

GOLDEN YEARS

A HOMECOMING 75 YEARS IN THE MAKING

BY / BECCA BROADDUS

MORRIS PORTER
BBA '41
DALLAS, TEXAS

IN

1941, THE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR SPURRED THE ENTRY OF THE UNITED STATES INTO WORLD WAR II. FORMER TEXAS GOVERNOR PAT NEFF WAS AT THE HELM OF BAYLOR UNIVERSITY while the Student Union Building was being constructed, and business students attended classes in the Carroll Library building. It's also the year business student Morris A. Porter received his diploma from Baylor University. Porter's graduation day, May 31, 1941, was the last time he stepped foot on Baylor's campus until Oct. 14, 2016—a little more than 75 years later. It happened to be his 97th birthday too.

🔥 "It's changed a lot since I was here," Porter jokes, as he arrives on Baylor's campus on the warm, Friday afternoon. 🔥 He's sharply dressed with freshly polished shoes and a pressed suit. The look is completed with a crisp, white pocket square. His blue eyes shine with excitement, as we get ready to board a golf cart for a student-led campus tour. 🔥 "It's so nice to be back on campus," he said. "It's the first time in 75 years, so it's completely different, naturally." 🔥 While he was at Baylor, he represented the University playing tennis and the trombone. 🔥 "I really was the busiest when I was at Baylor," he said. "I played tennis. I was in the band. My parents were not financially able to send me to college, so I had to work for the university to pay my way," the middle child of five siblings said. 🔥 His first year at Baylor, he earned his tuition in the independently owned carpentry shop. His first summer, he recounts, he helped build and sand all the new tables for the Baylor Law School. He worked as an assistant auditor and comptroller in the administrative building, what we now know as Pat Neff Hall, his last three years. 🔥 As we tour campus, he requests to see those places where he spent so much time in college: Pat Neff Hall, where business students take classes (the new Paul L. Foster Campus for Business and Innovation) and Brooks College. Although the original Brooks Hall was rebuilt in 2006, Porter wanted to see the new version of the dorm in which he spent three years. (He was shocked to learn it was no longer male-only.)

🔥 Little did he know, we had a surprise waiting for him in the new Foster Campus. Our arrival to the home of the School elicited a "holy mackerel!" but he hadn't even seen the birthday party inside yet. Baylor students, faculty and staff, along with Dean Maness, greeted him

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PALMER, EVELYN—Waco
Mathematics, Biology
Student Assistant to Miss Duggin; Kappa Delta Pi; Alpha Chi.

PARKLEY, R. D.—Electra
Business

PARKS, L. B.—Temple
Bible
Ministerial Alliance; International Relations; Red Head Club;
Bell County Club.

POOL, MARY ELEANOR—Grandview
Education
Peer Club.

POPHAM, JUNE L.—Killeen
French, History
Beta Phi Theta; Alpha Chi.

PENNINGTON, LOUISE—Waco
Speech
Baylor Theatre; Urbanites; Alpha Psi Omega.

PEARSON, ELIZABETH—Flano
Speech, English
Baylor Theatre; Alpha Psi Omega; International Relations Club.

PENNELL, HARRY—Houston
Bible
Ministerial Alliance.

PITTMAN, MARJORIE—Tyler
Education
D. A. P.; Secretary, Sophomore Class, Winter '38; Secretary, Junior
Class, Spring '40.

PORTER, MORRIS A.—Carlsbad, N. Mex.
Accounting
Delta Sigma Pi; Band '38-'40.

PETERS, LOIS MARIE—Columbus
Business
Burlison House Council.

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SENIOR



with a rousing birthday song and cake. The Baylor Business students even taught him how to do a sic 'em. 🔥 An Accounting graduate born in Texarkana, Texas, Porter got a job at Magnolia Petroleum Company in Dallas and reported to work two weeks after graduating. It was the start of a circuitous and successful career. He left the executive track at Magnolia to enlist in the service during World War II. He was a part of the 174th amphibious battalion, preparing to join the war in Japan. 🔥 He never used his Accounting degree to become a certified public accountant. After his time in the U.S. Army, he went back to Texas, where he began a varied and extensive career in the oil and gas industry. 🔥 He started Slocum Gas Company and later, Gibtown Gas Company, both of



which were gas gathering and processing facilities. After 15 years of profitability, they were sold, and Porter used the proceeds of the sales to start American Public Energy Company (AMPECO), an oil development and production company, and found Hydroex, Inc. In 1980, the company went public. After five years at the helm, Porter decided he had "reached an age that called for slowing down,"

so he retired as chairman of the board at AMPECO and began working from home. After operating his production as Hydroex, Inc., for five years, he sold out completely and went into full retirement at Edgemere Retirement Community in Dallas. (At some point, he also took the New Mexico realtor's exam and sold real estate in Ruidoso, New Mexico, for a short time.) 🔥 "I didn't stop my education after I went to Baylor," he said. "Actually, I just really learned how to learn at Baylor. This was just the beginning of my education. You can't stop. You have to continue to gain experience and learn." 🌱

bbr.baylor.edu/golden-years <



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