

**First Presbyterian Church Servant of the Heart
The Honorable W. Brantley Harvey, Jr.**



Interviewed 1/14/2012 by Roxanne Cheney

Brantley was born in Walterboro in 1930 and raised in Beaufort – and in First Presbyterian Church where his father was a Sunday school teacher, Chairman of the Board of Deacons, and Treasurer and his mother, Thelma, served as choir director. Brantley met some of his current friends and acquaintances in the early days; for example, he and Neal Aimar became fast friends when they were five years old!

He was valedictorian of the Beaufort High School class of 1947. Following graduation from The Citadel, Brantley served two years as an officer in the United States Army. After law school (University of South Carolina, Magna Cum Laude), he joined his father in the practice of law at Harvey & Battey, where he practiced for 55 years.

Among his many achievements, Brantley was elected to the South Carolina House of Representatives in 1958 and served in that body until 1974. He was elected and served as Lieutenant Governor from 1975-1978. Brantley also served the public with the SC Commission of Parks, Recreation and Tourism; the SC Department of Transportation; the Board of the South Carolina Technical College; and other nonprofit groups and organizations too numerous to mention.

He recalls WWII when the pastor (and chaplain of the local National Guard unit), Francis B. Mayes, Sr., was activated. The unit was called to active duty in December 1940; a year later, just as they were to come home, Pearl Harbor was attacked and they remained on active duty until the end of the war. The Reverend A.J. Montgomery came from up north to serve as pastor for a few years until the Reverend Mayes returned. Brantley also recalls that a lot of military families were active in our church during wartime.

During pre-teen and teenage years, Brantley was active with the Youth Group. There were a lot of activities with local churches of other denominations, as well as churches throughout the Presbytery (Beaufort was a much smaller place then). Asked to share a favorite or particularly memorable Youth Group activity, Brantley immediately responded, “Chasing girls!”

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He met his wife, the former Helen Coggeshall, at USC; they married in 1952 and moved back to Beaufort after graduating in 1955. Brantley credits the church with helping them raise five wonderful children: Bill (an Elder and choir member at First Pres); Eileen (Arlington, VA); Helen (a deacon in Columbia, SC); Margaret (married to a Presbyterian (PCA) pastor in Titusville, FL); and Warren (a Presbyterian (ARP) pastor in Apex, NC). Brantley and Helen were happily married more than 57 years before Helen succumbed to a rare neurological disease in 2010; he continues to feel blessed by the wonderful memories of their long and joyful life together.

He is delighted to be “Pops” (Helen was “Mimi”) to 18 grandchildren, four now in high school and the others in college or graduate school.

Brantley has served as an Elder; Deacon; and Sunday school teacher.

Looking ahead, Brantley would like First Presbyterian to work more closely with neighboring African American churches and to reach out more to military and civilian employees and family members at the local bases. He believes enhancing those relationships would benefit the entire community.

A history buff, Brantley loves reading the Old Testament – particularly the first five chapters – for its rich history as well as for God’s instructions. In the New Testament, his favorite books are Timothy I and II. Timothy, an avid young Christian who absorbs Paul’s instructions, is his hero. Brantley is especially fond of 2 Timothy 1:5, “I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.”

When asked if he wished to share anything else with members, Brantley stated that he wants to stand up and be counted as a loyal, supportive member of this church. He thinks we have a great pastor and associate pastor and he wants to help them strengthen our church. While he does not agree with recent decisions by the governing body, he is confident that our pastors and officers will run our local church the way it should be. The life and mission of the church are too important to allow differences of opinion to deter us from our responsibilities. “We can’t let ‘what ifs’ distract us from our vital work,” he concluded.

Thank you, Brantley, for dedicating your life to service to family and friends as well as our church, our community, and the great state of South Carolina. You have been eminently successful in myriad responsibilities and continue to set a high standard to which we can all aspire!