

Doris Pike White, 1959-1962, Maine

24th President General NSDAR

From: "The Wide Blue Sash", published by NSDAR

Doris Pike White joined Hannah Weston Chapter, Machias, Maine, in 1937. Prior to her election as President General, Mrs. White served as Maine State Regent as well as Vice President General. Mrs. White was an accomplished businesswoman who used her management experience and financial knowledge to lead DAR. She was born on December 1, 1896, in Lubec, Maine, the daughter of Chester Lincoln and Lottie Avery Pike. A graduate of Wellesley College, she did graduate work at Leland Stanford University. She taught languages, economics and history in both Massachusetts and New York City. She worked as a training director at a prominent Fifth Avenue department and also was involved in her family's industrial business until it was sold in 1954.



On August 12, 1944, Mrs. White married businessman Ashmead White and the couple moved to Bangor. When Mr. White passed away in 1952, Mrs. White entered the investment banking field. At the time of her election as President General, Mrs. White was a vice president of Pierce, White and Drummond, Inc., an investment firm in Bangor.

Mrs. White found it important to be active in civic and community work. In 1954, she was one of eight women on the Planning Committee for the White House Conference on Highway Safety. She also served on the Maine Highway Safety Committee in 1955. Twice, Mrs. White was appointed to the Maine Judicial Council by the governor of Maine. In this position she was one of three non-judges on the council, and the only woman. Both of the Whites were involved with Mr. White's alma mater, Bowdoin College: Mrs. White served as president of the Society of Bowdoin Women and Mr. White served as the Alumni Fund director, the Alumni Association president and on the Board of Overseers.

Mrs. White served as a page at the 1939 Continental Congress shortly after joining the Society. After marrying Mr. White, she transferred her membership to the Frances Dighton Williams Chapter in Bangor, but not before serving as regent of Hannah Weston Chapter from 1948-1950. She went on to serve as Maine State Regent from 1952-1954. During this time she served as national chairman of the Americanism Committee and the DAR Manual for Citizenship Committee from 1953-1956. In 1954 she received more votes than any other candidate running for Vice President General. She served as the president of the Vice Presidents General Club from 1955-1957. Mrs. White was elected President General in 1959 after a close race against Kathryn L. Newland of Michigan. Her circle brooch with clear stones is one of the first known pins representing a President General and her administration. The Doris White Auditorium-Gymnasium at Kate Duncan Smith DAR School in Alabama was dedicated in her honor on October 24, 1961. Additionally, the Doris Pike White endowment was created and the interest was used for maintenance for this Auditorium-Gymnasium.

One of Mrs. White's first acts as President General was to present Dr. Wernher von Braun with the DAR Americanism Medal in New York City on May 27, 1959. Dr. von Braun received the award for his work with Explorer I and the first successful moon probe, Pioneer I. Also of note, after John Wayne received the 1961 Motion Picture Award at Continental Congress, he gave a luncheon in Mrs. White's honor at Paramount Studios in Hollywood, Calif. Mrs. White visited the newly admitted state of Hawaii, where she placed a wreath at the USS Arizona site at Pearl Harbor on May 30, 1961.

Several improvements to the buildings were completed during the White Administration, including a three-year landscaping project that enhanced the area around DAR Headquarters and created the Memorial Garden on D Street. The exterior of Memorial Continental Hall was sanded and polished, and floodlights were installed to accent the building's architectural features at night. The Banquet Hall was redecorated for the first time since 1928. The Kansas Chapel was constructed and dedicated. Portraits of the four Founders of DAR were restored and placed in the DAR Library. This was paid for with funds from the Friends of the Museum.

With Mrs. White at the helm, DAR enjoyed financial success. Under her management Constitution Hall rentals increased. Custody of investments was moved to American Security & Trust Co. The \$835 balance in the Valley Forge Memorial Fund was transferred to the Investment Trust Fund. Twenty-five cents of each member's dues was also designated for this fund. National dues were raised to \$3, an increase of \$1. At the end of her term Mrs. White had raised the balance in the Investment Trust Fund from \$131,938.66 to \$276,470. In addition to this, membership hit an all-time record of 187,309 members and 2,863 chapters.

Mrs. White's hard work and success did not go unnoticed. In 1960 she received the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters from Bowdoin College. She was also awarded the George Washington Honor Medal by the Freedom Foundation at Valley Forge for her speech titled "For What Avail If Freedom Fail." After her term as President General, Mrs. White enjoyed traveling around the world, but also remained active in the Society. She served as president of the National Officers Club from 1974-1976. She moved to Portland, Maine, but maintained a summer home in Lubec. She transferred her membership back to Hannah Weston Chapter, and she frequently spoke to fellow chapter members about DAR topics as well as her travels. Mrs. White died in Portland, Maine, on November 22, 1987, after a long illness. She is buried in Mount Hope Cemetery in Bangor.

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