

Sikes, Enoch Walter ^[1]

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by John R. Woodard, 1994

19 May 1868–8 Jan. 1941

Enoch Walter Sikes, college president, was born in [Union County](#) ^[2], the son of John C. and Jane Austin Sikes. He attended [Wake Forest College](#) ^[3], where he played football, was an orator and a debater, and received an M.A. degree in 1891. Instead of becoming a lawyer as had been his earlier intention, he accepted an appointment as director of physical culture at Wake Forest. Sikes spent the summer at [Harvard University](#) ^[4] and began teaching in the fall of 1891. Continuing his education at [Johns Hopkins University](#) ^[5], he received a doctor of philosophy degree in 1897. He returned to Wake Forest College as assistant professor of history and political science. In 1910 he was drafted to run for the North Carolina legislature as senator from [Wake County](#) ^[6] but had no further political aspirations after serving the one term as senator. In 1915–16 he was dean of Wake Forest College.



Image of Enoch Walter Sikes, Dean of Wake Forest College (University), from *The Howler* yearbook at Wake Forest College, [p. 10], published 1916 by Wake Forest College. Presented on Digital NC. ^[7]

In 1916 Sikes was chosen president of [Coker College for Women](#) ^[8] at Hartsville, S.C. With this post he began a close connection with the state of South Carolina, where he spent over half of his lifework in education. In July 1925 he became president of [Clemson College](#) ^[9], and for fifteen years, until July 1940, he shaped the educational policies of South Carolina's Agricultural and Mechanical College. His term saw increased enrollment, the addition of new buildings and

equipment, and the remodeling of older facilities. Sikes remained president for two years after the official retirement age of seventy but asked to be relieved of the responsibility. After that request was accepted, he was asked to stay on at the institution in order to direct South Carolina historical research and to serve the public with his brilliant oratory.

Sikes was a frequent lecturer and wrote several articles for the *Wake Forest Student* and Clemson College publications. He was the author of four books: *The Transition of North Carolina from Colony to Commonwealth*^[10] (1898), *The Confederate States Congress*^[11] (1905), *The Growth of the Nation, 1837 to 1860* . . .^[12] (1905), and a *Supplement to Reinsch's Civil Government for the State of North Carolina* (1916). Many of his addresses to Clemson College students were published. Sikes served as governor of the Carolinas Kiwanis District in 1925.

He married Ruth Wingate, the daughter of Washington Manly Wingate, former president of Wake Forest College. They had one son, Walter Wingate, and one daughter, Ruth Janet. Sikes died suddenly of a heart attack. He was given a military funeral and buried on Cemetery Hill on the Clemson College campus.

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From:

Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press.^[31]

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