

= Marion L. Brittain =

Marion Luther Brittain , Sr. (November 11 , 1866 ? July 13 , 1953) was an American academic administrator and president of the Georgia Institute of Technology from 1922 to 1944 . Brittain was born in Georgia and , aside from a brief stint at the University of Chicago for graduate school , spent most of his life serving the educational community there . After receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree from Emory College in 1886 , Brittain worked his way up the ranks from principal of an Atlanta high school to superintendent of education for the entire state of Georgia .

In 1922 , Brittain accepted the position of president of the Georgia Institute of Technology , then called the Georgia School of Technology , an office he would hold until his retirement in 1944 . During his 22 @-@ year tenure at Georgia Tech , Brittain was credited with doubling student enrollment , establishing what is now the second largest aerospace engineering faculty in the United States , and playing an influential role in securing Georgia Tech 's position as a leading technical institute and research university . After his retirement , Brittain wrote The Story of Georgia Tech (1948) , a history of the Institute published shortly before his death in 1953 .

= = Early life = =

Marion L. Brittain was born in Wilkes County , Georgia in 1866 to Dr. J. M. Brittain , a Baptist minister , and Ida Callaway , granddaughter of Baptist minister Enoch Callaway . Brittain 's childhood was spent in a variety of towns and cities throughout the state of Georgia due to his father 's career as a minister . He attended Emory College for his undergraduate studies , graduating in 1886 with the commendation that he was the " best student in his department the college had had in ten years . " Brittain then spent ten years as an administrator of several high schools in the Atlanta , Georgia area . In 1897 , he gained local fame for his erudition after winning a contest held by the Atlanta Constitution in which he was able to identify the missing word from a passage taken from an obscure book on English literature . Brittain left his work as a high school administrator in 1898 to pursue graduate studies at the University of Chicago .

On December 5 , 1899 , Brittain and Lettie McDonald , daughter of Baptist minister Dr. Henry McDonald , were married . He returned to academic administration , first as superintendent of the Fulton County School System (1900 ? 1910) and later , at the appointment of Joseph Mackey Brown , the education system for the entire state of Georgia (1910 ? 1922) . In this role , Brittain became well known for fighting corruption and generally improving the education system . Throughout this time , Brittain earned LL.D. degrees from Mercer University (1919) , and , later , the University of Georgia (1927) and Emory University (1928) . He was also president of the Georgia Education Association in 1906 , of the Southern Education Association in 1913 , and of the Council of State School Superintendents of the United States in 1917 . He earned the wrath of Senator Tom Watson during these positions , who attempted to remove Brittain from his position as superintendent of education .

= = President of Georgia Tech = =

On August 1 , 1922 , Brittain was elected president of the Georgia School of Technology (Georgia Tech) . During his tenure , Brittain was able to convince the state of Georgia to increase funding for the Institute . He had noted in the 1923 annual report that " there are more students in Georgia Tech than in any other two colleges in Georgia , and we have the smallest appropriation of them all . " Additionally , a \$ 300 @,@ 000 grant (equivalent to \$ 4 @,@ 249 @,@ 601 @.@ 59 in 2015) from the Guggenheim Foundation allowed Brittain to establish the David Guggenheim School of Aeronautics at Georgia Tech . In 1930 , Brittain 's decision to use the money for a School of Aeronautics was controversial ; today , the David Guggenheim School of Aerospace Engineering boasts the second largest faculty in the United States behind MIT .

Other accomplishments during Brittain 's administration included a doubling of Georgia Tech 's enrollment , the first ROTC unit in the Southern United States , accreditation for the Institute by the

Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools , and the creation of a new ceramic engineering department , building , and major that attracted the American Ceramics Society 's national convention to Atlanta . Perhaps most significantly , Brittain is attributed with providing the vision and securing the finances to move Georgia Tech away from its roots as a teaching @-@ oriented trade school and towards a new focus on science and technology research .

Brittain was known by reputation as a kind , gentle man and was well liked by students and faculty . He was especially remembered for his dedication to the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets football team , attending nearly every game including those taking place out @-@ of @-@ state . Outside of Georgia Tech , Brittain taught Sunday school classes and maintained active membership in a number of service organizations . Brittain retired from his position as president of Georgia Tech in 1944 , after which he penned a history of the Institute entitled The Story of Georgia Tech , completed in 1948 . He died in 1953 , survived by three children : McDonald , Marion Luther , Jr . , and Ida , three grandsons , and a great @-@ granddaughter . Flags at the university were flown at half @-@ staff for a month in remembrance of Brittain , and classes were cancelled for the rest of the school week .

= = Legacy = =

Long after his death , Brittain continues to be remembered through several prestigious awards named in his honor . The Marion L. Brittain Fellows Program , established in 1990 , awards postdoctoral fellowships to teach in the Communications Program at Georgia Tech 's School of Literature , Communication , and Culture for up to three years . At Emory University , the Marion Luther Brittain Award is presented annually at commencement to a graduate " who has demonstrated exemplary service to both the university and the greater community without expectation of recognition " and is considered the university 's highest student honor .

A pair of buildings bears the name of Brittain as well . The Dr. Marion Luther Brittain , Sr. , House , built in the Neoclassical Revival style and located at 1109 West Peachtree Street in Atlanta , was added to the National Register of Historic Places on September 23 , 1993 . The building served as Brittain 's home from its construction in 1911 until Brittain and his family moved to the Georgia Tech president 's house in 1922 . It has since been converted into office space and is privately owned . Additionally , the Marion L. Brittain Dining Hall , erected in 1928 , is one of two dining facilities for students living in residence halls on the east side of Georgia Tech 's campus .