

# Rasmussen, Lowell Reed (1907–1998)

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Lowell Reed Rasmussen was an educator and administrator who worked at Humboldt Academy, Golden Gate Academy, Lodi Academy, the Southeastern California Conference, La Sierra College, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, and the Pacific Union Conference.

## Early Life

Lowell Reed Rasmussen was born March 3, 1907, in Ceres, California, to Jens C. and Eva Belle (Reed) Rasmussen. His parents, both Seventh-day Adventists, raised him and his sister in that faith, and they sent them to Adventist schools.<sup>1</sup> His mother died in 1914.<sup>2</sup> His father remarried the next year, and Rasmussen gained several step-siblings.<sup>3</sup> In 1918, when he was eleven years old, Rasmussen was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church membership. He attended Lodi Academy (1922-1925) and Pacific Union College (1925-1927; 1928-1930), graduating in 1930 with his bachelor's degree. He married Vera Ruth Hills, daughter of William and Pearl Hills, who had spent time as a child as a missionary in China;<sup>4</sup> that same year, in Mountain View, California. Together they had three daughters: Ardyth, Marilyn, and Yvonne.

## Career

Rasmussen's first teaching post was at the Turlock (California) church school, during the 1927-1928 school year, before he returned to his studies. After graduation, Lowell Rasmussen became principal of Humboldt Academy, located in Eureka, California. He held that role until 1932, when he became the principal of Golden Gate



Lowell R. Rasmussen, c. 1940s.

Source: Lowell R. Rasmussen Collection (MS 32), Rebok Memorial Library.

Academy, located in Berkeley, California. During Lowell's principalship at Golden Gate Academy, which lasted through the end of the 1936-1937 school year,<sup>5</sup> the Rasmussens were called to mission service in Africa, but ultimately had to decline due to health concerns.<sup>6</sup>

In 1937, Rasmussen became principal of Lodi Academy, located in Lodi, California. He served in that role until 1941, when he became the educational and home commission secretary (in today's terms, the departmental director) for the Southeastern California Conference. While in this position he was ordained as a minister by W. H. Branson, L. K. Dickson, and Lloyd E. Biggs, on August 2, 1941.<sup>7</sup>

In 1942, Rasmussen became the president of La Sierra College, a role he held throughout World War II. In 1946, he was called to the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists to serve as an associate secretary in the Education Department<sup>8</sup> and served in this role until 1959, when he became the Educational Department Secretary (in today's terms, the departmental director) of the Pacific Union Conference.<sup>9</sup> While serving in this capacity, Lowell Rasmussen was deeply involved and invested in the creation of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, an accrediting commission which was established in 1961 and still exists today.<sup>10</sup> Rasmussen also served on the Seventh-day Adventist Church's Board of Regents and on the boards of several academic institutions in the Pacific Union Conference.

## Retirement and Legacy

Lowell Rasmussen retired in 1971, and he and Vera moved to the U. S. state of North Carolina. In 1972, he was a charter member of the Arden Seventh-day Adventist Church, in Arden, North Carolina,<sup>11</sup> which is still open today. His wife, Vera, passed away in 1980,<sup>12</sup> and he died on August 26, 1998.<sup>13</sup> His legacy is one of a steady commitment to the rigorous and thorough education of Seventh-day Adventists.

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### SOURCES

"Arden Opens New Sanctuary." *Southern Tidings*, October 1, 1977.

Biographical Information Blank, "William Francis Hills." July 25, 1912. RG 21, Box WH 2513, General Conference Archives, Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A.

Biographical Information Blank, "Lowell Reed Rasmussen." December 2, 1946, RG 21, Box WH 2515, General Conference Archives, Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A.

Bradley, W. P. "Pacific Union Conference Session." *ARH*, February 26, 1959.

Farnsworth, E. W. "Rasmussen." *ARH*, January 28, 1915.

L. R. Rasmussen appointee file, RG 21, Box 9899, General Conference Archives, Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A.

"Rasmussen." *Pacific Union Recorder*, May 9, 1945.

"Rasmussen, Lowell Reed." *Southern Tidings*, November 1998.

"Rasmussen, Maud Hart Hartwick." *ARH*, May 24, 1945.

"Rasmussen, Vera Ruth." *Southern Tidings*, May 1, 1980.

"Telex news from the Conferences of the Southern Union." *Southern Tidings*, November 11, 1973.

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## NOTES

1. Biographical Information Blank, "Lowell Reed Rasmussen," December 2, 1946, RG 21, Box WH 2515, General Conference Archives.
2. E. W. Farnsworth, "Rasmussen," *ARH*, January 28, 1915, 22.
3. "Rasmussen, Maud Hart Hartwick," *ARH*, May 24, 1945, 22, and "Rasmussen," *Pacific Union Recorder*, May 9, 1945, 6.
4. Biographical Information Blank, "William Francis Hills," July 25, 1912. RG 21, Box WH 2513, General Conference Archives. Vera is listed as "Orpha Vera"; in other official documentation, she is referred to as "Vera Ruth," so that is the name the author chose to use.
5. Biographical Information Blank, "Lowell Reed Rasmussen," December 2, 1946, RG 21, Box WH 2515, General Conference Archives.
6. L. R. Rasmussen appointee file, RG 21, Box 9899, General Conference Archives.
7. Biographical Information Blank, "Lowell Reed Rasmussen," December 2, 1946, RG 21, Box WH 2515, General Conference Archives.
8. Ibid.
9. W. P. Bradley, "Pacific Union Conference Session," *ARH*, February 26, 1959, 32.
10. See WASC Accrediting Commission for Schools website, accessed September 16, 2022, at <https://www.acswasc.org/>.
11. "Rasmussen, Lowell Reed," *Southern Tidings*, November 1998, 29. See also "Telex news from the Conferences of the Southern Union," *Southern Tidings*, November 11, 1973, 20, and "Arden Opens New Sanctuary," *Southern Tidings*, October 1, 1977, 19.
12. "Rasmussen, Vera Ruth," *Southern Tidings*, May 1, 1980, 28.
13. "Rasmussen, Lowell Reed," *Southern Tidings*, November 1998, 29.

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