

The Salla Stephens Bradshaw and John Ray Stephens Endowed Scholarship

Ray Stephens and Salla Gammill married on December 27, 1933, and moved from east Texas to the High Plains of West Texas, near Dimmitt.

Ray surrendered to the ministry in May of 1934. Soon thereafter, Ray met some young ministers from Wayland Baptist College. It was then that Ray and Salla became interested in furthering their education.

On September 1, 1934, with \$20 and very little other personal property, they moved to Plainview, Texas to enroll in school. By the grace of God and President George W. McDonald, Salla entered the Academy to finish high school and Ray entered college. They finished Wayland College in the spring of 1937.

Ray pastored the Afton Baptist Church for two years before he and Salla left to enter Baylor University for the fall term in 1939. Ray graduated from Baylor in May 1941.

In the fall of 1941, both Ray and Salla enrolled in Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. Together they continued to prepare for the work that God had called them to do.

In September 1943, Ray was called by God to serve his country. He enlisted in the U.S. Air Force and served as a Southern Baptist chaplain from 1944 until he was honorably discharged in May 1946. Ray remained attached to a reserve unit and in 1950 was recalled to service in the U.S. Air Force. Ray was stationed at Patrick Air Force Base, Florida, where on October 28, 1951, Chaplain Major John Ray Stephens lost his life in a rescue attempt of two drowning airmen in the Atlantic Ocean.

After Ray's death, Salla taught school and reared their three children. Though only a short history of their lives, this is the story of a man and his wife who completely surrendered their lives to Jesus Christ and reaped his many wonderful blessings. God has been good to the Stephens family.