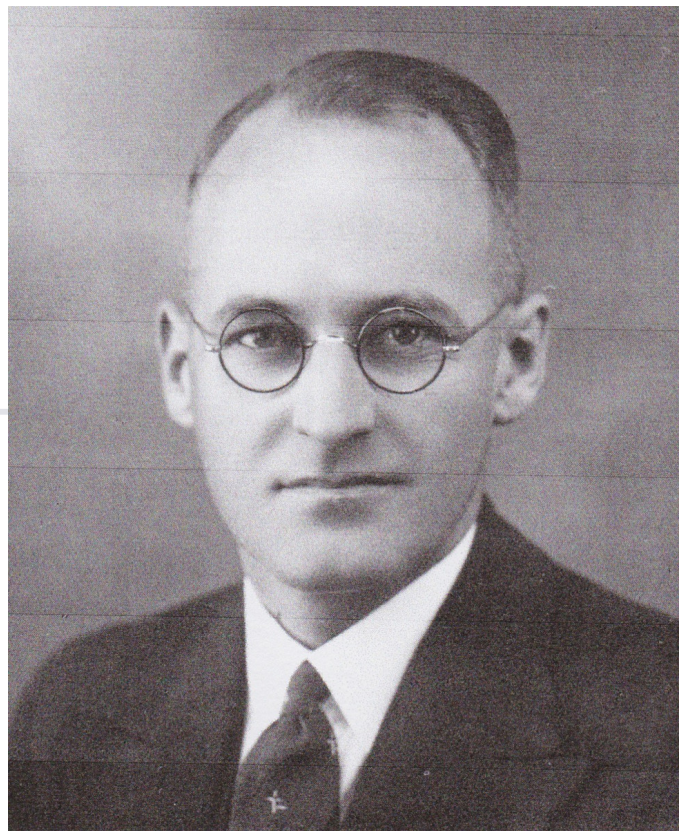


Dawson, Andrew William (1903–1985)

LESTER DEVINE

Originally trained as a secondary history teacher, a career long Adventist educator, Lester Devine, Ed.D., has taught at elementary, secondary and higher education levels and spent more than three decades in elected educational leadership positions in two divisions of the world Church, NAD (1969-1982) and SPD (1982-2005). He completed his forty years of denominational service with a term as director of the Ellen G. White/Adventist Research Centre at Avondale University College in Australia where his life-long hobby of learning and presenting on Adventist heritage issues became his vocation.



Andrew Dawson

Photo courtesy of Lester Devine.

Andrew William Dawson, general manager of the Sanitarium Health Food Company and manager of Australasian Conference Association, Ltd., was born in Birregurra, Victoria, Australia, on March 19, 1903.¹

The second son of farmer Andrew William Dawson and Alice (Hardy), he had three brothers and one sister until his mother died when he was just five years of age. Subsequently his father remarried, and two more sisters were added to the family.²

Dawson's father became a Seventh-day Adventist in 1917, when he was just 14. He credited his father's influence with his decision to be baptized in 1920.³ At 16 years of age he commenced study at the Australasian Missionary College at Cooranbong, New South Wales. He studied business at the college between 1919 and 1921, though he did not graduate.⁴

On January 19, 1928, Dawson married Ruth Antoinette Fisher in the Auburn church, Victoria.⁵ She was the daughter of George and Lily Fisher and had been born in Hornsby, a northern suburb of Sydney, on December 31, 1904.⁶ They had four children: Olwyn Betty (Schubert), born in Auckland, New Zealand, on October 26, 1930; Verona Jean (Rosevear), born in Christchurch, New Zealand, on April 22, 1932; Laurel May (Millist), born in Christchurch, New Zealand, on July 16, 1936; and Andrew William, born in Sydney, Australia on August 26, 1941.⁷

Dawson began his employment with the Church in 1927, initially in the bakery at the Melbourne Sanitarium Health Food Company (SHF) factory, where he became the manager. By 1929 he was a traveling salesman for the sanitarium, based in Melbourne. By mid-1930 he was the manager of the Auckland SHF factory in New Zealand. At 27 he was perhaps the youngest factory manager in the history of the company to that point. By late 1931 he was the manager of the SHF factory in Christchurch, New Zealand.⁸ It was during his tenure there that the beautiful and internationally renowned gardens at the factory were first established.⁹

By 1936 Dawson had become the secretary (general manager/CEO) for all SHF operations in New Zealand. Back in Australia by May 1939, he was appointed as the sales and advertising manager at the Head Office of the SHF, and from 1943 to 1946 he served as the secretary (manager/CEO) of the entire Sanitarium Health Food Company operations in Australasia. He was a man of considerable ability who rose very quickly through the leadership ranks of the company.

From September 1946 to June 1951 Dawson was the manager of Australasian Conference Association, Ltd. (ACA), which held the real and intellectual property of the Church. Then he was the business manager of Avondale College for four years before returning to the SHF as the retail manager for the company operations in Wellington, New Zealand from 1956. His last posting before retirement was as the manager of the factory and wholesale operations in Adelaide, South Australia. He retired in March 1965.¹⁰

His years of service are summarized as follows:¹¹

July 1927– October 1929	Melbourne Bakery	Baker and Manager
November 1929– June 1930	Melbourne Wholesale	Traveler
July 1930–October 1931	Auckland SHF Factory	Manager
November 1931–September 1936	Christchurch SHF Factory	Manager
October 1936–April 1939	SHF New Zealand	Manager
May 1939–May 1941	SHF Head Office	Assistant General Manager
June 1941– September 1941	SHF New Zealand	Acting Manager (Temp)
October 1941– January 1942	SHF Head Office	Assistant General Manager
February 1942– September 1942	SHF Eastern District	Acting Secretary
October 1942– September 1946	SHF Head Office	General Manager

October 1946–June 1951	ACA Ltd.	General Manager
July 1951–August 1956	Avondale College	Business Manager
September 1956– January 1960	SHF Wellington	Manager
February 1960– March 1965	SHF Adelaide	Manager

Andrew and Ruth Dawson retired in 1966 to Wahroonga, New South Wales, after 39 years of service. Their retirement years were cut short, however, when, after 38 years of marriage, Ruth Dawson died on January 4, 1967, in the Sydney Sanitarium and Hospital.¹² The service was conducted in the Wahroonga church, and she was buried in the Avondale Cemetery at Cooranbong.¹³ On February 11, 1968, Andrew Dawson married Amy Winifred Schubert in the Swansea, New South Wales, church.¹⁴ Amy was the widowed mother of Dawson's son-in-law, Will Schubert, of Melbourne.¹⁵ Andrew and Amy spent 16 years together in retirement at Cooranbong.¹⁶ Andrew William Dawson died on March 7, 1985.¹⁷ A service was held in the Ladies Chapel at Avondale College, and he was buried in the Avondale Cemetery.¹⁸

Ellen White once wrote that what the world needed was “men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall.”¹⁹ Cameron Myers, a later general manager of the Sanitarium Health Food Company, wrote in his life sketch of Dawson: “Andrew Dawson was that kind of man.”²⁰

SOURCES

Andrew William Dawson Biographical Records. South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives. Folder: “Dawson, Andrew William.” Document: “Biographical Information Blank.”

Andrew William Dawson Sustentation Records. South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives. Folder: “Dawson, Andrew William.” Document: “Weekly Rate.”

Branster, G. “Dawson–Schubert marriage.” *Australasian Record*, March 18, 1968.

Hollingsworth, H. W. “Andrew William Dawson obituary.” *Australasian Record*, June 1, 1985.

Myers, D. C. “Life Sketch of Andrew William Dawson.” *Australasian Record*, June 1, 1985.

Palmer, C. S. “Ruth Antionette Dawson obituary.” *Australasian Record*, February 13, 1967.

Turner, W. G. “Dawson–Fisher marriage.” *Australasian Record*, February 20, 1928.

White, Ellen G. *Education*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1903.

NOTES

1. Andrew William Dawson Biographical Records, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives (Folder: "Dawson, Andrew William"); Document: "Biographical Information Blank."
2. D. C. Myers, "Life Sketch of Andrew William Dawson," *Australasian Record*, June 1, 1985, 13.
3. Andrew William Dawson Biographical Records,
4. Ibid.
5. W. G. Turner, "Dawson-Fisher marriage," *Australasian Record*, February 20, 1928, 7.
6. Ibid.; Myers, 13.
7. Andrew William Dawson Biographical Records.
8. Ibid.
9. Myers, 13.
10. Andrew William Dawson Biographical Records.
11. Andrew William Dawson Sustentation Records, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives (Folder: "Dawson, Andrew William"); Document: "Weekly Rate."
12. C. S. Palmer, "Ruth Antionette Dawson obituary," *Australasian Record*, February 13, 1967, 14.
13. Ibid.
14. G. Branster, "Dawson-Schubert marriage," *Australasian Record*, March 18, 1968, 14.
15. Myers, 13.
16. Ibid.
17. H. W. Hollingsworth, "Andrew William Dawson obituary," *Australasian Record*, June 1, 1985, 14; Myers, 13.
18. Ibid.

19. Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1903), 57.

20. Myers, 13.

encyclopedia.adventist.org is an official website of the [Seventh-day Adventist World Church](#)

© 2020 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 12501 Old Columbia Pike Silver Spring , MD 20904 USA 301-680-6000