

Legacy of Arthur “Ott” Alford

July 2, 2022, is the 195th birthday of The Memorial Baptist Church. Organized as the Greenville Baptist Church on July 2, 1827, the young mission-focused church was the birthplace of the Baptist State Convention founded in 1830. The Greenville Baptist Church changed its name in 1890 to The Memorial Baptist Church as a memorial to the founding of the Baptist State Convention in 1830. Through these 195 years, many members have left large footprints in fulfilling Memorial’s mission and ministry.

Among them is Arthur S. Alford, fondly known as Ott. Born in Lauringburg, North Carolina, Ott came to Greenville in the mid -1950s and joined The Memorial Baptist church by letter on July 1, 1956. He remained a devoted member and church leader for more than twenty years. He died on April 22, 1982. Ott earned bachelor and graduate degrees at East Carolina College and devoted his entire professional career with the Pitt County



Picture Source: ECU Digital Collection

Schools. During his watch, the Greenville City Schools and Pitt County Schools merged as one unit and the schools were desegregated, In addition, Ott was a member of the Pitt County Mental Health Society and the Greenville Kiwanis Club.

Just as Ott Alford’s professional career indicated successful work and strong leadership, these qualities and traits characterized his commitment to his church. As might be expected, he was devoted to the education component of

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the church. In the 150th anniversary year (1976), Ott saw the Sunday School Program as a “sick patient in need of aggressive treatment.” Enrollment trends pointed downward and average attendance barely reached one hundred. Ott went to work to reserve the downward slope by building new classes. Among these was the new class of young married couples recruited by Ott and taught by Ott and wife “Bet.” Inspired by Ott, a class of college students was restarted. In addition to Sunday school work, Ott served as Training Union Director; was a member of the church choir; and served on the Pulpit Search Committee that recommended E. T. Vinson to serve as Memorial’s 37th pastor.

Ott Alford’s leadership also extended to the church building. In 1973, he chaired the Dedication Committee to celebrate the “new site, sanctuary, and education building to the glory and use of God.” He and Norman Little, Chairman of the Building and Grounds Committee, placed the white marble cornerstone in the base of the ninety-two foot tower of the church.



Picture Source: FaithLab SmugMug

Prepared by Dr. Hugh Wease

If you would like to learn more about The Memorial Baptist Church’s history, stop by the office and get a copy of Dr. Wease’s book, “A Journey of Faith: The Memorial Baptist Church 1927-2002.”

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