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[LOOKING BACK: Dr. R.C. Partlow](#)

Sunday, [May 31, 2015](#) at 11:11 by [betty.slowe](#)

Fifty years ago this week, Dr. Rufus Cornelius Partlow Sr. retired after a 53 years of continued service with Alabama State Hospitals.

Born in St. Clair County, Partlow and his older brother, W.D. (William Dempsey) Partlow grew up on a farm and left to attend medical school. Both interned at Bryce Hospital and spent their careers treating the patients at state mental institutions and administering the hospitals.

Born in 1885, Dr. R.C. Partlow graduated from the Birmingham Medical College in 1912 and began his service with the Bryce Hospital eight days later as a staff physician, interning under his brother and Dr. James T. Searcy. He served a total of 30 years at Bryce Hospital, two years at Searcy Hospital in Mount Vernon, and 21 years as assistant superintendent of Partlow State School.

When R.C. Partlow joined the staff of Bryce Hospital in 1912, the patient population was 1,600; it was 5,100 in 1965. When he became assistant superintendent of Partlow State School and Hospital in 1944, the population was 800. At his retirement it was 2,200 – 600 more than comfortable capacity, and there were 460 children on the waiting list. For the first eight years of his service at Partlow, Dr. Partlow was the only physician and was on call 24 hours a day. As assistant superintendent, Partlow was in charge of running the facility; Dr. J.S. Tarwater was superintendent of all the state hospitals.

The two children of Dr. R.C. Partlow and his wife, the former Nancy Ervin Dominick, were Rufus Partlow Jr. and Ilouise Partlow Hill; both were born and raised on the Bryce campus.

Dr. R.C. Partlow was certified by the American Board of Neurology and Psychiatry in 1932. He was a life member of the Southern Medical Association, a fellow and past counselor of the American Association of Mental Deficiency, a past president and fellow in the Alabama Academy of

Neurology and Psychiatry and a member of the Tuscaloosa Civitan Club.

In 1975, Dr. R.C. Partlow died at 90 years of age. His brother, Dr. W.D. Partlow preceded him in death; he died in 1953 at 76 years of age.

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The Tuscaloosa News librarian, browses the News archive for people, places and events in the colorful history of Tuscaloosa and West Alabama.



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