierson Cherry was forty years old and had three children, ages twelve, ten, and five. The family moved to Arkansas's capital, Little Rock, accompanied by Margaret's mother, **Charlotte Martin Gallaway (1878–1968)**. Margaret's father had died five years earlier.

*Francis Adams Cherry (age forty-four) and Margaret Frierson Cherry (age forty) in 1952, after his election as governor of Arkansas.*



The gown worn by Margaret Frierson Cherry at her husband's inaugural ball is displayed today at the Old State House Museum in Little Rock. It is a strapless gown covered in sequins and nylon netting. It was purchased at the Helen of Memphis shop in Memphis, Tennessee.

Francis Adams and Margaret Frierson Cherry were the second family to reside in the newly built Arkansas Governor's Mansion in Little Rock. As first lady of Arkansas, Margaret is remembered as an especially gracious hostess at the mansion.



*Completed in 1950, Arkansas's Governor's Mansion occupies a city block in downtown Little Rock. It is a tourist attraction, in part because it was the home of former president Bill Clinton.*

In 1955, after Francis Adams Cherry's term as governor ended, the family moved to Bethesda, Montgomery County, Maryland, a Washington, D.C., suburb. The house they bought in Bethesda cost \$28,000. At that time, Francis Cherry's salary as a member of a government agency, the Subversive Activities Control Board (SACB), was \$25,000 per year. I particularly remember Margaret Frierson Cherry showing Neville and me around Washington on one of our visits there in the late 1950s. Neville's Aunt Margaret readily admitted to me that she had acquired a case of Potomac Fever.\*

Francis Adams Cherry died of heart disease in 1965, and Margaret Frierson Cherry became a fifty-two-year-old widow. She had been married for twenty-seven years, and her widowhood would last for the next twenty-five. Three or four years after Francis Cherry died, while planning to return to live in Jonesboro, Margaret met a Colonial Williamsburg hostess trainer who was speaking at the Woman's Club of Chevy Chase in Chevy Chase, Maryland. That chance encounter inspired Margaret to become a Williamsburg hostess, and in March 1969, at age fifty-six, she attended a training class at Williamsburg. Later in 1969, Margaret Cherry moved to Williamsburg, Virginia, where she worked as a docent and interpreter at Colonial Williamsburg for approximately ten years. It has been said that she got the job, in part, because of a recommendation from Winthrop Rockefeller (1912–1973), who was chairman of the board of Colonial Williamsburg in 1965 and governor of Arkansas from 1967 to 1971.

Margaret Frierson Cherry retired from Colonial Williamsburg in about 1979. She continued to live in Williamsburg for the rest of her life. Margaret died of a stroke on July 7, 1990, in Williamsburg, one month shy of her seventy-eighth birthday. Neville and I attended the funeral. She is buried with her husband at Oaklawn Cemetery in Jonesboro, Arkansas.

*Margaret Frierson Cherry in front of the Governor's Palace at Colonial Williamsburg in the 1970s.*



\*Potomac Fever is a determination or fervor to share in the power and prestige of the United States government in Washington, D.C. It is often acquired by persons appointed or elected to government positions.

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### 2. JUDGE AND GOVERNOR FRANCIS ADAMS CHERRY, NEVILLE'S UNCLE

Francis Adams Cherry (1908–1965) was Neville's only uncle. He married Neville's aunt, **Margaret Frierson (1912–1990)**, in 1937, when Neville was one year old.

When Neville was a youngster, Francis Adams Cherry gave her the nickname Butch.\* It was an example of opposite nicknaming, for Neville was a petite and feminine little girl with naturally curly hair. Fortunately, the name never caught on with others.

*Francis Adams Cherry (age thirty-four) and Neville (age six) standing in front of the Frierson House in Jonesboro, Arkansas, 1942.*



When Neville and I first met at Southwestern at Memphis in 1954, Francis Adams Cherry was the governor of Arkansas. By the time we married in 1958, he and his family were living just outside Washington, D.C., in Bethesda, Maryland. Neville and I visited the Cherry family in Bethesda while I attended graduate school at the University of Virginia in 1958 and 1959. I remember Francis as a distinguished, friendly, and jovial man. He had a great sense of humor and he was much admired.

Francis Adams Cherry, the youngest of five children, was born on September 5, 1908, in Ft. Worth, Texas, but raised in Oklahoma. He graduated from high school in Enid, Oklahoma, in 1926, after which he attended Oklahoma A & M College (now Oklahoma State University) in Stillwater.

*\*Butch was originally a nickname for someone who was a butcher. In the 1940s and earlier, it was a slang term for a man who was notably masculine in manner or appearance. The word was later used as a derogatory term to define some lesbians.*



*Francis Adams Cherry as a young man.*

After a few years of odd jobs, Francis Adams Cherry entered the University of Arkansas Law School in Fayetteville. While there he met Neville's aunt, Margaret Frierson. They met around the time when she was voted the university's campus queen in 1933. After graduating from law school in 1936, Francis Cherry lived briefly in Little Rock, Arkansas. In 1937 he moved to Jonesboro, Arkansas, to practice law. Soon after, he married Margaret Frierson in Jonesboro on November 10, 1937.

Some years ago, Margaret Frierson Cherry made a tape recording in which she talked about her husband coming to Jonesboro. She recalled:

*My husband came to Jonesboro to settle at the instigation of my brother, Charles [Neville's father]. Having struggled through Law School on his own and also struggled to settle into practice in Little Rock, he was finding it very difficult in the Depression [1929–39]. My brother, knowing that we had plans to marry sometime in the future, helped things along a bit by suggesting that he come to Jonesboro and practice law with Marcus Fietz, a court reporter . . . who wanted to actively practice law.*



*This Jonesboro newspaper announcement was published three months before Francis Adams Cherry and Margaret Frierson married in 1937.*

In 1942, at age thirty-four, Francis Adams Cherry was elected chancellor and probate judge of the 12th Chancery District\* of Arkansas, which included six counties in northeastern Arkansas. He defeated the incumbent in that election. Francis Cherry's father-in-law, **Charles Davis Frierson Sr. (1877–1947)**, had been the first chancery judge for that district, from 1911 to 1917.

In 1944, at around age thirty-six, Francis Adams Cherry waived his military exemption and received a commission as a lieutenant, junior grade, in the United States Navy. He served for two years in the Naval Judge Advocate General's Corps in Washington, D.C.

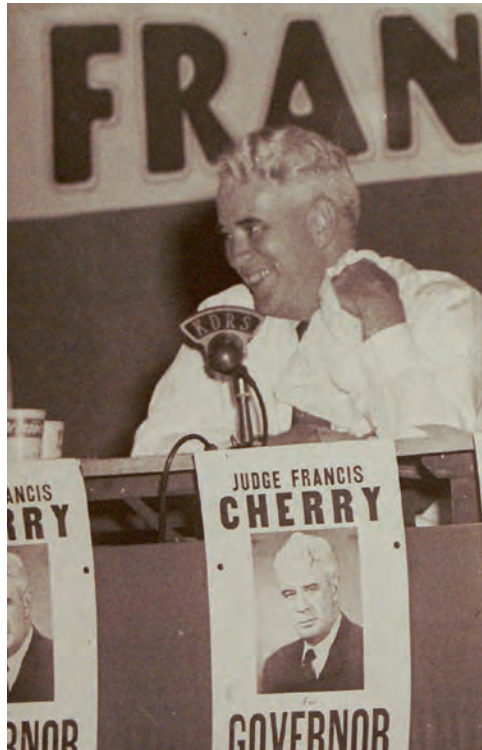
*\*Chancery courts are courts of equity. They deal with matters such as divorces and estates, and do not adjudicate criminal cases. In Arkansas, as in most states, chancery courts no longer exist, having been merged into other courts.*



*Lieutenant Francis Adams Cherry with his family during World War II, 1944: (back row, left to right) Charlotte Martin Gallaway Frierson, Margaret Frierson Cherry, Francis Adams Cherry, Margaret Alice Purifoy Frierson; (front row, left to right) Neville, Charlotte Frierson Cherry, Haskille Scott Cherry III, and James Gordon Frierson.*

Francis Adams Cherry returned to his judge's position in 1946 after the war and was re-elected in 1948 without opposition. In 1952, although relatively unknown, Judge Francis Cherry decided to run for governor of Arkansas against the two-term incumbent, Governor Sid McMath (1912–2003). In a crowded field, he sought to define himself as an honest, apolitical figure, and he refused contributions of over \$500. He spent his resources on radio advertising, conducting “talk-a-thons” in which he answered questions for endless hours. *“It was a grassroots campaign,”* Margaret Frierson Cherry said. *“He was running against the Machine.”*

*Francis Adams Cherry engaged in a radio "talk-a-thon" during his campaign for governor of Arkansas in 1952.*



In the Democratic primary, Francis Adams Cherry came in a close second to Governor Sid McMath, but he handily defeated Governor McMath in the run-off. In the general election, as was common in those days, Francis Cherry, the Democratic candidate, trounced the Republican.

*Francis Adams and Margaret Frierson Cherry celebrating the news of his victory in the election for governor of Arkansas in 1952.*





*Francis Adams Cherry delivering his inaugural address on January 13, 1953, in Little Rock, Arkansas. Seated (left to right) are his children Haskille Scott Cherry III and Charlotte Frierson Cherry; his wife, Margaret Frierson Cherry; and his son Francis Adams Cherry Jr.*

The Cherry family moved to the Governor’s Mansion in Little Rock, accompanied by Neville’s grandmother **Charlotte Martin Gallaway Frierson (1878–1968)**, who had been a widow for five years.

As governor, Francis Adams Cherry set out to pursue an agenda of efficiency and reform. He had success in establishing Arkansas’s first Department of Finance and Administration, promoting industrial development, and reforming the Highway Commission. However, he failed in his effort to achieve significant tax reform.

Unfortunately, his popularity waned. Some commentators have blamed his problems on “*blunders of honesty*,” and others have said he was politically naive. Margaret Frierson Cherry recollected that “*the Machine was out to get him from the day he took office because their hands were no longer able to get into the till of the state and they realized they could not influence Francis Cherry.*”





*Francis Adams Cherry served as governor of Arkansas in 1953 and 1954.*

When Francis Cherry sought re-election in 1954, his opponent was a little-known highway commissioner, Orval Faubus (1910–1994), who had the support of former Governor Sid McMath. Orval Faubus defeated Francis Cherry in a bitterly fought and narrowly decided election. Voter backlash from Francis Cherry’s revelation that Orval Faubus had attended a school with communist leanings is often cited as a reason for his loss.

During the campaign, Orval Faubus warned voters about the perils of school integration. The *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision was handed down by the United States Supreme Court on May 17, 1954, during Francis Adams Cherry’s second year as governor. In response to that Supreme Court decision, Governor Cherry’s first official statement was clear and unequivocal: “Arkansas will observe the law. It always has.” Governor Cherry added that the matter of desegregation “has received a lot of thought” and that the state of Arkansas would not “approach the problem with the idea of being outlaws.” After that statement, on May 18, 1954, *The New York Times* reported, “Cherry Says Arkansas to Obey the Law.”

In her taped recollections, Margaret Frierson Cherry said about her husband’s re-election loss, “In the end it was not a fair election.” She followed that statement by quoting former Governor Sid McMath, who years later expressed regret to Francis Cherry for his support of Orval Faubus. McMath said, “And to think that I was a party to stealing that election from you.”

Orval Faubus went on to serve six terms as the governor of Arkansas.\* In September 1957, he defied a Supreme Court order to desegregate schools in Little Rock, becoming the first of several infamous demagogues who, for all time, personify and epitomize resistance to school integration in the 1950s and 1960s. Other notable examples are Alabama Governor George Wallace (1919–1996) and Mississippi Governor Ross Barnett (1898–1987), who emulated Faubus in 1963. If Francis Adams Cherry had been governor of Arkansas in 1957, the integration crisis at Central High School in Little Rock would not have happened. Francis Cherry was a strong believer that we should be governed by the rule of law and not the opinions of men.

After his defeat, Francis Adams Cherry moved back to Jonesboro and joined the law firm headed by his brother-in-law, **Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (1907–1970)**. The next year, in 1955, Francis Cherry was appointed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower (1890–1969) to the Subversive Activities Control Board (SACB). The board was created in 1950 in conjunction with the Internal Security Act, known as the McCarran Act.\*\* Francis Cherry's appointment was secured for him by several prominent Arkansas Republicans from Little Rock, as well as by Senator John McClellan (1896–1977), Arkansas's powerful Democratic senator (1943–77). President John F. Kennedy (1917–1963) elevated Francis Cherry to chairman of the SACB in 1963, and President Lyndon B. Johnson (1908–1973) later reappointed him.

Francis Adams Cherry had health problems from a fairly young age. I particularly remember that he had various ailments, including insomnia, when we visited with him in the late 1950s. In 1963 he underwent heart surgery in Houston, Texas, after which he continued working at his office on a part-time basis. He died at age fifty-six, on July 15, 1965, two years after his heart operation.

There were two funeral services for Francis Adams Cherry. The first was held at his home in Washington, D.C.; following that service, he lay in state at the Capitol building in Little Rock. The second service was held at the First Presbyterian Church in Jonesboro, after which Francis Cherry was buried in Oaklawn Cemetery in Jonesboro. Neville and I did not attend the Jonesboro services, for Neville was about to deliver our third child, Elizabeth Montgomery Bryan (b. 1965).

\*Orval Faubus decided not to run for a seventh term as governor in 1966, and Winthrop Rockefeller (1912–1973) was elected instead. Faubus did try for three comebacks, however. He was defeated in 1970 by Dale Bumpers (1925–2016), in 1974 by David Pryor (b. 1934), and in 1986 by Bill Clinton (b. 1946).

\*\*The McCarran Act, passed in 1950 over the veto of President Harry Truman (1884–1972), did not outlaw the Communist Party in the United States, but it did seek to expose and regulate communist activity. The McCarran Act was weakened by the United States Supreme Court in 1965, and the SACB was abolished in 1972.

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### 3. THE CHERRY CHILDREN, NEVILLE'S ONLY FIRST COUSINS

In the 1940s, Neville's only aunt, **Margaret Frierson Cherry (1912–1990)**, and Francis Adams Cherry (1908–1965) had three children. They are Neville's only first cousins.



*The Cherry family, c. 1952: (left to right) Francis Adams Cherry Jr. (age five), Margaret Frierson Cherry (age forty), Charlotte Frierson Cherry (age ten), Haskille Scott Cherry III (age twelve), and Francis Adams Cherry (age forty-four).*

- **HASKILLE SCOTT CHERRY III (1940–2007)** was the eldest of the Cherry children. He was named after his paternal grandfather and was called Scott. He attended Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, graduating in 1962 with a degree in history.

Haskille Scott Cherry III married Dianne Sherwin Draper (b. 1940) in 1964; they had two children, and divorced in 1991. Their oldest child, Martha Jeanne “Marty” Cherry (b. 1965), married Don Mentzer (b. 1964). They live in Ocean Isle, North Carolina, an Atlantic Coast town located about forty miles north of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. They have no children. Scott and Dianne Draper Cherry's younger child, Patrick Scott “Pat” Cherry (b. 1967), was married, but his wife died just a few years after their marriage. He lives near his sister in Ocean Isle.

Neville and I recall Scott Cherry as a bespectacled, pipe-smoking young man who was quite loquacious and an avid storyteller. Unfortunately, he was diagnosed with Crohn's disease while he was in college and was afflicted with that disease for the rest of his life. In his later years, Haskille Scott Cherry was the proprietor of a tobacco shop and lived with his parrots in a small apartment in Williamsburg, Virginia. He died at age sixty-six, in 2007.

- CHARLOTTE FRIERSON CHERRY (b. 1942) is the second Cherry child. She was named for her grandmother **Charlotte Gallaway Frierson (1878–1968)**. After high school, Charlotte Cherry attended Queen’s College in Charlotte, North Carolina. The school changed its name to Queens University of Charlotte in 2002. After two years at Queen’s College, Charlotte transferred to the University of Arkansas, where she graduated with a degree in history in 1964. Charlotte Cherry is an accomplished musician, and has been a harpist since she was fifteen years old. She is also a pianist and flutist, and has performed in churches and professionally throughout her life.

In 1971 Charlotte Frierson Cherry married Ted Cherry (1938–1997), who was not related to her. They had worked together at the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in Langley, Virginia, a few miles west of Washington, D.C. They had no children. In 1980 Charlotte and Ted, both pilots and aviation enthusiasts, moved to Mountain Home, Arkansas, located in the southern Ozark Mountains in north-central Arkansas. They operated a bookstore there. Ted died unexpectedly of a heart attack in 1997. Since that time, Charlotte Cherry has continued to live in Mountain Home.

- FRANCIS ADAMS “SANDY” CHERRY JR. (b. 1947) is the youngest of the Cherry children and an early member of the Baby Boomer generation. He was around eight years old when his family left Jonesboro and moved to Washington, D.C., in 1955. In 1969 Sandy Cherry graduated from Denison University in Granville, Ohio, thirty miles west of Columbus, with a degree in political science.

In 1972, at age twenty-four, Sandy Cherry graduated from Vanderbilt Law School in Nashville, Tennessee. Later that year, in November, at age twenty-five, he married twenty-one-year-old Paula Marie Burns (b. 1951), who was working at the Vanderbilt Law School. Neville and I were living in West Point, Mississippi, at the time and drove to Nashville to attend their wedding.

After law school, Sandy and Paula Burns Cherry moved to Richmond, Virginia, where he served for the next four years as assistant attorney general for the Commonwealth of Virginia. In 1976 Sandy became a partner in a Richmond law firm, Randolph, Boyd, Cherry, and Vaughan. For many years, Sandy has been a recognized specialist in the field of eminent domain.\* He continues his association with the law firm today. Sandy and Paula Burns Cherry have three children, all born in Richmond, and four grandchildren.

\*Eminent domain is the right of the government or its agent to expropriate private property for public use, with payment of compensation.



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#### 4. THE BOY SCOUT JAMBOREE IN COPENHAGEN, DENMARK, 1924

In 1924, at age seventeen, **Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (1907–1970)** was chosen to be a member of the troop of American Boy Scouts participating in the International Boy Scout Jamboree in Copenhagen, Denmark. It was an experience of a lifetime for Neville's father.

As a young man, Charles Davis Frierson Jr. was a paragon of a Boy Scout, and he was, in fact, an Eagle Scout at the age of thirteen. His qualifications were outlined in a July 5, 1924, Jonesboro, Arkansas, newspaper article announcing his selection to go to the Jamboree.

*Among the Jonesboro Scouts no boy has more experience than Charles Frierson, Jr.*

*He has been raised in the outdoors. He learned to ride and swim when he was six years of age, was a good canoeist at eight years of age, rode after the hounds on a Shetland pony in a deer chase at seven years, and accompanied the Scouts on many a hike and camping trip as a mascot before he was twelve years of age.*

*On his twelfth birthday he took the tenderfoot examination and became a scout. During 1920 and 1921 he took 21 merit badges and became an Eagle Scout in January 1921 before he became 14 years old. He killed a deer with a rifle when thirteen years old, and has since killed three more deer.*

*He has camped in the big woods of Northeast Arkansas hundreds of times, and is a good woodsman. He is also a good swimmer and has the Life-saving, Swimming, and Athletic merit badges. In athletics he is a good boxer and is on the high school track team, being a runner and jumper. In the Scout Field meets, he has won the individual championship two years successively.*

Charles Davis Frierson Jr.'s Jamboree experience lasted for two months, beginning on July 9, 1924, with a two-day train ride to New York for a two-week training camp. The training camp was held at Bear Mountain, about forty miles up the Hudson River from New York City.



*Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (left) at the International Boy Scout Jamboree in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1924. The other two Boy Scouts are unidentified.*

The group of American Boy Scouts who traveled to Bear Mountain then sailed from New York to England on Saturday, July 26, 1924, on the S.S. *Leviathan*.<sup>\*</sup> In England the Boy Scouts camped at Wembley, an area in northwest London. Wembley is best known as the home of Wembley Stadium, England's most important sporting venue. The original stadium was completed in 1923.

On August 7, the American Boy Scouts left London and traveled to Copenhagen, the site of the Boy Scout Jamboree, which took place during the period between August 10 and August 24, 1924.

<sup>\*</sup>*The S. S. Leviathan was a German ocean liner built in 1911. The ship was confiscated by the United States government during World War I (1914–18) and acquired by United States Lines in 1919. The S.S. Leviathan regularly sailed the Atlantic Ocean from 1914 to 1934, and it was sold for scrap metal in 1938.*



*Seventeen-year-old Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (left) at the second International Boy Scout Jamboree in 1924. The other boy is unidentified.*

After two weeks of events, the American team was victorious, garnering 181 points, ahead of second-place England, which had 172 points.

*The Jonesboro Evening Sun* reported that Charles Davis Frierson Jr. took part in all the troop events. He was one of the principal Indian dancers and one of the tug-of-war men. He also won the eighty-meter dash.

THE WORLD SCOUT CHAMPIONSHIPS													
	Turn out	Camp craft	Songs and yells	Folk dances	Campfire entertainment	Scout contest I	Scout contest II	Patrol obstacle race	24 hours patrol hike	Swimming	Camp routine	Total	Nr.
1. America .....	17	17	17	13	18	11	20*	18	20	16	14	181	1
2. Austria .....	13	13	18	12	11	9	9	13	14	18	12	142	6
3. Chile .....	15	13	10	7	10	10	4	10	0	0	12	91	11
4. Denmark .....	13	19	17	14	10	—	17	—	—	16	10	—	—
5. England .....	18	19	15	17	18	13	12*	10	18	16	16	172	2
6. Finland .....	—	—	—	—	—	—	18	—	—	13	—	—	—
7. France .....	15	15	9	13	12	13	13	10	14	12	10	136	8
8. Holland .....	16	16	5	15	12	10	13	15	12	11	10	135	9
9. Hungaria .....	16	17	13	14	18	14	13*	11	14	17	19	166	3
10. Italy .....	8	11	15	11	0	10	9	13	13	10	11	111	10
11. Luxemburg .....	10	10	5	0	11	7	10	0	0	12	10	75	12
12. Norway .....	19	16	9	7	17	12	15	17	14	14	18	158	4
13. Poland .....	17	17	13	15	12	10	15	13	15	10	18	155	5
14. Switzerland .....	18	9	14	6	18	9	11	14	15	10	15	139	7

\* Canoe trip for contest. 0 Dropped out of contest. — Not entered for contest.

Tug-of-war World Champion: Denmark.

The score card for the 1924 World Scout Championships at the International Boy Scout Jamboree in Copenhagen, Denmark. The United States won first place, England finished in second place, and Hungaria (Hungary) finished in third place.

After the Jamboree, the American Boy Scouts went to Hamburg, Germany, as well as Amsterdam, Netherlands; Brussels, Belgium; and Paris, France. They sailed back to New York, departing from Cherbourg, France, on August 30 aboard the R.M.S. *Lancastria*.\*

\*The R.M.S. (Royal Mail Ship) *Lancastria* was a British Cunard passenger liner launched in 1920. The ship was commandeered to become a troop ship during World War II. The R.M.S. *Lancastria* was sunk by the Germans on June 17, 1940, just off the west coast of France, and at least four thousand people died. It was the highest death toll for England in a single engagement in World War II. The sinking of the *Lancastria* caused more fatalities than the sinking of the R.M.S. *Titanic* (1,517) in 1912 and the R.M.S. *Lusitania* (1,198) in 1915 put together.



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### 5. CHARLES DAVIS FRIERSON JR.'S ACCOUNT OF THE JAMBOREE

After Neville's father, **Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (1907–1970)**, returned home from the International Boy Scout Jamboree in September 1924, he was in great demand. Though he was only seventeen years old, he addressed several civic groups in Jonesboro, Arkansas, about his extraordinary experiences.

An article that appeared in *The Jonesboro Evening Sun* on September 17, 1924, complimented Charles Davis Frierson Jr.'s presentation to a local businessmen's club.

*Young Frierson related his trip in detail and so tense was the attention given him that the fall of a leaf from the tree branches could be heard. It is safe to say that never before has a more interesting story been unfolded to scouts and business men visitors.*

*The speaker's way of expressing himself was masterful. His language was the choicest and equaled that of a college graduate. The trip to Denmark was a wonderful experience for Charles.*

Charles Davis Frierson Jr. had remarkable writing skills at age seventeen, and they are especially evident in an account of his trip that he published on September 26, 1924, in *The Jonesboro Evening Sun*. A portion of that newspaper account follows.



*A feature article in The Jonesboro Evening Sun on September 26, 1924, by Charles Davis Frierson Jr.*



*At your request, I am very glad to write you the following report of my trip to the International Boy Scout Jamboree in Denmark as the representative of the St. Francis Valley Council Boy Scouts of America:*

*Every four years the Scouts of all nations gather, have contests and exchange views. They call these meetings "Jamborees". This year Denmark invited the Scouts to hold their Jamboree near Copenhagen. . . .*

*America sent fifty-six boys and four officers. These boys came from twenty-eight states and one from Hawaii. Of these forty-eight boys were in the official competing troop. This troop had to average not over sixteen years of age and had to compete in every phase of scouting. To be a member a boy had to be either an Eagle, Star, or Life Scout.\* An Eagle Scout has twenty-one merit badges and forty-eight boys, out of fifty-six were Eagle Scouts.*

*I left Jonesboro the night of July 9th, via St. Louis and arrived in New York on July 11th where the Scout Association took me in charge. After spending a night at Coney Island and a day in New York, registering, giving our life history and innermost thoughts to the publicity department and receiving a banquet interspersed with lectures on what was expected of us, we were loaded in busses,\*\* taken to a steamboat and thence up the Hudson in sight of Palisades,\*\*\* to camp at Bear Mountain where two weeks were to be spent in training.*

*When the training period was over, we were a tired bunch. Busses carried us thirty-five miles to New York, where we were met by motor police who conducted us to the Leviathan, clearing all traffic for our passage; even the traffic cops would give one glance at us whizzing down upon them and would make a dive for the curb, giving us the street.*

*That night we spent on board having a big banquet where President Coolidge [John Calvin Coolidge (1872–1933)] addressed us over the phone and Will Rogers [William P. A. Rogers (1879–1935)] told us a lot of jokes about the Democratic Convention that I had read three weeks before. Just as I was in the midst of a Peach Melba we were ordered to sing and when we got back to our seats the waiter had taken away the rest of my dessert and I never will reconcile myself to missing it.*

*On Saturday, July 27th, the Leviathan sailed with us amid weeping, laughing and the waving of many handkerchiefs.*

\*The seven ranks in the Boy Scouts, from highest to lowest, are Eagle, Life, Star, First Class, Second Class, Tenderfoot, and Scout.

\*\*Until 1961, busses was the preferred plural for bus in Webster dictionaries. Today buses is preferred.

\*\*\*The Palisades is a twenty-mile line of steep cliffs along the west side of the lower Hudson River. The cliffs run north from Jersey City, New Jersey, to Nyack, New York.

*We landed in England and after the customs men had satisfied themselves that we were not smuggling cigars into the country we left by train for London. London is too much compressed into ten miles square and four stories high. It ought to spread up and out. It is composed largely of innumerable boarding houses connected by crooked streets in which you can get lost too easily.*

*The six days in England were spent sightseeing, and it was by far too short a time.*

*We went to many of the public buildings and monuments of London and also visited Stratford-on-Avon, and Kenilworth, Warwick, and Windsor Castles.*

*There had not been any great excitement over our arrival in England, but when we arrived in Copenhagen, we were received with enthusiasm, din, and clamour. Thousands of people and a brass band met us at the station. Thousands more crowded the streets. Excitement reigned supreme.*

*We then entered the Jamboree contests full tilt, and something was going on all the time and during the entire contest we kept near the head, but were not first all the time. The Indian dances we gave were extremely popular and were always attended by vast throngs.*

*Our patrol had to draw to pick its entry into the six contests on its program and I was terribly afraid I would get drawn for the Handyman contest which requires genius. However, I was lucky enough to draw the 80 meters dash. There were about 15,000 people, including Sir Robert Baden Powell [(1857–1941)], the World's Chief Scout and the Prince of Denmark [Prince Valdemar (1858–1939)], watching the race. The race came at six o'clock in the afternoon of next to the last day of the Jamboree and during a hard cold driving rain. As I had been having hard chills all days the prospect of running under those conditions did not have much of an appeal. However, I won the race which made me feel better for a little while; but afterwards I was quite sick that night, and was taken to a hotel in town but was all right the next day. Another scout was ill the same way, so it was probably something we ate that caused it.*

*The last day of the Jamboree we were all lined up and Sir Robert Baden Powell gave out the various prizes to the winners. We were almost too tired and wet to rejoice properly at having won the King's cup for first place in the Jamboree. I was given a Danish book as a prize, but couldn't read it.*

*The Jamboree was the greatest possible tribute to scouting. With all the thousands of boys from thirty-seven nations present, not a bit of friction developed during the whole time, and the boys treated each other like brothers.*

*After the contests, the people of Copenhagen insisted that all the scouts scatter out and visit them in their homes and see the sights and be entertained. The four days following spent in this way were among the most enjoyable of the whole trip. The hospitality of the Danes cannot be overrated; it is wonderful—they gave up everything to see that we had a good time and fed us seven or eight times a day till new and larger belts were required by all.*

*Seventeen of our troop, including myself, danced Indian dances in the amusement park before 60,000 people. Afterwards a great banquet was given us by the manager of the park in appreciation of our bringing him the largest crowd by 25,000 people that he had ever experienced.*

*Our first stop after leaving Denmark was in Hamburg, Germany, where the German scouts greeted us, entertaining us and helped show us the city. We then visited Amsterdam, the Hague and Brussels, in Belgium. We inspected town halls, castles, prisons, wind mills, cathedrals, dikes, cheese factories and the Zuyder Zee until they were very well mixed in our minds. We then went through part of France, and saw much of the portion wrecked during the last war, passing through St. Quentin and Noyon\* which were interesting to us because of America's connection with them in the war.*

*Paris was the most interesting city we visited. We inspected numerous places of interest, including Eiffel Tower, Versailles, Notre Dame, and the Louvre. Paris was also the best town to shop in that we discovered. One of the things that impressed me was the typical Frenchness of the French people, and the use of the hands as an aid to conversation. Finally we sailed for home on the "Lancastria", and the voyage home was a very busy time.*

*On our arrival in New York we were given another banquet at which we were told how proud everyone was of us and at which Will Rogers sprung some jokes we hadn't heard before as we had been out of the United States some time.*

*After sightseeing in New York a day we were finally disbanded. We were greeted by Mayor Hylan [John Francis Hylan (1868–1936)] who looked very bored; so did we.*

*During the two months the troop was together many of the closest friendships were formed. The officers were the best that could have been procured; each one was an expert in his line.*

*The boys composing the troop were splendid scouts and it was a great privilege and pleasure to be associated with them. For me the Jamboree trip will be the red letter event of my scouting life.*

CHARLES D. FRIERSON, Jr.

*\*Saint-Quentin, a city largely destroyed in World War I, is located 105 miles northeast of Paris. Noyon, a town about 60 miles northeast of Paris, was also heavily damaged in World War I.*

## CHARLES DAVIS FRIERSON JR.'S LIFE

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### 6. KAPPA ALPHA OR KAPPA SIGMA IN 1925

In 1925 Neville's father, **Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (1907–1970)**, enrolled as a freshman at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. He was eighteen years old.

Soon after entering college, Charles Davis Frierson Jr. faced a dilemma. His father, **Charles Davis Frierson Sr. (1877–1947)**, wanted Charles Jr. to join the Kappa Alpha Fraternity, while Charles Jr. wanted to join the Kappa Sigma Fraternity. The difficulty of this decision is reflected in a handwritten note that Charles Jr. sent to his father on September 18, 1925:

*Dear Dad,*

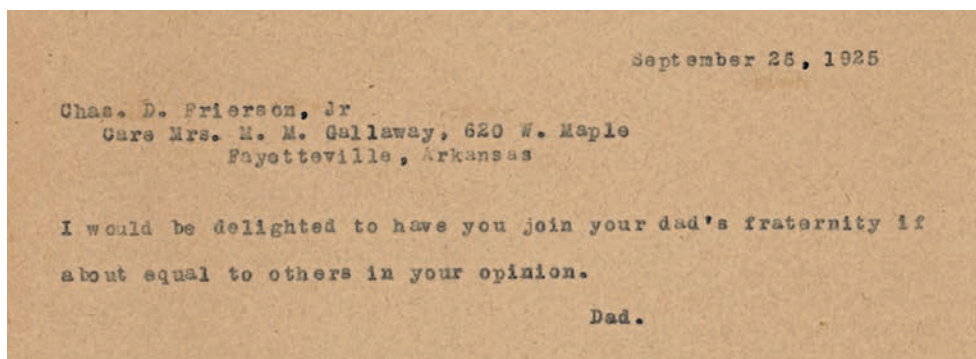
*I went to sleep and slept too long to go to the Kappa Alpha lounge. I sure was sorry. I have seen the Kappa Alpha's. They are all right, but I don't take to them very much.*

*I would like to be in the Kappa Alpha's because they are yours. I like the Kappa Sig's better. They are a fine bunch of fellows and well rounded. But I don't feel real enthusiastic because you were a K. A.*

*I wish you would tell me just how you feel about it. If you want me to be a K. A. wire me, so it will get here before I have a date with them. I've told the Kappa Sig's that if I wasn't a K. A. I will pledge Kappa Sigma.*

Lovingly, Charles

About a week after Charles Davis Frierson Jr. sent his letter, his father sent Charles Jr. a telegram in care of Charles Jr.'s grandmother **Eudocia Margaret Martin (1846–1927)**:



*Telegram message to Charles Davis Frierson Jr. from his father in September 1925.*

On the day after he sent this telegram, Charles Davis Frierson Sr. sent a long letter elaborating on his terse telegram:

*Mr. Chas. D. Frierson, Jr.*

*620 West Maple St., Fayetteville Ark.*

*My Darling Boy: —*

*On receipt of your letter asking about my feelings regarding your fraternity, I wired that I would be delighted to have you join your Dad's fraternity if other things were about equal, but to make your own choice.*

*You know by this time that I don't want to be selfish with you about anything: and if you would be better suited with the companionship of members of some other fraternity, I don't want my influence to keep you out of the frat of your choice.*

*However, naturally there is something sweet about the idea of one's own boy belonging to the organizations his father joined. If I should come up there to school during the term, undoubtedly it would be pleasanter, and I would feel more at home in the Kappa Alpha House rather than in others. Then in reminiscing about my school days, I could feel considerably freer if you and I belonged to the same Frat.*

*Another thing: I notice that the Kappa Sigmas are strong on athletics: but I don't know that it is best for you to concentrate too much on athletics. Then so far as you individually are concerned, you would stand out better in a Frat not too strong on athletic members than in one that has a great many members of that type. It might actually handicap you to run around too entirely with athletes.*

*The choice of either of the Frats mentioned would not be a very serious error, provided the members of each are up to a certain standard of manliness and gentlemanliness. But if there is any doubt in your mind, why [not] come on in to your Dad's Frat, and if it doesn't suit you, try to re-mould it nearer to your heart's desire. You can set out to get in some members you particularly care for. But if you join Kappa Sigma, it is absolutely all right with me. What I want is your happiness and your success, and I don't want to "cramp your style" nor "suppress your individualism".*

*Your Dad*

Charles Davis Frierson Jr. joined the Kappa Sigma Fraternity.

## CHARLES DAVIS FRIERSON JR.'S LIFE

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### 7. “THE BOY WITH THE ARTIST’S FORM” AND MARGARET JEWELL

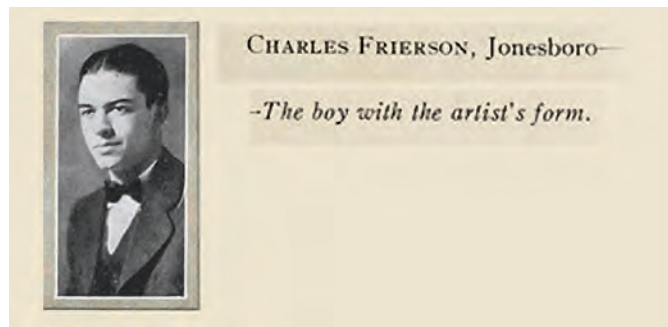
**Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (1907–1970)** met Margaret Jewell (1909–1998) in 1925, shortly after he entered the freshman class at the University of Arkansas. Charles was eighteen years old and a freshman; Margaret Jewell was sixteen years old and a junior.

*Margaret Jewell at age sixteen in 1925. She was in the junior class at the University of Arkansas.*



Margaret Jewell entered the University of Arkansas as a fourteen-year-old freshman in 1923. She was said to have been the youngest student in the nation to enter college that year. Margaret Jewell’s father, James Jewell (1878–1962), was dean of the new College of Education at the University of Arkansas. Margaret Jewell graduated from the university in 1927 and moved with her family to Oregon. She later earned advanced degrees in philosophy and dance, and in 1937 she founded the dance program at Stanford University. She married in 1941 and had two children.

In 1989, at age eighty, Margaret Jewell Mullen wrote her first book, *An Arkansas Childhood: Growing up in the Athens of the Ozarks*. In that book, she described falling in love with Charles Federson (a lightly disguised pseudonym for Charles Davis Frierson Jr.) at the University of Arkansas in 1925. She referred to him in her book as “*the boy with the artist’s form*”



*Charles Davis Frierson Jr. depicted in the University of Arkansas's 1927 yearbook, The Razorback.*

## 192 ❖ An Arkansas Childhood

The happy event that really made my last two years so special for me was that I fell in love.

Charles Federson came from Jonesboro, over by the river across from Memphis, where his father was a lawyer. He was neatly taller than I, dark, good looking, and deeply tanned from the summer sun when I met him at a house dance the Kappa Sigs held to introduce their new pledge class. Chuck had been an Eagle Scout and had attended the International Scout Jamboree in Copenhagen the year before. He gave me a picture of himself in breechclout and feathered headdress, dancing an American Indian ritual for the Jamboree. As it said under his later picture in the annual: "The boy with the artist's form."

I could hardly believe my good fortune. He was handsome, popular, good natured, kind. He had traveled—the first of my peers to have left the country. And he liked ME! I was in transports. We truly liked doing the same things. We enjoyed talking, talking, talking. I was able to tell him things that before I had kept only for Ruth. And that bothered me in a way. There wasn't time enough, I felt, for old loyalties and new love.

Charles was at the house a lot. Mother and Daddy liked him, and the feeling of ease and approval was mutual. When Daddy was in Jonesboro for a speaking engagement, Judge Federson took him to their home for dinner and to meet Mrs. Federson. I could hardly wait for Charles to be initiated so that I could sport his pin. We went on long walks, to dances and movies, had library dates (for which I managed to be suspended for a week because of "insistent talking"). It was a wonderful year!

Charles' attention gave me the beginnings of a self confidence I had needed so much. Everything looked better, seemed easier. I was chosen a Homecoming Princess and enjoyed the prestige even more because Ruth was also in the court. Bids came in for honorary organizations: Psi Chi (psychology), Kappa Delta Pi (education), and the highly regarded Lambda Tau (English and writing). The most prized invitation, however, was to the Rootin' Rubes, officially designated "the girls' pep squad," the women's branch of the Arkansas Boosters Club. Dressed in red sweaters with white felt razorbacks emblazoned upon our breasts and white pleated skirts, we served a dual purpose as goodwill ambassadors and impromptu cheer leaders. The "perks" were many and our prestige was great. We attended most out-of-town games, we had special seats in a special section, we had a chance to meet the opposing team members (although our loyalty was firmly bonded, past, present, and future to the U of A). We felt important and necessary and had unbelievable fun.

Charles was a track man, running the 440 and winning most of the time. I spent what hours I could, sitting on the same bleachers I had scorned in earlier years, watching him run.

*Passages about Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (called Charles Federson) in Margaret Jewell Mullen's book, An Arkansas Childhood. Ruth, who is mentioned twice in this text, was Margaret Jewell's dearest friend in college.*



## CHARLES DAVIS FRIERSON JR.'S LIFE

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### 8. CHARLES DAVIS FRIERSON JR.'S SECRET SOCIETY: T.N.E.

**Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (1907–1970)** joined a secret sophomore-class Greek society known as T.N.E. in 1926. He joined during his second year at the University of Arkansas. Charles had become a member of Kappa Sigma, a mainstream college fraternity, the previous year.

Theta Nu Epsilon, usually referred to as T.N.E., is a secret society founded at Wesleyan University in Connecticut in 1870. The University of Arkansas chapter, called Phi Phi, was founded in 1904 and continued on the campus until 1930.

*The emblematic symbol  
or badge of Theta Nu  
Epsilon (T.N.E.).*



*The emblematic symbol  
of Skull and Bones.*

The original T.N.E. chapter at Wesleyan was sponsored by Skull and Bones, the most famous American collegiate secret society, which was founded at Yale University in 1832. In 1982 Skull and Bones revealed its membership during its first 150 years. Perhaps the most notable members of Skull and Bones are President George W. Bush (b. 1946); his father, President George H. W. Bush (b. 1924); and his grandfather Senator Prescott Bush (1895–1972). Interestingly, at least to me, William McCormick Blair (1884–1982), who built and owned our home at Crab Tree Farm, was a member of Skull and Bones at Yale during the first decade of the twentieth century.

In a sophomore-class society such as T.N.E., members are chosen at the end of their freshman year. The new members run the chapter during their sophomore year, and juniors and seniors serve as honorary members or advisors. Charles Davis Frierson Jr.'s membership in T.N.E. was revealed by Margaret Jewell Mullen (1909–1998) in her 1989 autobiographical book, *An Arkansas Childhood*. She also related a T.N.E. escapade that they undertook during her senior year, in the spring of 1927. Charles was a twenty-year-old sophomore at that time, and Margaret Jewell was an eighteen-year-old graduating senior.

*Last Home in Arkansas* ✦ 199

My senior year rushed on. Having found out what college was all about aside from classes, I was determined to miss no part of it. Charles and I were a steady twosome, and his membership in TNE, a sub-rosa fraternity prominent then on college campuses, prompted some off-beat adventures, exciting because we often risked disciplinary action if apprehended. Our escapades were harmless but often ill-chosen in terms of safety. I particularly remember being lifted up to the bottom of a spidery fire escape on the tower of Old Main. There I removed the rope around my waist and tied it to the bottom rung of the metal ladder so that Charles and another TNE could join me—with its help. We scaled the four-story tower, climbed through an unlocked museum window, left a TNE greeting in the hands of a skeleton there and went back down the way we had come. Why? You have to be that age at that moment to know the answer!

*A passage revealing Charles Davis Frierson Jr.'s membership in T.N.E., a secret sophomore society at the University of Arkansas, in 1926 and 1927. This passage comes from Margaret Jewell Mullen's 1989 autobiographical book, An Arkansas Childhood.*

*Old Main tower, climbed by Charles Davis Frierson Jr. during his sophomore year at the University of Arkansas.*



**Charles Davis Frierson Sr. (1877–1947)** mentioned the T.N.E. matter in a letter\* to his son.

*My Dear Sonny: —*

*We are very glad you think everything will come out all right in regard to your chapter and also the T.N.E. matter. You say you fixed that up, but you refrained from saying what you did to fix it up, and you failed to say whether you had a faculty interview about it. Of course we had a little curiosity as to whether you had to sing three songs, or dance a jig, or run through the spanking machine. . . . Remember that you are in school to study and to graduate; and while I want you to stand up for your crowd, I don't want you to get "in bad" with the faculty.*

\*This letter was written on September 25, 1927, three days after the famous Tunney-Dempsey (long count) rematch at Soldier's Field in Chicago, Illinois, on September 22, 1927. Charles Davis Frierson Sr. was ecstatic about Gene Tunney's (1897–1978) victory over Jack Dempsey (1895–1983), and the rest of this letter was mostly about that historic event.

## CHARLES DAVIS FRIERSON JR.'S LIFE

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### 9. “WATCHING HIM RUN”

**Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (1907–1970)** was a track runner in his college years at the University of Arkansas. His specialty was the quarter-mile race or, as it is often called, the 440-yard dash.

Margaret Jewell Mullen (1909–1998), Charles Davis Frierson Jr.’s girlfriend at the University of Arkansas in 1927, wrote in 1989 about his performance in a race in May 1927. Her account of the event appears in her autobiography, *An Arkansas Childhood*, written sixty-two years after the race took place. That account appears in a segment of the book entitled “Watching Him Run.” She wrote, “I searched the field for Charles’ handsome black head and finally found it. He had seen me and we exchanged our private sign. Now I had to wait for what was to me the main event. Charles was a 440 man, a quarter miler.”

*A passage about Charles Davis Frierson Jr. from Margaret Jewell Mullen’s 1989 book, An Arkansas Childhood. She described Charles’s participation in a track race at the University of Arkansas in 1927.*

#### 202 ✦ An Arkansas Childhood

They were on the track. Charles had drawn a good lane, second from the inside, between two runners, one so blond and pale and seemingly fragile that his finishing any race seemed doubtful. Two other Arkansas men drew outside lanes. They all dug into their blocks, worked their spikes into good position, dropped down over their feet. Then the call, “On your mark—Get set,” brought them up tense and ready for the gun. It was a good start. Charles ran easily and took advantage of his position. As they rounded the track and appeared in mid-race to be running almost singly, Charles drew ahead. He was a natural runner with an easy open stride. But right on his heels came SMU’s blond challenger, and he stayed right there matching Charles stride for stride. They came around into the finishing sprint almost shoulder to shoulder. As they neared the tape, first one seemed to be ahead, then the other. I screamed, “Go, Charles!” just as the deceptively fragile blond lunged with his SMU jersey a fraction of an inch—but all that was needed—ahead of Charles’ red Razorback chest. They stumbled off the track into clumps of waiting teammates, either exultant or commiserating. I blinked the tears out of my eyes—it had been such a beautiful day.

In her senior year (1926–27) at college, Margaret Jewell was president of the Woman’s League at the University of Arkansas. In April 1927, the month before Charles Frierson Jr.’s race in May, Margaret Jewell attended a national conference of the Intercollegiate Association of Women Students. It was a four-day conference, held from April 20 to April 23 at the University of Illinois in Urbana, Illinois. The following paragraph in her 1989 book relates her memory of being there.

And here on the Illinois campus I suddenly found that by some strange magic I knew how to attract and deal with that other sex. It was intoxicating! I made two conquests while I was there that lasted over years and miles through correspondence, although our hopes for meeting again never materialized. Ken and Neil, wherever you are, my thanks for building my self-confidence!

In this passage, Margaret Jewell revealed some sort of sexual flirtation or initiation, which had occurred sixty-two years earlier, when she was eighteen years old, away from her home in Arkansas, and while she was dating Charles Frierson Jr.

During her April 1927 trip to Urbana, Illinois, Margaret Jewell also learned that her family would be moving in the summer of 1927 from Fayetteville, Arkansas, to Oregon, where her father would be joining the faculty of Oregon State College. In the “Watching Him Run” segment of her book, she wrote the following about her impending separation from Charles Frierson Jr.

In less than a month I would be graduating. Later in the summer we would be moving west—to Oregon. What would the West be like? Ever since my parents had made the decision to leave Arkansas for the Pacific Northwest, I had wondered. Charles and I found no answers. He was a junior, headed for a law career in his father’s office in Jonesboro. My excitement about graduating was threatened by my anxiety over leaving Charles, leaving Arkansas, leaving the life I knew so well and loved so much.

*Eighteen-year-old Margaret Jewell, Charles Frierson Jr.’s girlfriend, graduated from the University of Arkansas a few days after Charles ran a quarter-mile race in 1927.*



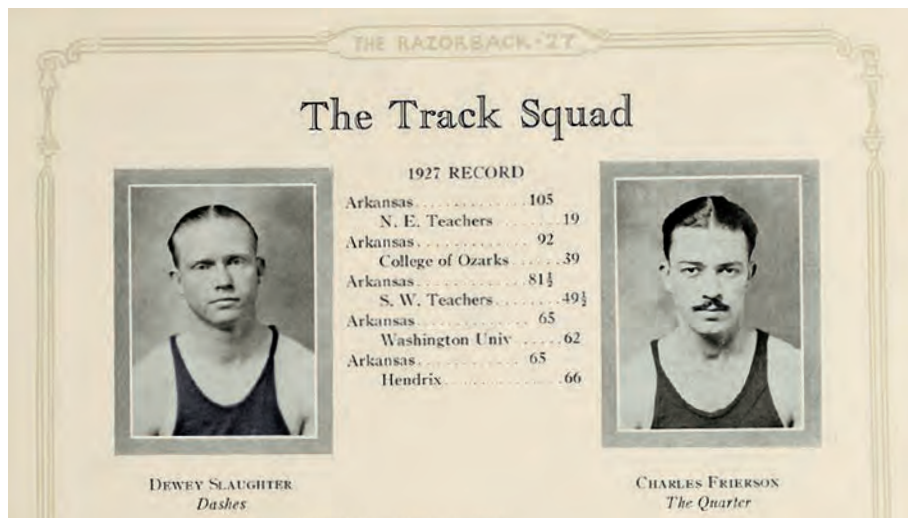
## CHARLES DAVIS FRIERSON JR.'S LIFE

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### 10. CHARLES DAVIS FRIERSON JR. IN *THE RAZORBACK*

**Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (1907–1970)** was prominently featured in the 1927, 1928, and 1929 yearbooks of the University of Arkansas. The yearbook is called *The Razorback*.

In the 1927 *Razorback*, Charles Frierson Jr. is depicted as a member of the University of Arkansas track team. His specialty on the track squad was the 440-yard dash.



*Charles Davis Frierson Jr. is shown on the right as a member of the 1927 track team at the University of Arkansas.*

The 1928 *Razorback* noted that intramural wrestling had been introduced at the University of Arkansas that winter. Among the wrestling competition winners that year was Charles Frierson Jr., who wrestled in the 135-pound category.


In the 1928 yearbook, Charles Frierson Jr. is pictured as president of the junior class. There is also a large photograph of Charles posing as a rather stylishly dressed college junior.

In the 1929 *Razorback*, Charles Frierson Jr. is pictured in the yearbook alongside the resume of his college activities.

*The Razorback ~ 1928*

## JUNIOR CLASS

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CHARLES FRIERSON  
*President*

OFFICERS

CHARLES FRIERSON . . . . . *President*  
FRANCES CRUTCHER . . . . . *Vice-President*  
FRANK MCBRIDE . . . . . *Secretary-Treasurer*

*Charles Davis Frierson Jr., president of his junior class in 1928.*




**CHARLES FRIERSON**  
*Activities*

*Charles Davis Frierson Jr. depicted in the 1928 Razorback yearbook at the University of Arkansas.*

FRIERSON, CHARLES, JR.  
*Jonesboro*  
ΚΣ

Pres. Junior Class '28;  
Student Senate '28; Vigilance  
Committee '27, '28; Track;  
"A" Club; Pres. A. B. C.;  
Inter-Fraternity Council '28,  
'29; Who's Who '28, '29;  
Secretary Associated Law  
Students; Adjutant 1st Bat-  
talion; Scabbard and Blade;  
Rifle Team '26, '27, '28.



OF NINETEEN TWENTY NINE

*Charles Davis Frierson Jr. in the Razorback yearbook in 1929, his senior year.*

## CHARLES DAVIS FRIERSON JR.'S LIFE

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### 11. A YEAR IN FOGGY BOTTOM AT GEORGE WASHINGTON LAW SCHOOL

In 1929 **Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (1907–1970)** enrolled in law school at the George Washington University Law School in Washington, D.C. He was a twenty-two-year-old.



*The rectangle on this map of Washington, D.C., is enlarged below.*

George Washington University Law School was founded in 1865 and has a highly distinguished roster of alumni. Commonly known as GW Law, the school is located in a Washington, D.C., area called Foggy Bottom, which is just west of the White House. In addition to George Washington University, the area is also the location of the United States State Department. For this reason, Foggy Bottom has become a metonym\* for the State Department.



*This map shows the site of George Washington University Law School, where Charles Davis Frierson Jr. was enrolled in 1929–30. The map notes the location of the apartment where he lived in Washington, D.C., and the site of a photograph (p. 122) taken in the winter of 1929–30.*

\*A metonym is a name used for something else with which it is associated. For example, Washington is a metonym for the federal government of the United States.

Charles Frierson Jr.'s Washington D.C., address was discovered in a letter written to him by his father, **Charles Davis Frierson Sr. (1877–1947)**, on Black Tuesday, October 29, 1929, the defining date of the Stock Market Crash of 1929. The panic on Wall Street had begun five days earlier on Black Thursday, October 24, 1929. Did these events prompt this letter?

Charles Frierson Jr, October 29, 1929  
 Corcoran Court 401 23rd Street NW Apt. 604  
 Washington, D.C.

Dear Son:

*I got your address as above set out over the telephone from your mother who had it from Margaret Purifoy. . . . I am sending you . . . a cashier's check for \$100.00 as I am quite sure you must be running a little low by this time. I hope you are comfortably situated and I am glad you are not too far from the school. Mother says it is five blocks away.*

Your Dad



*Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (right) in his apartment on 23rd Street in Washington, D.C., in 1929–30. On the left is his roommate, John Dupree Eldridge Jr. (1909–2002), who was from Augusta, Arkansas, about sixty miles southwest of Jonesboro, Arkansas.*

In a letter dated May 25, 1930, Charles Davis Frierson Sr. wrote these words to his son:

*Do you still plan to go back to Fayetteville next year? I think you are old enough [he was twenty-three] to make your own plans, and can go back to Washington or to U. of A. as you please. The business is here for you if you can learn to handle it. I certainly seem to have more than I can do; although I am not getting rich.*

In the fall of 1930, Neville's father returned to Fayetteville, Arkansas, for his second year of law school. He received his law degree from the University of Arkansas in the spring of 1931.



## CHARLES DAVIS FRIERSON JR.'S LIFE

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### 12. AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL LETTER: TWENTY YEARS IN THE LIFE OF CHARLES DAVIS FRIERSON JR.

**Major Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (1907–1970)** wrote a letter from Omaha, Nebraska, in 1944 to a friend with whom he had attended the second International Boy Scout Jamboree in Copenhagen, Denmark, twenty years earlier.

*Charles Davis Frierson Jr. at his desk in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1944. From there he wrote an autobiographical letter about the twenty years from 1924 to 1944.*



The letter was written to Gordon Dees Gill (1908–1980), who lived in Lake Charles, Louisiana, and had been a Boy Scout with Charles Davis Frierson Jr. at the Jamboree in 1924. The letter is a rare opportunity to read Charles's own words about himself. His wry humor and slightly self-deprecating wit reveal both his writing skill and his modesty.

*Omaha, Nebraska                      July 11, 1944*

*Mr. Gordon Dees Gill  
1126 Python Street  
Lake Charles, Louisiana*

*Dear Gordon:*

*Following the recently received directive from Vollmann which meets with my approval, I am setting out below the history of Frierson for the last twenty years:*

*Graduated with an A.B. from University of Arkansas in '29; attended George Washington in Washington, D.C. for one year and completed law degree at the University of Arkansas in '31. I did a good deal of messing around with organizations during the under-graduate period and never distinguished myself in scholastic ways. Ran on the track team which reminds me of the time you chased over the rougher portions of the Kings Deer Park through miles of nettles and how your legs resembled a South Sea Islander with a bad case of elephantiasis [sic.] that night.*

*In '31 I started practicing law in Jonesboro, Arkansas, with my father and kept at that until 15 March 1942. I spent four of these years as the City Attorney and four of them as State Senator which were sidelines to the law practice. About the time of Pearl Harbor I had a hunk of bone chiseled out of my nose so that I could breath sufficiently to fight the Wars and went on active duty in March. They discovered that I was too old to serve as a Lt. of Infantry so I was told that I was an Intelligence Officer and sent to St. Paul, Minnesota, where the office covered Minnesota, North and South Dakota. In July of 1942 I was ordered to Omaha and have been here ever since. I am still surprised that the War Department thinks that I should fight this war in the Mid West, however, they may get around to changing their minds about that before it is over. In November of '42 I took charge of the District Intelligence Office which at the time covered Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota; later South Dakota was removed and still later the territory was changed so that my present assignment covers Nebraska and South Dakota. My present grade is Major.*

*When this shindig is over I expect to go back to Jonesboro, Arkansas, and see if there is any law to practice. I had a fairly active practice before the war but undoubtedly the situation will have changed and my grocery man will have to start carrying me on the cuff for protracted periods like he did in 1931 and 1932. It was sometime in 1932 that I began profiting by other peoples suffering and brought quite a number of foreclosures, later there was a lot of municipal bond practice and about the time that played out I fell into some insurance and utilities business. These activities managed to keep the growing family growing. The oldest boy is just 12 and passed his Tenderfoot test on his birthday; next is the young lady of the family who is 8; and James is 4. You may recall me getting a letter or two during the summer of '24—I married the writer and she has been able to put up with me for all these years which I consider quite a remarkable feat.*

*For avocation (perhaps a vocation if there is no more law business) I have been acquiring, trafficking in and seeing to the farming of a good deal of land that I bought in the early '30's when people were trying to give it away. I have spent considerable time working on financial end of the scouting program, the acquiring and building of camping facilities, and on the district committees. I believe the last troop duty I had with the Scouts was about 1931.*

*Regards and I hope that some time we can see each other again,*

CHARLES D. FRIERSON, JR.

Major, Inf.

Present Address:

Hq District 5, Seventh Service Command  
311 WOW Building  
Omaha, Nebraska

Permanent Address

Frierson Building  
Jonesboro, Arkansas

## CHARLES DAVIS FRIERSON JR.'S LIFE

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### 13. JAPANESE FIRE BALLOONS

For a six-month period—from November 1, 1944, to the end of April 1945—the Japanese turned loose nine thousand balloons (gas bags) that were designed to travel across the Pacific Ocean and drop incendiary bombs on the United States. About thirty-three feet in diameter, these Japanese fire balloons were filled with hydrogen gas and traveled at about thirty thousand feet in the jet stream from Japan to the United States.



*A reinflated Japanese fire balloon that was retrieved intact near Alturas, California, on January 10, 1945.*

The Japanese balloon invasion was conceived as a retaliation for Lt. Colonel (later Lt. General) Jimmy Doolittle's (1896–1993) bombing of Tokyo on April 18, 1942. It took the Japanese over two years to prepare this invasion. Of the nine thousand balloons released, it is estimated that about one thousand reached North America. The balloons caused considerable fear but did little damage. Most importantly, the press voluntarily censored itself about the falling balloons. As a result, the Japanese presumed the balloons were not reaching the United States and called off the program in April 1945.

#### **Major Charles Davis Frierson Jr.**

**(1907–1970)** was an intelligence officer

for District 5 (Nebraska and South Dakota) during and after the Japanese fire balloon invasion. He was stationed in Omaha, Nebraska. The Japanese firebombs apparently consumed much of Major Frierson's attention during the last year of his military service, for his archives contain abundant information about them.

Neville recalls traveling to South Dakota with her family during the summer of 1945. The Frierson family went to see a site near Red Elm, South Dakota, where one of the Japanese fire balloons had fallen. Neville says it was the most memorable trip of her entire childhood.



*The Frierson family at a Japanese fire balloon landing site in Red Elm, South Dakota, in the summer of 1945: (back row, left to right) Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (age thirty-eight), Margaret Alice Purifoy Frierson (age thirty-seven), Charles Davis Frierson III (age thirteen); (front row, left to right) Neville (age nine) and James Gordon Frierson (age five).*

Neville also recalls visiting Mount Rushmore National Memorial in the Black Hills National Forest on that trip in 1945. The Friersons' visit took place just four years after Mount Rushmore was completed in 1941. They saw the sculpted heads of Presidents George Washington (1732–1799), Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826), Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865), and Theodore Roosevelt (1858–1919) carved in the granite mountain. It had taken fourteen years, four hundred people, and one million dollars to create this memorial, and amazingly, no one was killed during its construction. In 1945 the five Friersons were among 84,000 people to visit Mount Rushmore. Since 2000, two million or more people have visited the monument annually.



*Neville's family took a trip from Omaha, Nebraska, to Mount Rushmore and Red Elm, South Dakota, in the summer of 1945.*



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### 14. MR. NORTHEAST ARKANSAS, CHARLES DAVIS FRIERSON JR.

In the period following World War II, American industry was booming. However, the Old South, which had always been economically dependent on agriculture, lagged far behind in industrial development. Thus, in the 1950s and 1960s, community leaders throughout the South turned their attention to attracting new and relocated manufacturing plants to their towns and cities.

During that time, **Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (1907–1970)** was a prominent lawyer and leading banker in Jonesboro, Arkansas. He became widely recognized as a masterful practitioner of the art of industrial development. In 1960 *The Commercial Appeal* in Memphis, Tennessee, honored Charles Frierson Jr. as the Industrial Man of the Year for the entire Mid-South.\*

During the almost twelve years I knew Charles Frierson Jr., he and I often talked about his efforts to induce industrial companies to build plants in Jonesboro. This was the civic activity about which he was most passionate.

Interestingly, some years after Neville and I moved to Chicago in 1974, I became acquainted with Robert A. “Bob” Pritzker (1926–2011), a scion of Chicago’s Pritzker family. Somehow, Bob Pritzker learned that Neville was the daughter of Charles Frierson Jr., with whom he had worked in 1957 to move the Colson Castor Company to Jonesboro. The Colson Castor Company is still headquartered in Jonesboro, almost sixty years later. For the rest of his life, every time Neville and I encountered Bob Pritzker, he would talk about and compliment Neville’s father.

*\*The Mid-South is an informally defined region usually described as an area anchored by Memphis, Tennessee, and consisting of portions of seven states. The area encompasses western Tennessee, northern Mississippi, the Missouri boot heel, western Kentucky, northeastern Arkansas, southern Illinois, and northwestern Alabama.*



HE SERVES WITH DISTINCTION—Charles Frierson, attorney and banker of Jonesboro, Ark., was presented the Bureau's first personal Distinguished Service Award as the Mid-Southerner who did most for economic development of his area during 1959. —Staff Photos

## Busy Jonesboro Bank Head Is Industrial Man Of Year

The Commercial Appeal announcement that Charles Davis Frierson Jr. had been named the Industrial Man of the Year for the Mid-South in 1960.

According to the records, he is president of the Mercantile Bank of Jonesboro, Ark.

But according to the people in that section, he is "Mr. Northeast Arkansas."

In fact, if the average person did what he does, the bank presidency would be relegated to a sideline job. But Charles Frierson is no average person.

He is, among other things, Industrial Man of the Year. The award was made yesterday during this newspaper's annual Cotton Carnival Mayors' Lunch at the Peabody.

A secret panel of judges made the decision from nomination reports submitted by Chamber of Commerce executives, city officials, relatives and just plain citizens. Many men had done many things for their communities and the area surrounding them, but when the judging was completed, the gentleman from Jonesboro was the unanimous choice.

### Gives Others Credit

"You will very rarely see his picture in the newspaper," the nomination read. "He does all the work and gives other people credit." (A check of The Commercial Appeal files failed to reveal a past clipping regarding Mr. Frierson.)

What about the work that he does?

He is credited with having a major influence in the location at Jonesboro of eight industries with 2,445 persons on their payrolls. Of this number, about 1,000 were added during 1959 at the Crane Co., American District Telegraph Co. and Jonesboro Shoe Co.

He has spearheaded the Craighead-Greene-Poinsett Counties Watershed Program, which calls for 22 lakes ranging in size from 40 to 1,000 acres, all of which are expected to be factors in future industrial growth in the section.

He led a movement which resulted in a complete parking study of Jonesboro, a \$500,000 bond issue and additional off-street parking lots.

### Leader In Centennial

He was on the steering committee for the centennial celebration of Jonesboro and Craighead County, saw that the centennial museum was made a permanent fixture, and was responsible for the microfilming of old newspapers and other historical documents for posterity.

He initiated a plan by which a new City Hall-Central Fire Station were constructed without a tax increase.

He led the move to build a permanent fairgrounds adjoining the Jonesboro city limits.

He initiated the city zoning ordinance and arranged for

### The Commercial Appeal's first

public hearings necessary before its passage.

He helped the Arkansas Association of Retarded School Children raise more than \$6,000 for a special school; worked with the Jewish citizens in their efforts to build a new temple; lent time and financial knowhow to the Salvation Army for providing new quarters; was drive chairman for the United Fund campaign, which in 1959 got 90 per cent more than the year before.

He serves as attorney without pay for the Jonesboro Special School District, Jonesboro Industrial Development Corp.; Jonesboro Parking Authority, Big Creek Watershed Association, Cache River-Bayou De-View Flood Control Project, Peoples Property Association and Jonesboro Chamber of Commerce.

He is also a member of the board of directors of the Monette State Bank and the Mid-South Gas Co. and is on the advisory board of St. Bernard's Hospital and the Jonesboro Presbyterian Church.

Mr. Frierson is a former city attorney, state senator, Army major, Democrat Central Committee chairman, city planning commission chairman, board member of the Arkansas Chamber of Commerce.

And he had time yesterday to come to Memphis for lunch.

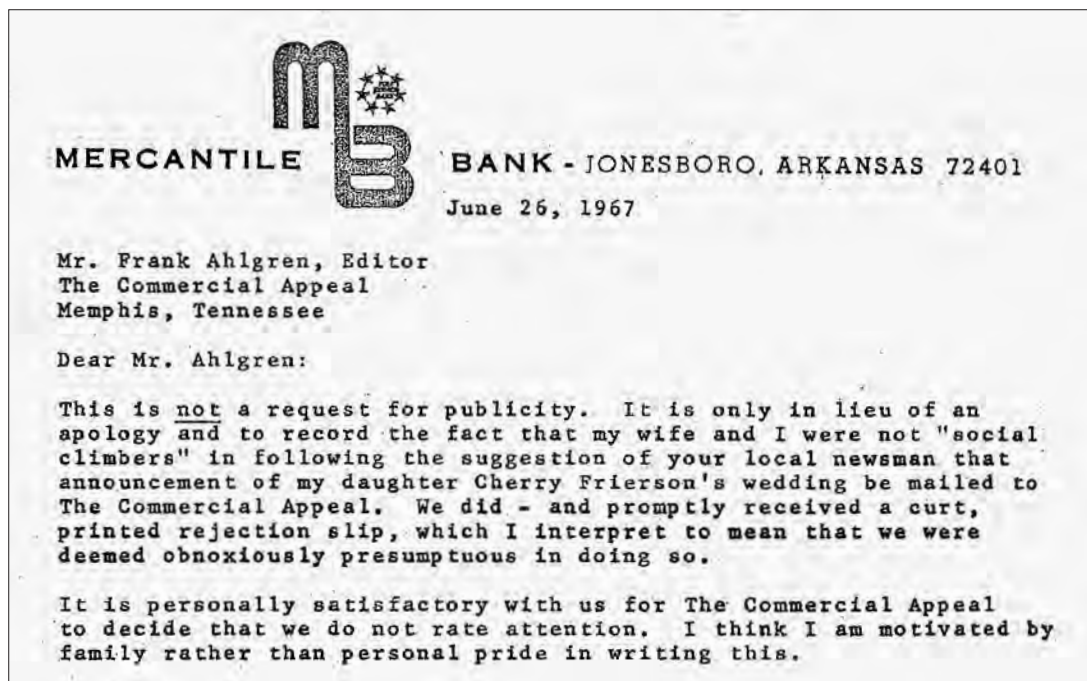
## CHARLES DAVIS FRIERSON JR.'S LIFE

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### 15. AN OUTBURST OF INDIGNATION BY CHARLES DAVIS FRIERSON JR.

In June 1967, **Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (1907–1970)** sent *The Commercial Appeal* in Memphis, Tennessee, information about his daughter Cherry Purifoy Frierson's (b. 1947) upcoming marriage to William Allen Hester (b. 1947). He intended for the newspaper to publish a wedding announcement. In return, he received a terse rejection notice from the newspaper.

Charles Davis Frierson Jr. reacted with great indignation to the dismissal of his request, and he wrote an irate letter to the longtime editor of *The Commercial Appeal*, Frank Ahlgren (1903–1995). The letter, written about one month before the wedding, represents an uncharacteristic outburst of anger by Mr. Frierson, and exposes his strong sense of family pride.



My daughter's great grandfather, James G. Frierson, from Eastern Arkansas, was State Senator, Circuit Judge, and a framer of the Arkansas Constitution in 1874. Her grandfather was Chancery Judge and quite prominent in law and civic affairs. Her father heads a law firm with extensive practice in Eastern Arkansas, and for thirteen years has been active president of the Mercantile Bank, Jonesboro. I received and truly appreciate the Distinguished Service Award from the MidSouth Resources Bureau, The Commercial Appeal, in 1959. Her aunt is widow of Francis Cherry who was Governor of Arkansas and Chairman of the Federal Subversive Control Board. Her great aunt was Mrs. Allen Hughes, whose husband was prominent as a judge and lawyer in Eastern Arkansas and Memphis, and her sons, Drs. James and John Davis Hughes, practice in Memphis, William Hughes heads the office of the Massachusetts Mutual Life, and Allen Hughes is attorney with the Union Planters Bank. Her sister, Neville Frierson Bryan, graduated from Southwestern, and on occasion of her marriage to John Bryan, Jr., West Point, Mississippi, was honored by the occasion appearing in your paper.

Now, having said all this in justification for my failing to apologize for sending the wedding data direct, as suggested to us, I realize that I don't really give a damn and you can throw this in the wastepaper basket.

Very truly,

  
Charles Frierson  
President

CF:bl

*An irate letter written to the editor of The Commercial Appeal by Charles Davis Frierson Jr. in 1967.*

We do not know if Charles Davis Frierson Jr. ever received a response to his letter. We do know that it was naive of him to simply mail the wedding announcement information to the newspaper.

He should have recruited his daughter Neville to approach the newspaper. When Neville and I were planning our marriage almost nine years earlier, in 1958, Neville personally delivered her engagement picture and information to Mary George Beggs (1933–2008),\* the society editor of *The Commercial Appeal*.

\*Mary George Beggs, a 1955 graduate of Southwestern at Memphis, was a friend of Neville's and mine. She was a writer and editor of the society page of *The Commercial Appeal* in Memphis from 1955 to 1995.



## CHARLES DAVIS FRIERSON JR.'S LIFE

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### 16. LAKE FRIERSON AND LAKE FRIERSON STATE PARK, EPONYMS OF CHARLES DAVIS FRIERSON JR.

Lake Frierson and Lake Frierson State Park are two important Arkansas recreational areas named for **Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (1907–1970)**.

Lake Frierson is a 350-acre, artificially created reservoir of water developed in the 1970s by the United States Soil Conservation Service.\* It is located on Crowley's Ridge, about ten miles north of Jonesboro, in Greene County, Arkansas. The lake was dedicated in 1974 and is today managed by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission.

Lake Frierson State Park is a 135-acre recreation park located on the eastern shore of Lake Frierson. The park is best known for its fishing, camping, and hiking. The development of the park was funded by Arkansas's state legislature in 1975, and construction began in 1978. About 65,000 people visit the park annually.



*Lake Frierson and Lake Frierson State Park in Greene County, Arkansas, just ten miles north of Jonesboro.*

\*The United States Soil Conservation Service, founded in 1932, had its name changed in 1994 to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). It is a relatively small agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The NRCS budget is about \$4 billion out of the USDA's annual \$148 billion budget. The agency works with private landowners to help them conserve natural resources.



*Signage at the entrance to Lake Frierson State Park, 2010.*

In printed material about the lake and the park, Charles Davis Frierson Jr. is described as a Jonesboro attorney who donated hours of research and provided the necessary documentation for the purchase of the property. In fact, most of the work to create the park was done by Charles Davis Frierson III (b. 1932) after his father's death in 1970. In 1974 State Senator Paul Jerry Bookout Sr. (1933–2006) got the lake named for Charles Frierson Jr. because of all he had done for northeastern Arkansas.

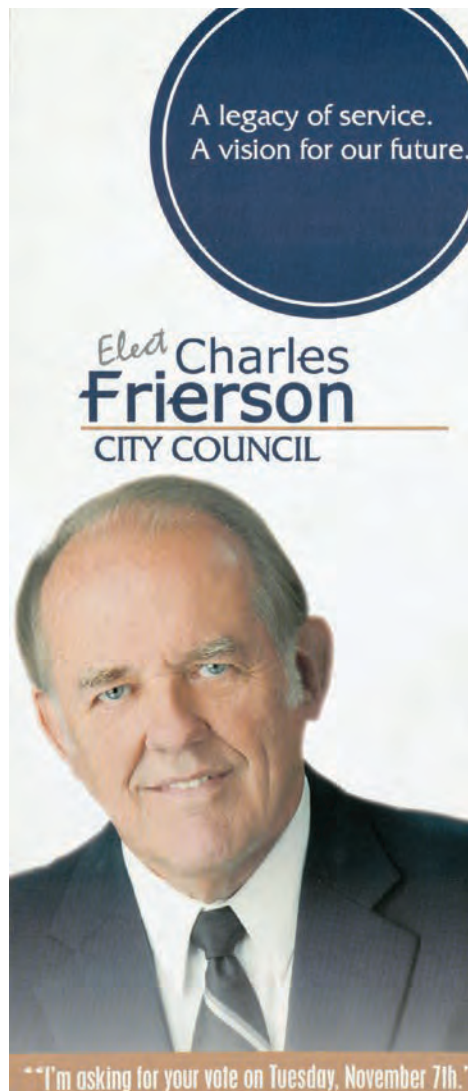
## CHARLES DAVIS FRIERSON JR.'S LIFE

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### 17. “MY IMPRESSIONS OF DAD” BY CHARLES DAVIS FRIERSON III

In 2011 Neville’s brother Charles Davis Frierson III (b. 1932) sent me a document that he called “a very brief summary of my impressions of Dad.” Charles Davis III went on to say, “I wrote these in 2007 for some reason. Actually they are an embarrassing example of my bad memory.”

*Neville’s older brother, Charles Davis Frierson III, pictured in a 2006 campaign brochure. He was running for the Jonesboro City Council. He was elected to the office and is currently serving his third four-year term.*



What follows are Charles Davis Frierson III’s recollections of his father, **Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (1907–1970)**, written thirty-seven years after Charles Davis Frierson Jr. died.

## FATHER

*I'm not sure I want to do this. More to the point, I doubt that my memory of what my Father was "really like" will show who he really was. The scrapbooks in my possession show what others think of him, and my Grandfather, by way of testimonials and obituaries. All my life I have either been intimidated by him, or felt, even now, that I could not achieve the level of work habit and leadership he always demonstrated. I have often thought it made better sense to do as James [his brother, James Gordon Frierson] did, get out of town.*

*I say these things only to show that my views may be somewhat warped.*

*My parents never had a great deal of money. This was true of almost everyone during the Great Depression [1929–39] and through the 1930s. Our family never really suffered, but certainly did not acquire an excess of material things during this time. Dad was in law practice with his father, and during this time, served as a state senator, where he made some friends who later became important leaders throughout the state.*

*He was instrumental in the acquisition by the city of [Jonesboro] of Craighead Forest Park. The story goes that he was returning by train from St. Louis, where the Court of Appeals is located, and on the train, visited with one of the Bergers, who were substantial businessmen in St. Louis and Jonesboro. Mr. Berger told Dad he knew of a tract of ground a few miles South of Jonesboro, owned by a St. Louis lady, who wanted to sell 640 acres for about \$5.00 an acre. Dad organized two or three other people, connected to the Young Men's Civic Club, and they sold "deeds" to one foot square pieces of the property to raise money to buy it.*

*He served as officer in charge of counterintelligence, during the war, based in Omaha, with jurisdiction in Nebraska, South Dakota, and a part of Iowa. Our family took the train to Omaha three different summers, and at least two Christmas weeks. I recall that on one trip, he decided to take us to South Dakota to visit the Badlands and Black Hills. We drove that considerable distance, before interstates, met with an agent near the Black Hills, drove out in the country, where he unloaded from the trunk*

*an explosive device. At this time, the most interesting activity were Japanese balloons which rode the jet stream, dropped down (even in Nebraska and S.D.) and were supposed to set fires. They blew this thing up with a pretty good bang. Mother had some pretty harsh (for her) things to say to him for having that thing in the trunk all that way.*

*Dad, never to my memory, had any really harsh words for his children. His silence and body language was enough. He had very little patience with us, and if we did not promptly carry out a request, he would do it himself. I have only heard stories about his temper, which could be devastating. He did not "suffer fools" gracefully and did not tolerate procrastination.*

*After the war, he rejoined the law firm, and both David Walker and Frank Snellgrove became associated. About the time of Grandpa's death, he became President of Mercantile Bank, but continued to handle some law matters. He worked all day, and, after a brief dinner break, into the night. We saw very little of him. Perhaps once a month, he gathered me and we explored his properties.*

*His most outstanding characteristic was his interest in almost everything around him. He was an acknowledged expert on drainage matters, had a more than common grasp of engineering, knew a lot about geology and hydrology, and farming in general. This permitted him to discuss and argue with "experts" in these fields.*

*Mostly, he is remembered for his contributions to economic progress in Jonesboro. A lot of the late night work related to this. He served as City Attorney in the 1930s, and on one or two city committees later. He was instrumental in getting a traffic study for Jonesboro, and other planning programs. He was a major factor in acquiring land for the municipal airport. No one spent more free time helping city development. His banker rival, Herbert McAdams, managed to join in at the end to take credit. Sometimes this bothered Dad, and sometimes not. He never sought credit for anything.*

*What about social life? Well, basically there wasn't any. He had no personal, close friends. Zero. Mother did have some and associated with them occasionally, such as through the Treble Clef Club and maybe others. Vacations? I don't remember any.*

*I saw my father become emotional only twice. One followed an FDIC exam of Monett State Bank. Our family owned a sizable chunk of stock, and Dad served as Chairman of the Board. I don't recall the issues, but examiners severely questioned something that really upset him, and he choked up. Probably it was more the frustration of not being able to argue with these bureaucrats who had all the power that caused this.*

*The other time was when Dad and I were sitting in the car in our driveway, and I was to leave for Korea the next day. There had been a truce a couple of months earlier, but there were still tensions. He really cried this time, and I was very moved.*

*Charles Frierson Jr. earned more respect in more different areas than anyone else I can think of. Given a different, more selfish personality, I am convinced he could have become quite rich in material things. Instead, he became rich in stature, in respect of others for him, and, although mostly unknown and undocumented, rich in the satisfaction of causing this community to progress when many around us are dying.*

*By Charles Frierson III*



## CHARLES DAVIS FRIERSON JR.'S LIFE

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### 18. MY MEMORIES OF CHARLES DAVIS FRIERSON JR.

I knew my father-in-law, **Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (1907–1970)**, for just a little over twelve years.

I always called him Mr. Frierson. My recollections of him are now from over forty-six years ago.

My earliest strong memory of him was a moment that occurred a day or so before Neville and I married in August 1958, now almost sixty years ago. In the living room of Neville's childhood house, Mr. Frierson asked me to sit down with him for a moment. He then began to offer me, a twenty-one-year-old, some rather personal wedding night advice. He presumed (I must say correctly) that Neville and I were inexperienced. As I recall, I remained quiet and did not pursue the conversation, but I was to learn that Mr. Frierson had amazing prescience.

To me Mr. Frierson was a rather formal, serious, and shy man. His diffidence was, in fact, almost awkward. Over the years, however, I became very comfortable with him, and we developed a very good relationship. I particularly enjoyed talking with Mr. Frierson about all of his interests. He was a much better conversationalist on a one-on-one basis. He was very bright and knowledgeable, and I learned a lot from him. I was also greatly inspired by his deep civic commitment.

Mr. Frierson's interests were quite clear: his occupations (law, banking, and farming) and his civic/political life. He was intensively consumed by these duties. In fact, he devoted all his waking hours to their pursuit.

During the time that I knew him, Mr. Frierson's most defining trait was his grueling work ethic. After a full day's work at his offices, he always returned after dinner and worked late into the evening. I do not think he slept very much. Mr. Frierson never seemed very relaxed to me. The only exception was when he visited us on occasion at our home in West Point, Mississippi, for a few days. When he was there, he rested and took long naps. I suspect that this was because he was away from his stimulating vocations.

Mr. Frierson had no apparent interest or time for diversions such as sports, arts, travel, entertainment, or any kind of social life. I never saw him take an alcoholic drink or smoke, or heard him utter a profanity. Further, I do not recall many moments of levity with Mr. Frierson. As for his family, Mr. Frierson was attentive and highly devoted to his wife and children, but he was not a doting father or husband. As for religion, he was dutiful—I suspect largely because of community and family tradition.

Though he was a man of high position in the community and owned significant property, Mr. Frierson's lifestyle was decidedly unpretentious. He valued frugality and eschewed any show of wealth. He had no ambition to be a wealthy man. He could, on occasion, use self-deprecating rhetoric, but he was a confident individual and quietly proud of his accomplishments and his heritage.

As I reflect on Mr. Frierson, I am reminded of some words famously written by Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865) for his first political speech, given when he was twenty-three years old: *“Every man is said to have his peculiar ambition. Whether it is true or not, I can say for one—that I have no other [ambition] so great as that of being truly esteemed of my fellow men, by rendering myself worthy of their esteem.”*

President Lincoln's ambitions were realized beyond measure over the course of his relatively short life (fifty-six years). As this book attests, over Mr. Frierson's relatively short life (sixty-three years), those ambitions were equally realized.

By John H. Bryan



## CHARLES DAVIS FRIERSON JR.'S LIFE

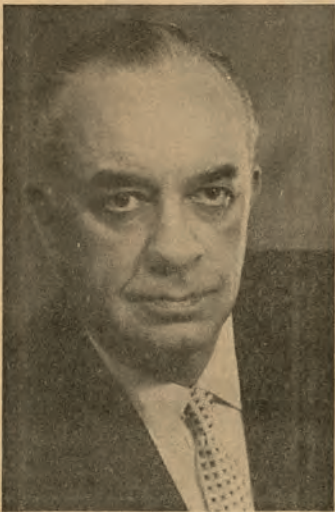
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### 19. THE OBITUARY OF CHARLES DAVIS FRIERSON JR.

On Sunday, December 27, 1970, the day after his death, a photograph and the obituary of **Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (1907–1970)** appeared in the upper-left columns on the front page of *The Jonesboro Sun*. Also on the front page of that newspaper was an editorial that was a special tribute to Mr. Frierson's contributions to his community.

# The Jonesboro Sun.

SIXTY-NINTH YEAR—No. 18. Associated Press  
Leased Wire JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, 72401 SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1970. 86 PAGES.



Charles Frierson  
♦ ♦ ♦

## Charles Frierson, Attorney, Banker, Civic Leader Dies

## A Life Of Service

(Editorial)

A model life of service to his community has come to an end with the death of Charles Frierson. In Jonesboro's over 100 years history there have been few men who have equalled Charles Frierson's record and none has exceeded it.

Frierson followed in the footsteps of his illustrious father, the late Judge Charles D. Frierson, who left behind a fine record of achievement.

As an attorney Frierson was outstanding and as a banker he turned in an excellent performance. As a civic leader he was great and his accomplishments for the progress of Jonesboro will be a lasting monument to him.

Frierson was a tireless worker and his eyes were constantly on the goal of building a greater Jonesboro. He played a leading role in bringing many of the large industries here that have contributed so much to the advancement of the city.

Serving as state senator and before that as city attorney he made his presence in both offices count for the community good. For many years he served as chairman of the Democratic Central Committee and his service was a major factor in the reputation Craighead has enjoyed of having clean and completely honest elections.

Frierson spent countless hours working for flood control and drainage of both St. Francis and Cache basins, and his work in this field paid tremendous economic dividends to farmers and businessmen.

The impressive record testifies eloquently to the achievements which were wrought by Charles Frierson.

It was of great good fortune for the community and area that he used his life so well.

# Charles Frierson, Attorney, Banker, Civic Leader Dies

Charles D. Frierson Jr., 63, president of Mercantile Bank, prominent attorney and civic leader, suffered a fatal heart attack Saturday afternoon at 2:30 at the bank.

He was senior member of the law firm of Frierson, Walker, Snellgrove and Laser. His practice was principally related to improvement districts, bond issues and municipal improvements in cities and towns and matters relating to industries.

The bank he headed is one of the largest in Northeast Arkansas, and his civic and industrial accomplishments had won him statewide recognition.

Mr. Frierson was born Jan. 12, 1907, the son of the late Judge C. D. and Charlotte Galloway Frierson of Jonesboro. His father was a prominent Jonesboro attorney and civic leader, and his grandmother, Mrs. Emma Davis Frierson, founded one of the first private schools in Jonesboro and taught here for many years. His grandfather, the late James Frierson, served as State Senator.

He attended Jonesboro schools and graduated from the University of Arkansas in the class of 1929. He studied law at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., and the University of Arkansas.

After completion of law school, he returned to Jonesboro to practice law with his father and was elected Jonesboro city attorney.

He served as State Senator from Craighead County from 1939 until he entered the Army as an officer in military intelligence in 1942. He rose to the rank of major.

Before World War II, he was active in civic affairs and was one of the leaders in the establishment of Craighead Forest. He was one of the leaders in the drainage and flood control activities in this section of Arkansas following the disastrous floods of 1937.

Following World War II, he returned to Jonesboro, re-entered law practice and resumed his civic work.

In the late 1940s, he succeeded his father as chairman of the Craighead County Democratic Central Committee, a post he held at the time of his death.

An early leader in the industrialization of Jonesboro, he played a major role in the efforts to locate every industry that came to Jonesboro in the period after World War II.

He was also active in city government, and he was one of the prime movers in the creation of the program that resulted in the purchase of downtown areas upon which to build off-street parking lots.

Mr. Frierson also worked for and helped write the zoning ordinances under which the city now operates and as chairman of the Traffic Advisory Commission was instrumental in getting the Jonesboro 1980 plan drawn by the city, the State Highway Department, the Federal Bureau of Public Roads and the University of Arkansas.

In 1952, he served as campaign manager for his brother-in-law, the late Gov. Francis Cherry, in his successful campaign to become governor of Arkansas.

He and other members of his family had for many years been major stockholders in Mercantile Bank, and in 1954, he was named president of that financial institution.

As a bank president, he played a major role in financing the industrial and business expansion of Jonesboro.

Mr. Frierson continued his interest in flood control and drainage, and he and his son, Charles Frierson III, served as attorneys for successful watershed districts in this area and for the Cache River-Bayou DeView Association — a group that is trying to put through Congress a \$60 million flood control project.

He was attorney for Craighead Electric Cooperative and for City Water and Light.

Mr. Frierson was active in the work of First Presbyterian Church and the Jonesboro Rotary Club and belonged to many legal and professional organizations. He was a member of the Lay Advisory Board of St. Bernard's Hospital.

In addition to being president of Mercantile Bank, he was a major stockholder in Monette State Bank.

At the time of his death, he was a member of the committee raising money to purchase land for the Jonesboro unit of the Arkansas Children's Colony.

He had extensive farming interests in Craighead and adjoining counties.

In 1940, he served as president of the University of Arkansas Alumni, and he was the first chairman of the Jonesboro City Planning Commission.

In 1958, Mr. Frierson served on the Board of Directors of the State Chamber of Commerce, and he served on the Board of the Jonesboro Chamber of Commerce several times.

In 1959, he received the Memphis Commercial Appeal Distinguished Service Award for economic development of the Mid-South, and he was one of the organizers and first president of Eastern Arkansas Development Council.

He was given the Arkansas Bar Association "Outstanding Lawyer-Citizen" Award in 1963.

Survivors include his wife, Mrs. Margaret Frierson; two sons, Charles Frierson III of Jonesboro and James Frierson of Pittsburg, Kan.; two daughters, Mrs. Neville Bryan of West Point, Miss., and Mrs. Cherry Hester of Jonesboro; a sister, Mrs. Margaret Cherry of Williamsburg, Va., and six grandchildren.

Funeral services will be held Monday morning at 10 o'clock at Oaklawn Cemetery with Rev. Worth Gibson, pastor of First Methodist Church, officiating. Gregg Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

The family requests that memorials be made to the Building Fund of First Presbyterian Church or to the Heart Association.