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NEWS

MOUNT AIRY, N.C.

Cecil Hill

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PROFILE

Cecil Hill

NAME: James Cecil Hill Sr.
AGE: 71
OCCUPATION: Senior Pastor
of Dover Baptist Church
in White Plains
HOMETOWN: Mount Airy
EDUCATION: Graduated from
Franklin High School, 1946;
Attended Appalachian State
Teachers College From 1946 To 1947;
Graduate of Southeastern Baptist
Theological Seminary
FAMILY: Wife, Rachel Parker Hill;
Two Sons, James Jr., deceased,
and Stephen Parker Hill, 35,
of Winston-Salem
HOBBIES: Golf, Fishing

By PETER SORENSON



It wasn't until he reached his mid-to-late teens that Cecil Hill first felt the call of God, which led towards his religious career.

And it wasn't until 1974, when Hill had almost reached age 50, that he decided that he "must receive the call."

"In 1974 was when I finally decided I must receive the call into the gospel ministry," he said. "What brought that about was a crisis. My father developed an inoperable brain tumor that was cancerous, malignant, and he was not saved at the time. Actually, when I learned that he was not going to live, I realized that I didn't want my father to go out into eternity separated from God. And so I made a commitment to God with my father, that my father would not go out into eternity lost; that I would give my life totally and completely to Him. And then I was ordained by the First Baptist Church of Mount Airy in 1974."

Hill, 71, presently works as the senior pastor of Dover Baptist Church in White Plains. His job duties include conducting preaching services, weddings and funerals, visiting the sick, and counseling the church's members with personal problems, conducting Bible study, and general oversight of the spiritual aspect of the church and the church itself. He has been at this church since last August.

Hill was born May 2, 1927 in Mount Airy, the first of six children, to the late Zeb Hill, a tenant tobacco farmer, and his wife, Ola Hill. He attended Franklin School, graduating in 1946 as valedictorian of his class.

He described his childhood as an "average childhood during the years of the Great Depression," with lack of money only allowing him to attend Appalachian State Teachers College for about three semesters, from the beginning of the 1946-47 academic year through the middle of the 1947-48 academic year.



Peter Sorenson/The Mount Airy News

had burned, and there was no employment in Mount Airy for his wife.

So the twosome decided to move to Winston-Salem, where both found work, Hill with the Winston-Salem Savings & Loan Association and his wife with Baptist Hospital.

In 1960, the couple returned to Mount Airy and Hill began working for a local loan and trust company for three years, after which he went to work for Workmen's Federal Savings & Loan in January 1963. In the 20 years he was employed at Workmen's, he worked his way up to vice president, retiring in 1982.

"When I was seven years old, I left the farm temporarily, to run a store, till I was about 11 years old. And then one day my father said, 'We're going to move back to the farm. You children are not going to amount to anything unless and until you know what responsibility at work is.' He kept us in line."

Back around 1953 or 1954, Hill worked as a scoutmaster for the Boy Scout troop at Flat Rock Baptist Church. During an overnight held at a Scout hut in Flat Rock, some troop members did not know that Hill was aware of their plans to sneak out of the hut during the night. Although he attempted

lege, and I was able to stay until the money ran out," Hill said. "What led to my ministry was when I was saved when I was about 17 years of age.

"I probably should say I accepted Christ at that age," he continued, "and then at the age of 18, I felt the call to the ministry... I just felt the call through the church...I was about 16 years old before I started attending church regularly."

He attended Antioch Baptist Church. "I just felt within myself that the Lord was calling me to the ministry, but I put it off for many years."

While Hill was "wrestling with that call," he held a number of professional positions.

After he dropped out of Appalachian State Teachers' College in 1947, his original intention was to work to get money to finish his education, but he met his future wife, Rachel, shortly thereafter and, subsequently "the family came along," which did not afford Hill the opportunity to pursue his education.

After leaving school, Hill worked for about eight years at the Mount Airy Mantle and Table Furniture Company, where he handled payroll and cost accounting in the office.

Then, after his wife, a registered nurse, and he were married, Mount Airy's old hospital, Martin Memorial Hospital,

Woodville Baptist Church. When he took early retirement from Workmen's in 1982, he took full-time at the Woodville Ministry.

After Hill retired from the church in 1988, he enrolled in the Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary from 1988 until 1991 "for additional education in the ministry.

"While I was in the seminary, I helped to organize a new church in North Durham," Hill said, referring to one of his flagship accomplishments. "I pastored that church for a short time. Then, after I graduated from the seminary, we moved back to Winston-Salem. And then I took a pastorate at a church in Davie County for four years."

Hill's son, James Jr., was killed in an accident Dec. 20, 1996, and subsequently Hill and his wife decided to return to Mount Airy "for support to help us through the death."

Last August, he accepted a call to Dover Baptist Church as a full-time pastor, where he has worked ever since.

Hill talked about memories from his childhood and his professional career, which includes membership in numerous other organizations besides churches.

"There were six of us, and my mother and father ...My brothers and sisters and I, we all worked hard, we worked together on the farm," Hill said. "My father was a disciplinarian, and he made us 'walk the chalk line.' ...

to attract them in their efforts by placing his bed so that it blocked the front door of the hut, some troop members sneaked out a side window after Hill had faked going to sleep.

"I just started snoring," he said. Hill said the Scouts were surprised after he came out the front of the hut and caught them on the side.

"Jackie Timmons (one of the Scouts) still jokes with me about it," he said.

"I received a call from the chairman of the (Mocksville) church committee," he said, recalling another incident. "And he said that the director of admissions here at the Surry Baptist Association had recommended me to that church.

"When I talked to them I found out that their pastor had gotten down into great debt...and I was recommended because of my financial background.

"And that was one of my great accomplishments. In four years, that debt was paid in full."

FAVORITE FOOD:	Shrimp scampi, shrimp creole
FAVORITE MUSIC:	Classical
FAVORITE BOOK:	Bible
FAVORITE MOVIE:	"The Quiet Man"