

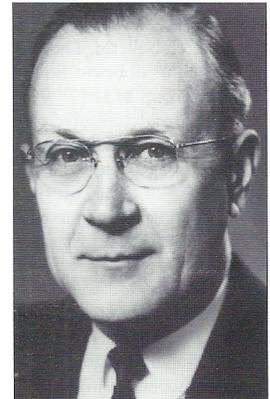
The Florida Baptist Historical Society seeks to **preserve the legacy** of Florida Baptist pastoral leaders and laity, the past and present functioning Baptist churches, the State Convention's cooperating ministries and milestone events that were historically significant to Florida Baptists. The Society's mission is accomplished through a variety of ministry services provided to Florida Baptists. To underscore this emphasis the Society's monthly newsletter, LEGACY, seeks to highlight the legacy endowed by the people, churches and events in Florida Baptist history. During the next several months this newsletter will feature those persons whose legacy in Florida Baptist life was achieved in part, by their service as president of the Florida Baptist State Convention.

As noted in previous issues of LEGACY, since 1854 (excluding the seven years at various times the State Convention did not meet), the persons elected as president have included 78 pastors and 16 laypersons. The first two issues of LEGACY featured brief profiles on those 16 laypersons. Continuing this month, we provide brief profiles on selected pastors who served as State Convention president.

#### **Millard J. Berquist, President 1950**

Millard J. Berquist (b. 1902; d. 1990) was serving as pastor (1947 — 1957) of the First Baptist Church, Tampa, at the time of his election to lead the Florida Baptist State Convention. He previously served the Riverside Baptist Church, Jacksonville (1942 — 1947). Berquist went from Florida in 1957 to become the first president of Southern Baptists' then newest and fifth theological education institution, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary located in Kansas City, Missouri.

During the 1950 annual meeting at which Berquist presided, messengers approved a plan to establish a Camps and Assembly program that would result in the establishment of three permanent regional, geographically locations that would serve as Florida Baptist's retreat and training facility. Messengers adopted the 1951 annual convention budget, which authorized the continued split of Cooperative Program receipts on a 50-50 basis between the Southern Baptist Convention and the state convention.



Millard J. Berquist



Earl B. Edington

#### **Earl B. Edington, President 1951**

Earl Blackburn Edington (b. 1904; d. 1989) was the long-time pastor (1944 — 1971) of the First Baptist Church, St. Petersburg. The Tennessee native served as pastor of churches in Tennessee, Kentucky and Alabama prior to coming to Florida. While in both Alabama and Florida, Edington served on a wide variety of local and state denominational entities.

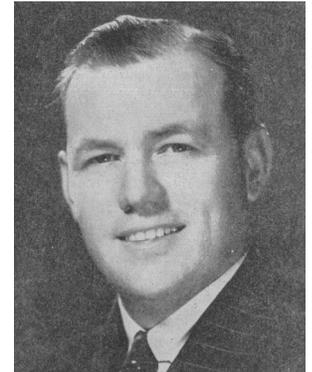
Following the conclusion of the opening Wednesday afternoon session of the 1951 State Convention, messengers were invited to the dedication of the Florida Baptist Children's Home which had re-located from Arcadia to Lakeland during the year. In a separate business session, messengers approved a report from a Special Committee on Survey of Convention Institutions and Agencies which outlined critical current and long-range capital needs of the various entities. Also considered and

approved by messengers was a motion to appoint a study committee to consider the potential of the then Baptist Bible Institute becoming an official agency of the State Convention.

### **Albert L. Carnett, President 1952**

Albert L. Carnett (b. 1911; d. 1970) was pastor (1942 — 1954) of the Woodlawn Baptist Church at the time of his election in 1951 to serve as state convention president during 1952. He later served as the long-time pastor (1954 — 1970) of the First Baptist Church, Winter Haven. At the time of Carnett's death, *Florida Baptist Witness* Editor W.G. Stracener wrote, "he loved lost souls, he loved men, he loved people. . .he loved to preach, he loved to witness personally, he love to stand as vigorously against sin as he did for righteousness."

During the 1952 annual meeting, messengers discussed at length and then approved a motion to revise the State Convention Bylaws which defined the membership composition of the State Board of Missions. The change permitted each association to nominate their respective representative to serve on the State Board. In response to the report made by the Special Committee on Survey [1951 State Convention] the messengers approved a 10-year capital fund budget to be earmarked for facility needs at Stetson University, the camps and assemblies, and the children's home.



Albert L. Carnett



Harold G. Sanders

### **Harold G. Sanders, President 1954**

Harold Glen Sanders (b. 1907; d. 1986) was in the midst of a 15-year stint as pastor (1946 -- 1961) of the First Baptist Church, Tallahassee, when he was elected state convention president. Prior to accepting the Florida pastorate, Sanders served as a U.S. Navy Chaplain in the Pacific during World War II. His earlier service as a pastor included churches in Missouri, Kentucky, Indiana and Alabama. In 1961, Sanders was elected as the Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, a post he held until his retirement in 1972.

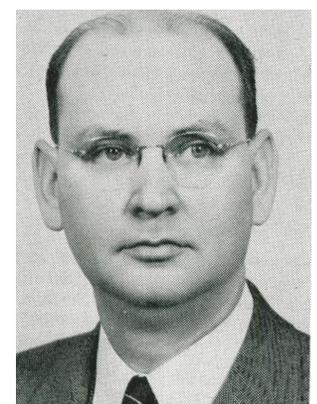
Sanders presided over the **Centennial year celebration** - 100 years since the organization of the Florida Baptist State Convention - although this was only the 93<sup>rd</sup> annual meeting for the convention. On seven separate occasions the state convention did not meet due to war or other restricting conditions. The state convention messengers learned of the significant gains made in Florida as a result of the year-long, heavily promoted, Southern Baptist Convention's Sunday School enrolment campaign of "**A Million More in 54.**" The emphasis resulted in significant increases in local

church Sunday school enrolments, as well as reports of increased study course awards being earned by teachers who sought to improve the quality of their Sunday school teaching.

### **Julius H. Avery, President 1958**

Julius Hillier Avery (b. 1908; d. 1994) was serving as pastor (1949 — 1965) of the First Baptist Church, Panama City, at the time of his service as state convention president. The native of Georgia had previously served churches in Mississippi and Alabama before accepting the pastorate in the Panhandle Gulf Coast church. From the pastorate, Avery became more widely known as the director (1965 — 1973) of the Florida Baptist Convention's ministry with National Baptists in Florida.

Facility expansion seemed to be the order of business for the 1958 State Convention annual meeting. Messengers approved a recommendation by a Committee on Home for the Aging to move forward with establishing housing for "the care of senior citizens." The State Board of Missions was authorized to proceed in securing an existing facility and to employ a program director. [The following year the state



Julius H. Avery

convention approved Articles of Incorporation for the proposed, then called, retirement center and was introduced to J. Perry Carter the new agency director.] In a separate property matter, messengers approved a plan by the State Board of Missions to re-locate the Convention offices from a downtown Jacksonville facility, built in 1924, to a south Jacksonville location. They planned to construct a five-story Baptist Building that could more adequately accommodate the convention's increased ministry program staffs.

### Carl A. Howell, President, 1959



Carl A. Howell

Carl Alonzo Howell (b. 1901; d. 1978) was serving as pastor (1944 — 1966) of the Murray Hill Baptist Church, Jacksonville, at the time of his election as state convention president. Under his leadership, the Murray Hill church established 11 missions. He previously served Florida Baptist churches in Leesburg, Tampa, and Eustis.

During the annual 1959 State Convention meeting held in Tallahassee, messengers approved a resolution and separate recommendation to participate in the Southern Baptist Convention- promoted **Baptist Diamond Jubilee**, celebrating the beginning of Baptist work in America. In the course of the proposed five-year Jubilee observance, Florida Baptists committed to start 100 new missions and churches per year and increase yearly baptism records to 59,861 annually by the year 1964. Messengers also expressed chagrin at the growing "moral, social and economic problems afflicting the people of Florida and America." The resolution called upon Florida Baptists to pursue "a true

revival of ethical values" by developing "Christian solutions" to alcohol abuse, gambling, indecent literature, juvenile delinquency and crime, and commercialization that "cheapens the Lord's Day".

### The sequential order of State Convention Presidents between 1950 and 1959:

Millard J. Berquist, 1950  
Earl B. Edington, 1951  
Albert L. Carnett, 1952  
James W. Parrish, 1953  
Harold Glen Sanders, 1954

Cecil B. Carroll, 1955  
Preston Brooks Sellers, 1956  
J. E. Stallings, 1957  
Julius Hillier Avery, 1958  
Carl A. Howell, 1959

[Series to continue next month]

## Historical Society Endowment

You can create a personal, God-honoring Legacy by contributing to the Florida Baptist Historical Society endowment fund that will support the future on-going mission and ministries of the Society. Society ministries include researching, collecting, preserving, and publishing Florida Southern Baptist historical materials. The Society assists local churches in preserving their respective Legacy by offering assistance in research, writing and publication of local church documentaries and histories. Gifts to this fund are tax deductible and all checks may be made out to the Florida Baptist Historical Society Endowment Fund. Mail to: Florida Baptist Historical Society, PO Box 95, Graceville, FL 32440.

