

EMMA NEAL MCQUEEN MORRISON

Probably nothing has done more to heighten the awareness of North Carolina's historic heritage than the state's tradition of outdoor historical dramas; indeed, the pioneer, and very likely premier, production of that sort in the entire country is Roanoke Island's "The Lost Colony."

The prime mover of that enterprise has been Emma Neal Morrison: associated with it for more than thirty years, over twenty of them as its producer, she was named Producer Emeritus on her retirement in 1983. Her labor of love on this Paul Green drama has sustained it through (as it has been put) "financial storms, audience apathy, and occasional slaps from Mother Nature."

She has as well devoted herself to several projects for the betterment of her native state -- she was born in Scotland County -- and of this University. Of particular note is her long service as Chairman of the Roanoke Island Historical Association (of which she is now Chairman Emeritus) and as Vice Chairman of the Historic Bath Commission. With her husband, the late Fred W. Morrison of the class of 1913 (made honorary Doctor of Laws at our Commencement in 1964) she was instrumental in establishing the Morrison Scholarships here as well as in helping to found the Ackland Art Museum.

Through all her activities, not least a prominent role representing North Carolina in Washington, D.C., where her primary home has been for the last half century, she has exemplified the virtues of vitality and loyalty in exercising the kind of cultural statesmanship we delight in honoring with the degree of Doctor of Laws.