

Dan E. Sweat

1933-1997

The Man

Once heralded as Atlanta's "premier civic administrator" by the New York Times, Dan E. Sweat was one of Atlanta's most respected public servants. During his career, he was tapped by mayors, governors and former President Jimmy Carter to tackle what seemed to be impossible tasks. His enormous community influence spans four decades. In addition to tireless work on behalf of Atlanta, he was a dedicated supporter and alumnus of Georgia State University. He was an educator who passed his knowledge and foresight on to many who continue the Sweat legacy to improve the lives of others.

The Legacy

As a memorial to visionary leadership and commitment to the community and to learning in all forms, Georgia State University has created the Dan E. Sweat Distinguished Scholar Chair in Educational Community Policy. ([Click here for more information](#))



Dan was a bold, straightforward and inspiring leader who proved that public policy and humanity could be linked for the good of Atlanta and its people. He was the chief operating officer for the City of Atlanta and was the first executive director of the Atlanta Regional Commission. For 15 years, he served as president of Central Atlanta Progress (CAP) at a time when politicians, business leaders and civic activists were often at odds over the city's growth. Under Dan's leadership, CAP was instrumental in the planning and development of the Bedford Pine Urban Redevelopment Area, the formation of the Downtown Environmental Patrol (now the Atlanta Clean City Commission), the financing of the mounted Atlanta Police Patrol and the redevelopment of Underground Atlanta. One of the most significant efforts, and one that exemplifies Dan's personal commitment, was the drive to rebuild the Bowen Homes Day Care Center, which had been destroyed by a boiler explosion. He went on to run The Atlanta Project at the request of former President, Jimmy Carter.

It has been said that Dan was both color- and gender-blind, and that he saw the potential in all people and encouraged their development. Dan dedicated himself full time to building a city where blacks and whites could work together politically, where businesses could flourish, and where compassion and community could grow.

He was central to local politics, though never elected. Dan Sweat was the consummate behind-the-scenes worker. He made things happen, but didn't seek the credit.

"Dan was known for so many things. But he was serious about helping Georgia State University become the great institution it is today. He was proud to have his friends and colleagues associate him with Georgia State and was a firm believer that education makes a difference. That's why this distinguished scholar's chair is a most appropriate way to remember Dan."

**Mrs. Tally Sweat
Wife of 40 years**

As career high points, Dan cited his work as chief of the Atlanta Regional Commission (protecting the Chattahoochee River and the area's water supply) as well as his role in the redevelopment at Bedford-Pine, near the Civic Center.

Personal Data

- ▶ Born in Waycross, Georgia on December 21, 1933.
- ▶ Married to Tally Hammock in 1956.
- ▶ Graduated from Georgia State College in 1957 with a degree in public administration.
- ▶ 3 children: 2 sons (Steve and Charles), 1 daughter (Sally) and 4 grandchildren.
- ▶ Died in Atlanta, Georgia on February 28, 1997.

"I guess I probably want to be remembered as an honest and honorable public administrator who was able to contribute to the quality of life of the community."

Dan E. Sweat

Career Highlights

1952 - 1963 Reporter for The Atlanta Journal
1957 - 1958 U.S. Navy
1963 - 1964 Executive Assistant to DeKalb Commissioner Chairman, Charles Emmerich
1965 - 1966 Associate Administrator of Economic Opportunity Atlanta
1966 - 1969 Administrative Aide to Atlanta Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr.
1969 - 1971 Chief Administrative Officer of the City of Atlanta
1971 - 1973 Executive Director of the Atlanta Regional Commission
1973 - 1988 President of Central Atlanta Progress
1988 - 1991 President of Cousins Family Foundation
1991 - 1995 Coordinator of The Atlanta Project
1995 - 1997 Program Director of The America Project

"Dan's contribution to Atlanta is almost immeasurable. If you go back and look at all the positive, progressive things that have been done to bring together the top leaders of Atlanta, from diverse interests, to work in the spirit of harmony... you'll almost always find that Dan Sweat was involved in them."

Jimmy Carter
Former United States President

Professional Honors and Board Affiliations

Dan E. Sweat served on the boards of numerous organizations including the Peach Bowl, Inc., the Junior League of Atlanta, the International Downtown Executive's Association and Metropolitan Atlanta Community Foundation, Inc.

"To this very day I believe Dan's great dream was for Atlanta to have the best coordinated social services in America. That would include, and in fact probably would result in the widespread and ultimately successful fight against poverty."

Maynard Jackson
Former Atlanta Mayor

Honors for Public Service

1996 WSB Radio/Atlanta Gas Light Company – "Shining Light Award"
1996 Leadership Georgia's J.W. Fanning Fellow Award