

Gaye Garrison Sprague



Gaye Garrison Sprague, P.E. (BSCE 1978, MSCE 1980) is the owner and principal of Sprague & Sprague Consulting Engineers which has provided traffic engineering and transportation planning services to public and private clients in the Carolinas and Georgia since 1985. Gaye grew up on Denver Downs Farm just 10 miles from Clemson. When, in the early 1970s, she told her parents Ed (CU '42) and Juanita Garrison that she wanted to be an engineer, they never questioned that choice despite the low percentage of females in the profession. Gaye's aunt Nancy Garrison worked on the Manhattan Project and probably would have been an engineer if she had been born in 1953 instead of 1923. She was a great example as Gaye embarked on a career that was not traditional for a woman at the time. Gaye was fortunate to have a TL Hannah High School teacher Robert Palmer who introduced her to civil engineering by bringing surveying problems into math class. Once she was enrolled in civil engineering, her interest in transportation was nurtured by her Clemson professors Ed Clark, Larry Josey, and Don Stafford.

Her career path has been supported by the mentorship of many employers, associates, and friends including Crosby Adams, Bill Finger, John Owings (CU '69), and Hibbett Neel. Her most important support in all things personal and professional has come from her husband Joel (BSCE 1979).

Gaye worked for Wilbur Smith & Associates, Ralph Whitehead & Associates, City of Charlotte Department of Transportation, and Greenville County Planning Commission before starting Sprague & Sprague. A Professional Engineer in four states, Gaye has been active in the profession having served on the South Carolina Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors, as chair of the Board of the Greenville Transit Authority, and as chair of the Greenville Chamber of Commerce Transportation Committee. She served in all offices of the South Carolina Section and Southern District of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) and served on the International ITE Board of Directors. She was the long-time chair of the SC Section ITE Scholarship Committee. She has been recognized for her contributions to her profession by being named the Transportation Engineer of the Year and President's Award Recipient by the SC Section of ITE and the Engineer of the Year by the Piedmont Chapter of the South Carolina Society of Professional Engineers. She also received the Marble Hensley Outstanding Individual Activity Award and Herman Hoose Distinguished Service Award from the Southern District of ITE and the Service to People Award from the SC Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE). She is an Honor Member of the CU Chapter of Chi Epsilon and appreciates the support of Brad Putnam in receiving that honor.

At Clemson, Gaye taught undergraduate and graduate civil engineering courses and served on the Civil Engineering Advisory Board, as the Contact Member for the Student Chapter of ASCE, and on the State Extension Advisory Committee. She has supported the ITE Student Chapter through financial contributions, presentations, hiring the Chapter to conduct counts, and hiring summer interns and appreciates the leadership of advisors Wayne Sarasua and Jennifer Ogle. While a student at Clemson Gaye received the Pomona Pipe Products Award and the John M. Ford Memorial Award in civil engineering.

In her community, Gaye has supported many organizations as a volunteer and is currently serving on the Boards of Genesis Homes, Upstate Forever, and the Greenville Charity Ball. She previously served on the boards of the Piedmont Health Foundation, The Children's Museum of the Upstate, the Peace Center, the Appalachian Council of Governments, and the Conestee Foundation. She was a Cub Scout den leader, co-president of both the Augusta Circle Elementary PTA and the Hughes Academy PTSA, and co-chair of the beautification committee for the Greenville High School PTSA. She has also been an active volunteer for Greenville Women Giving, Friends of the Reedy River (FORR), Habitat for Humanity (HFH), Conservation Voters of South Carolina, and Greenville County 4-H. She is an elder at Westminster Presbyterian Church. Gaye has been recognized for her community involvement over the years, including receiving the HFH Battered Hammer Award, the Order of the Jessamine, and being named State PTSA Volunteer of the Year, the Reedy Falls District Cub Scouter of the Year, and the Volunteer of the Year for FORR. She considers her greatest reward for this volunteer work to be getting to know good people and working with them on good causes.

Gaye served as one of two at-large representatives on Greenville City Council 2009-2017, working to make Greenville a thriving and sustainable community with a quality of life that attracts and keeps young people in Greenville and involves them in local government.

All of Gaye's siblings attended Clemson – Tom ('80), Bart ('82), Lee ('82), Catherine ('95), and Elizabeth ('95). Gaye and Joel's son Jay works with Joel in construction materials testing at TRI Environmental. Jay and his wife Mollie are Clemson graduates ('08), and they and their children Colson, Reid, and Caroline also live in Greenville. In memory of their son Ben, Gaye and Joel have established an endowment for the Glenn Department of Civil Engineering to annually award a scholarship to a student majoring in Civil Engineering from an underrepresented population.