

Pat M. Neff

To Pat Morris Neff, religion was not something to be practiced on Sunday, then put away for a week. He took his religion with him into his daily life, his governmental career, his educational leadership. And that may have been the chief factor in his success.

Yet, of course, there were others. He was a fine figure of a man. When he was governor, he looked like a governor. When he was a college president, he looked like a college president. He had thick, iron gray hair, and he never abandoned the classic dress of the old Southern lawyer and statesman—the winged collar and black string tie.

He seemed to have a fine sense of what was expected of him, and always had the ability and integrity to measure up. His appearance, his battle to come up from humble beginnings, his ability to reach the top in whatever field he entered, his classic, old-styled rolling oratory, the unfailingly constructive use he made of his talents—all of those things and many others made him the kind of public figure which seems to be disappearing in these more streamlined days.

To the man on the street he was never Mr. Neff, Governor Neff, or President Neff. He was "Pat Neff." There was never the need for a title or a description. It was as though the two words were indivisible, and carried their own title, description and honors.

With the passing of Pat Neff there passes an era in Texas politics. We are the richer for having experienced it, but his death remains an irreparable loss to the state. Personalities such as his are few, and appear all too seldom.