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## Clifton L. Ganus Sr. Biography

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Clifton L. Ganus Sr. was born on October 25, 1903, in Hillsboro, Texas. After only receiving an elementary-level education, Ganus set out from Hillsboro on his own to find a job in Dallas. As he worked at the Southwestern Restaurant in Dallas, Ganus would often visit Hillsboro on the weekends to visit his soon-to-be wife, Jewell Bearden. After getting married, Ganus worked in a variety of different jobs in different cities, but eventually ended up back in Dallas with a job at a drive-in sandwich shop named Pig Stands. Eventually Ganus became the regional purchasing manager for Pig Stands in Dallas. In 1929, Ganus moved to New Orleans to be the district manager of six Pig Stands restaurants there.

After three years of managing these restaurants, Ganus decided to start his own business in 1932. Alongside his business partner Atkinson, Ganus opened his first restaurant, A&G Number 1. After six months, Atkinson dropped out of the business and left Ganus in sole control. Around the same time, Ganus opened a sandwich shop named Mrs. Drake's. These two restaurants, A&G and Mrs. Drake's, were famous New Orleans eating establishments from the 1930s until the 1990s. As he continued to expand his operations, Ganus consolidated his restaurants under a new company he created named Finest Foods, Inc. Cafeterias, wholesale, and restaurants were opened not only in New Orleans but as well as in Houston and Memphis. Finest Foods stayed in operation until it officially closed in 1998.

In New Orleans, Ganus became a well-known and trusted civic leader and was involved in all types of work in the civic, business, and nonprofit sectors of the city. Ganus was also dedicated to the works of the church and to Christian education. After becoming acquainted with Harding College in 1939, Ganus became personally involved with the future of the university in several ways. His oldest son, Clifton L. Ganus Jr. would go on to attend Harding and eventually become the university's third president. Additionally, Ganus joined the Harding Board of Trustees in 1939 and served as Chairman of Harding's Board of Trustees from 1940 to 1954.

Ganus passed away in September 1955 at 51 after battling illness for several years. His legacy lives on through his family, his work, and his service.