



Dr. Edward L. Weldon

1936-2022

Director, Georgia Division of Archives and
History, 1982-2000



Former Georgia Archives Director, Dr. Edward L. Weldon, passed away on December 16, 2022. Ed served as the sixth director of what was then called the Georgia Department of Archives and History from 1982 until 2000. By the time he succeeded Carrol Hart, he already had a distinguished career. He held several management positions at the National Archives, including Deputy Archivist of the United States, and had been appointed as the first state archivist of New York State. He had also served as president of the Society of American Archivists, editor of the *American Archivist*, and as the first president of the Society of Georgia Archivists.

Dr. Weldon took over a program that had been highly successful under previous directors, but which needed important changes to deal with the innovations in late twentieth-century record-keeping. He reorganized workflow by grouping similar functions and consolidating eighteen divisions into four. Ed emphasized staff training and professional development by supporting staff travel to conferences and workshops. He tried to position the Archives to respond to increasing automation by records creators, and to use technology to make records widely available. Early automation projects included planning the move to a new records center in 1989 and cataloging the library book collection.

Ed's previous positions had taught him the value of collaboration with other organizations. The recent growth of excellent archives programs across Georgia and the southeast provided opportunities for cooperation. Working with others to obtain grant funding to accomplish joint goals proved quite successful. Two large grants were the Government Records Project, coordinated with the Research Libraries Group to catalog state government records and share appraisal information nationwide, and the GAMMA project which hired archivists to catalog records at 33 institutions in Georgia and add that cataloging to new national databases. Ed's National Archives experience showed him the possibilities of using federal money to assist the Georgia Archives and other institutions. While Georgia institutions had applied successfully to the National Historical and Records Commission for funding for a few specific projects, the lack of a local clearinghouse to review grants made the application process difficult. Ed was successful in setting up the Georgia Historical Records Advisory Board, first by executive order and in 1993 by legislation. GHRAB served as a clearinghouse for grants to Georgia and also served as an advisory board for the Archives. As GHRAB's state coordinator, Ed secured a number of grants that allowed the board to regrant money to local governments and historical societies to build records infrastructure throughout Georgia.

Dr. Weldon's work was invaluable to positioning the Georgia Archives to move successfully into the twenty-first century. We honor his memory, and extend our sympathies to his family.