

CONCORD COLLEGE

Athens, West Virginia

CITATION

ARNOLD G. PORTERFIELD

Bachelor of Arts

ARNOLD G. PORTERFIELD, entrepreneur, bookseller, scholar, and public servant, you have shared your love of literature and fine books with generations of residents in the two Virginias. Your Appalachian upbringing was nurtured in part by a grandmother who read book after book to you, beginning a lifelong love of reading. After serving your country with distinction in the Marine Corps during World War II and Korea, and after subsequent careers as a postal worker and coal broker, you gave your life to distributing the printed word as the founder and proprietor of the Appalachian Bookstore in your native Bluefield.

When you chose again to retire, you donated the contents of your bookstore, numbering an estimated forty thousand volumes, to a grateful Concord College Foundation. Some of your books continue to live on in the Marsh Library on this campus, while others have gone on to a new life of usefulness in the hands of new owners.

Your time on this college campus in 1935 and '36, which included two years playing football for the Maroon and Gray, has served you well — despite your confession that “at college I would read all night and then sometimes not go to class — reading what I wanted to, of course.” We hope that your *alma mater* helped trim the wick and feed the flame of your fiery interest in books; it is obvious that at the least we did not snuff it out.

You now spend your time in your beloved Bluefield with companions from Shakespeare, Baum, Wolfe, and authors whom you once described as “the good old boys — Tolstoy, Dickens, de Maupassant, *et cetera*....” We are inspired by your example, and admit some envy for your ability to indulge your thirst for the written word.

For your years of effort to lift the mind and spirit of your community, Concord College is pleased to have this opportunity to honor you, and hereby confers upon you our degree of Bachelor of Arts.

Given under the Seal of Concord College, and conferred from the academic halls in Athens, West Virginia, on this fifteenth day of May in the year one thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine, and of the College the one hundred and twenty-seventh.

Jerry L. Beasley
President