



- *Educator*
- *Missionary*
- *Philanthropist*

Lula Dobbs McEachern

1874–1949

Inducted 2002

Lula Dobbs McEachern took her beliefs in hard work, education, charity and Christian living and translated them into tangible accomplishments. During her lifetime, she worked diligently to extend educational opportunities to as many children and young people as she could reach. She was instrumental in helping women find a meaningful place in society and she worked tirelessly through the church to preserve world peace. As if this plate of good works wasn't enough, Lula added a big slice of business experience when she took over as chairman of the board of directors of the Life of Georgia insurance Company when her husband, John Newton McEachern, died in 1928.

Lula McEachern was truly a remarkable woman. A schoolteacher in Cobb County before her marriage, she decided to forsake the life of a privileged young matron after her wedding, opting instead to work the avenues available to women at that time to do her good work. One organization

"...It is gratifying to find one of great capabilities with a rare spirit of unselfishness and a willingness to serve humanity. Richly blessed is the people who can claim as a citizen such a personality and such a character... such a Georgian is Mrs. Lula Dobbs McEachern."

– Eminent Georgians, 1937

that allowed participation by women was the church, so it was a natural starting point for Lula, a devoted Methodist. She served as president of her church's missionary society and was subsequently elected to the board of the Women's Missionary Society of the North Georgia Conference of Methodist Churches. Her first act as president was to establish the first summer camp for young people.

Lula's involvement in the North Georgia Conference led her into leadership roles in many other organizations, including the advisory committee of the Candler School of Theology at Emory University and member of the board of trustees at Clarke College in Atlanta, an unusual

appointment for a white woman in the early part of the 20th century. In 1938, she headed the women's division of the Atlanta Community Chest. She was elected president of the National Council of Federated Church Women and was a member of the World Council of Christian Education. As her two grandsons headed to service in WW II, Lula worked with the American Red Cross, encouraging an end to the war and establishment of world peace.

When her husband died in 1928, Lula built a new Methodist Church in his home community of MacLand in Cobb County. She continued to support John's earlier donation of 240 acres of land for a school in MacLand. That school would later become McEachern High School and would receive 80% of Lula's ownership in the Life of Georgia Insurance Company when she died.

With all of her experiences with local, national and global organizations, it wasn't much of a stretch for this incredible woman to step in as chairman of the board of the Life of Georgia when John died. In that position, she served as counselor and conciliator, keeping family relationships running smoothly as her brothers and her son ascended to top management positions in the company. She stayed in that position until shortly before her death in 1949. Her grandson, Rankin McEachern Smith, later became President and CEO of Life of Georgia.

Lula McEachern was a woman ahead of her times. She was an intelligent, talented woman who had the courage and energy to dedicate her life to the principles she held dear. She blazed a trail that allowed other women to step forward and succeed in what had previously been a man's world. We take great pride in honoring Lula Dobbs McEachern as a Georgia Woman of Achievement.

Additional Resources

McEachern High School
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