

Hugh and Amelia Williamson
First Baptist Church, Pell City, AL
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Williamson is hanging up

By CAROL PAPPAS

PELL CITY — He's worn many a hat during a career that has spanned 30 years but on Aug. 1, Hugh Hardy Williamson will be hanging up one of those hats.

However, Williamson, assistant superintendent of the Pell City School System in charge of transportation, plans to continue the other careers he has managed to fit into what must be a hectic schedule.

He is in the midst of his second term as mayor, and he has held the position of director of the Pell City Extension Center of Gadsden State Junior College since 1973.

In his pursuit of a career in the educational field was sparked by "an interest in children and in people," he says, so he received his bachelor's

degree in education from Jacksonville State University.

He also holds a masters degree in Education Administration from the University of Alabama.

Williamson began teaching at the old Pell City Junior High in 1947 and then spent four years in the United States Air Force Strategic Air Command before returning to Pell City and the St. Clair County School System.

In 1959, he was promoted to transportation superintendent and assistant superintendent for the St. Clair Board and upon then Supt. O.D. Duran's death, he was appointed to that position, where he remained for a second elected term.

In 1971, he returned to the transportation superintendent post and remained there until June of 1982, when the Pell City School System began official operation.

He describes the system's first year of operation "the worst possible year" for any school system to begin because of the "proration situation."

The system has been hampered by limited state funding, but Williamson views the construction of the second

phase of the new high school as an encouraging sign of better things to come.

Williamson adds that "I see nothing but good things" ahead for the future of Pell City's educational system.

He supports that optimistic view saying that within the next 10 years, Pell City will have its new high school, and upgrading of present buildings will make for "an excellent physical plant system."

The educational leader also foresees "parents playing a more active role" in years to come, which has been "needed for a long time. Parents are going to wake up to the fact that they must speak out and demand accountability for their tax dollars."

But turning his attention away from the future and into the past, Williamson talked of his career as mayor. He had already been involved in politics through his election to county superintendent.

With the death of former Mayor Dill Nixon, whom he credits with farsightedness in starting "real good things" for the city, Williamson said he wanted to see those things finished.

one of his hats

so, a tornado had just devastated city, and he wanted to be involved in the rebuilding process with an eye to the future.

He threw his hat in the ring in 1976 and was elected to that top city post. In 1980 he was elected to a second term, and is still holding his various positions throughout the city.

How can he juggle so many tasks so well as is evidenced by his past record? "My wife says show me somebody who is a busy person, that person is one that got things done."

He adds, "It's hard, but if you stay at it, you can do it."

He can do it, he has, but he quickly adds his wife, Amelia, with his help to manage his often hectic schedule.

He has "acted in a supporting role" for many years, and he smiles and says he would never come close to achieving what he has without that help.

They were "childhood sweethearts," he says, and have been married for more than 30 years. She, too, shares an interest in education and is

currently teaching English at Pell City High School.

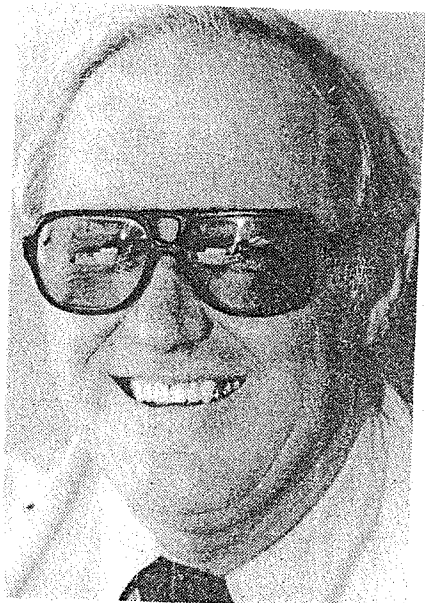
They have one son, Gaston, who holds a business degree from the University of Tennessee in Business, and he is currently employed by Continental Telephone in Pell City.

A devoted father, husband, educational leader and head of a quickly progressing city, Williamson apparently deserves a rest from the pace he keeps.

But he will never be content for a complete rest as he continues his efforts in several directions. But it seems as though those directions always lead to a single, common center — his hometown of Pell City.

And it isn't any wonder that his hometown is planning to salute Williamson with a hometown type celebration on July 7 at the new Pell City High School Cafeteria, the same facility for which he helped to secure the funding.

As the city bids farewell that night to its assistant superintendent, it will more importantly be a night for lauding his accomplishments over the



HUGH WILLIAMSON

years. And, of course, this type of hometown get-together would not be complete without fried chicken, ham, potato salad, corn on the cob, baked beans, fresh relish tray, a watermelon boat full of fresh fruit, fresh baked crescent rolls, peach cobbler topped with ice cream and lemon icebox pie — good 'ole home cooking for a good 'ole hometown boy made good.