Super Seniors

THEIR STORIES AND SECRETS

GLIMPSES
INTO THE LIVES OF
100
REMARKABLE
MEN AND WOMEN

Told by one of them who has known them all
FRANCIS RAYMOND LINE

Assisted by
HELEN E. LINE

Notice: Reading this book may result in adding years to your life!

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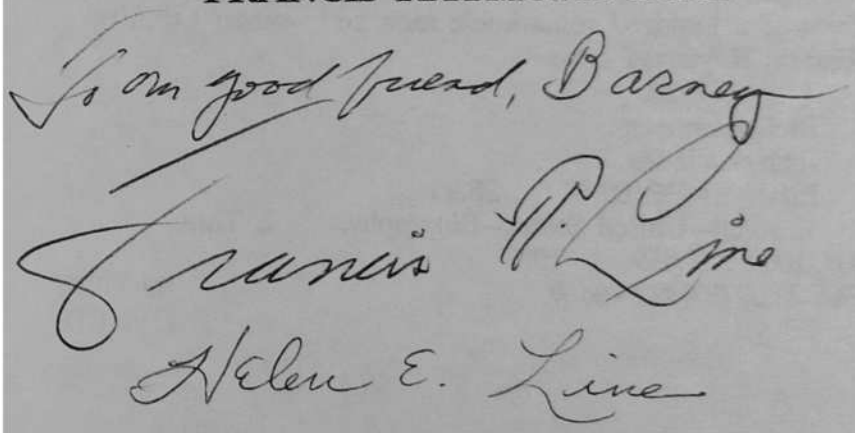
SUPER SENIORS

THEIR STORIES AND SECRETS

Glimpses into the lives of
a hundred remarkable men and women

Told by
One of Them
Who has Known Them All

FRANCIS RAYMOND LINE



Published by

WIDE HORIZONS PRESS
13 Meadowsweet
Irvine, CA 92715

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Line, Francis R.
Super seniors : their stories and secrets : glimpses into the lives of a hundred remarkable men and women / told by Francis Raymond Line
p. cm.
Bibliography: p.
Includes index.
ISBN 0-938109-06-5 : $8.95
1. Aged—United States—Biography. I. Title.
HQ1064.U5L559 1989
305.26'0973'0922—dc20 89-35072
CIP

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Let Them Know It

"I would rather see a sermon than hear one any day.
I would rather one would walk with me than merely tell the way.
So if they earn your praise, bestow it;
If you like them, let them know it;
Let the words of true encouragement be said.
Do not wait till life is over
And they're underneath the clover . . .
And have to read their tombstones when they're dead!"

[See After Words at back]

This book is principally about living men and women—people who are very much alive. They have earned our praise and we are letting them know it, now, while they are still with us. Millard Sheets, Mary Erickson, Ruth Cummings and Margaret Pashgian died while the book was being written and before it went to press. But we let them know, while they were still living, how much they meant in our lives.

In the pages that follow, some of the most remarkable individuals Helen and I have had the privilege of knowing will walk with us through the pages of their inspiring lives.

Introduction

We must start by asking: Who—or what—is a Super Senior? The term needs clarification.

Webster's defines "Senior" as someone "more advanced in dignity, rank, or office; superior." That is good enough for us. "Super" according to Webster's means "excellent, first rate." The latest Random House *Dictionary* comes up with the best definition of all. "Super," when referring to an individual, means one "who exceeds customary norms or levels." We'll go along with that, too. For persons to be included in this book we have set an arbitrary age limit of 75 years, or above. There is no limit to the "or above." Many chronicled in these pages are in their 80s or 90s. Some have already leaped over the century mark.

This defines what we are writing about. We must also state what this book is *not* about. In no way are we writing about the run-of-the-mill "Senior Citizen." Random House defines such a one as "an elderly or aged person, especially one who is retired, or whose principal source of support is a pension or Social Security benefits."

That is almost exactly the definition of the person who is *not* included here. This book creates word pictures of vigorous, much-alive, fully matured individuals whose outlook on life is "youthful" and whose "principal source of support" is not so much a "pension" as a "penchant"—a penchant for real living, looking ahead, savoring adventures, whether physical, intellectual, artistic, or spiritual.

In a way, this book has really not been written, in the ordinary sense. We have just stood by at arm's length and watched it grow. Sixty years ago Helen and I first met one of the persons who is included in these pages as a Super Senior. What we learned from her is revealed here. We have been meeting and becoming friends with such Super Persons ever since. In nearly every case these are our friends and personal acquaintances, whose lives we know. The majority of them are living and still active in one way or another. Some are now dead, but their insights and accomplishments will live on forever.

In a way, also, this is really two books rather than one. It draws nurture from the lives of a hundred Seniors. But it also delves into Helen's and my life as well, hopefully revealing a few secrets as to why we are even happier after 61 years of marriage than we were on our wedding day, and how we have maintained that joy—and fairly vigorous health as well—all those years.

While written primarily to provide reader pleasure, this is also a guidebook, a "how to" work unveiling the secrets of vigorous aging, as imparted by those who are already blessed with the knowledge of such secrets. Whether we like it or not—to be more accurate, whether *you* like it or not—if you who read this happen to be anywhere between 20 and 70, you will probably live into your 80s or 90s. Statistics bear that out. *So*, if you are going to live that long, the road ahead can be cleared of some of the bumps, and you can enjoy the scenery along that road much more fully, by peeping into the lives of the Super Seniors in this book. They have real secrets of living to share.

Finally, the dictionaries do not capitalize either "Super" or "Senior." WE DO. Every one of the persons with whom you will become friends after sharing their lives through these pages—every one is "UPPER CASE." You, in turn, can CAPITALIZE on the secrets of living that they reveal.

Read on.

Francis Raymond Line

Chapter 1

Ila McAfee Turner

91 and Just Begun

At 91 years of age, Ila McAfee Turner paints vigorously, exhibits widely, and—in her spare time—travels to such places as Yucatan to seek scenes for her sketchbook. She is probably America's most outstanding painter of horses. She has a field day—along with the horses—in her work as an artist. Whether she is doing watercolors or oils, animals of some kind usually dominate the scenes, and they are most often horses. Helen and I have been close friends of hers for 60 years. Her life has been intent and intense from the very start.

Ila's dad loved horses, and on the nearly half dozen Colorado mountain ranches that he owned or rented while she was growing up, he became an expert trainer of horses for himself and for his neighbors. That's where her love of them began.

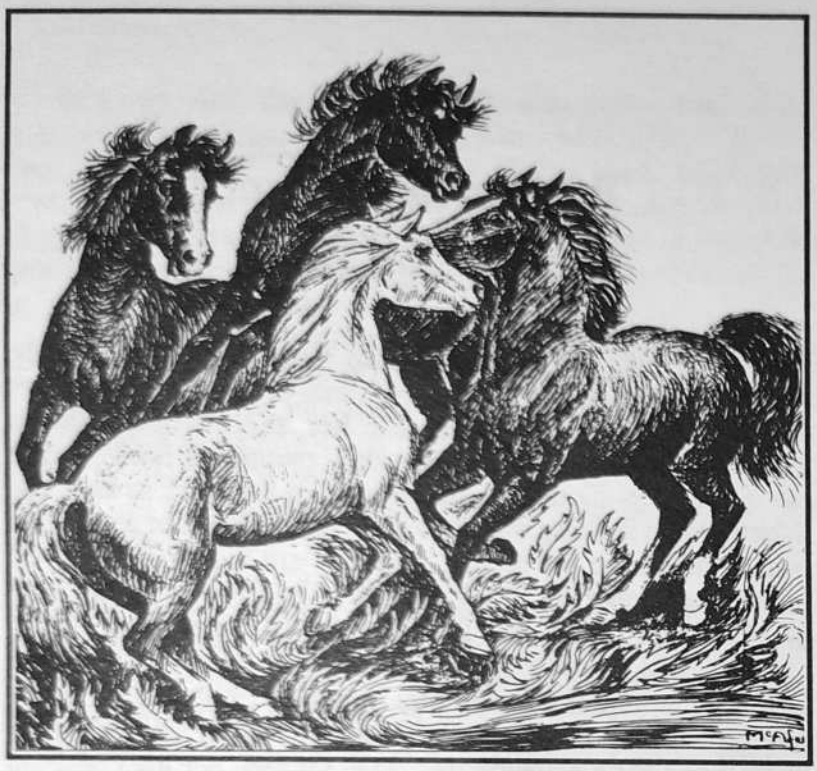
"Playing horse" was a favorite game with which she had passed countless golden days. But Ila had carried it beyond play; she had studied the gaits of the animals on the ranch and then practiced those gaits by trotting or galloping as she went about her chores. She even tried pacing, but that was difficult with only two legs, so sometimes she used two long sticks for front legs—one in each hand—and did a good job of pacing.

She and her sister rode horseback the five miles to the rural Logan school, first down Cochetopa Valley, then across the wider Tomechi Valley to the rustic building.

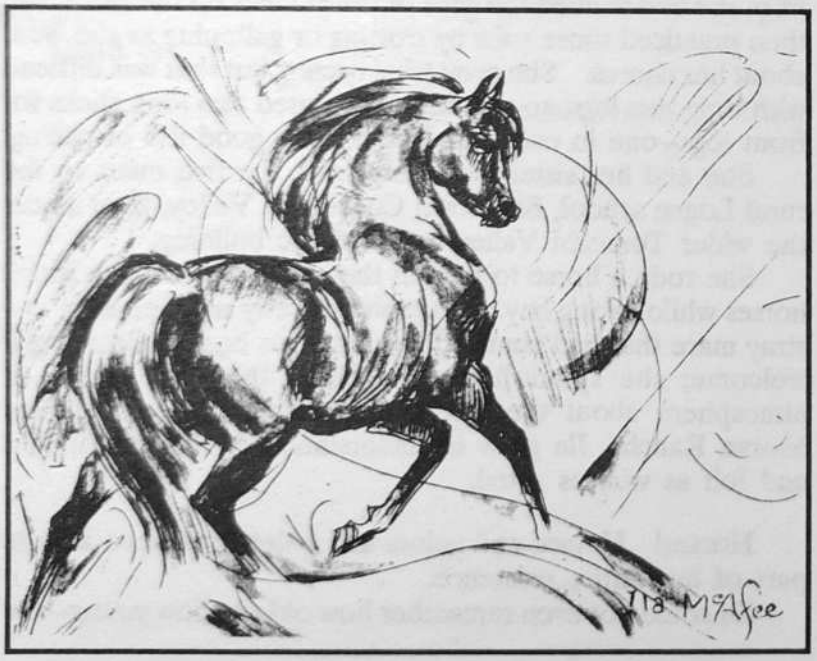
She rode a horse to help in the cattle drives. She drove horses while raking hay. Once she secretly sneaked feed to a stray mare that had come to the ranch, in hopes of making it welcome; she spent hours absorbing the rich wealth of atmosphere about the tiny blacksmith shop on the Jimmy Moran Ranch. Ila grew to understand how horses thought and felt as well as acted.

Horses! Horses and colors and paints had been a large part of her entire existence.

Ila could not even remember how old—or how young—she



Upper—Four Frisking Fillies, by Ila McAfee Turner
Lower—The Red Stallion, by Ila McAfee Turner



was when she started drawing horses. Her mother had sketched them for her at first, on scraps of wrapping paper and envelopes, for Ila to copy. Her mother had made just points for feet.

But horses don't have points, they have feet, Ila reasoned to herself. Taking the pencil she drew a horse with real hooves.

There had been no regular drawing materials at home but she employed scraps of wrapping paper, envelopes, and flyleaves of books. It was exciting to start school, with real blackboards. Throughout recess she would draw on the boards every animal she was familiar with from her free ranch life—rabbits, beaver, mountain lions, goats, cattle, but most of all, stallions and mares and colts.

In fourth grade, in a school in Greeley, a freckle-faced wavy-haired boy across the aisle whispered during class: "I'll give you a penny for a horse picture." He handed over a clean white sheet of unlined stationery, and with pounding heart Ila executed her first commission and earned her first fee.

Then came the day, still glistening in her memory, when a man who had heard about her drawings came on a visit to the ranch and gave her a dollar to draw him some horses.

When Ila was about 14 it was decided she should have art lessons. There was an evening class at the Normal School in Gunnison, 15 miles away. She rode in on horseback once a week, took her lesson, and stayed overnight with a woman who rented her a room, with a place in the barn for her horse.

Her teachers were Henry L. Richter and his wife Catherine. One day Ila realized that Mrs. Richter was standing behind her, watching her do a drawing.

"Ila," she exclaimed, "you're creating a real life horse scene—mares and stallions and colts—without even looking at a model, or even a photograph."

"Yes," Ila answered meekly, "I never look at horses when I draw them, or paint them, like artists do when they make portraits."

"This is remarkable," Mrs. Richter continued. "You have the complete anatomy of every horse exactly right—all the muscles and bone structures."

"I always paint from memory, not models," Ila explained. "I was born and raised with horses. I know them almost better than I know myself. I can close my eyes and see every detail."

Catherine Richter declared that here was a girl who should pursue her training in art. It was her influence that caused Ila, when she was 19, to head for Chicago to meet the great artist Lorado Taft.

Taft recommended that she study and work in the studio of the muralist James McBurney. That is where she met Elmer Turner, who had just recently returned from France where he had served in World War I. Both Ila and Elmer were aspiring artists. They worked together, they studied together, they painted together. One day they arrived at a mutual decision: they should spend the rest of their lives together, as husband and wife. The muralist, James McBurney, promised them a mural assignment in California as soon as they were married.

In a setting of autumn leaves at Ila's home in the Colorado Rockies, Ila and Elmer stood before the Rev. Geiser and joined hands and lives "until death do us part."

Rev. Geiser was an artist as well as a minister, who had lived in the art colony of Taos in the New Mexican Rockies. Ila and Elmer had heard of the place but had never been there. "You will love Taos," the minister promised, "and Taos will love you. Since you are going to California for a mural assignment, you should stop in Taos for a visit."

Elmer Turner, ex-soldier, teacher, muralist and landscape painter, and Ila McAfee Turner, the artist with the musical name and the girl who loved horses, headed west.

Rev. Geiser had been correct. Ila and Elmer loved Taos. The wine of its late autumn colors intoxicated them as they stopped at the New Mexican art colony on the way to their California mural assignment. They lingered long enough to let the intoxication mellow into longing as they caught the flavor of the place—blanketed Indians from the pueblo adding color to the plaza, Spanish-Americans, bright of dress, sparkling the air with their liquid musical language. And horses. All four sides of the plaza were lined with hitching posts where saddle horses or teams with wagons were tied.

And Taos loved the Turners. It loved the bold, joyous manner in which Elmer knocked on the doors of the leading artists, introduced himself and his bride, and said that he just wanted to get acquainted. He and Ila might be coming back some day to live.

Come back they did, to friends ready-made, who took nearly as much interest in plans for their new home as did the Turners themselves. The weekly paper gossiped intimately about the progress of the house they started to build. It was a cozy adobe studio-home, earth-hugging, typical of New Mexican houses. When the sign "White Horse Studio" went up by the little gate, the paper formally welcomed its two artist-occupants.

Taos loved the Turners, and every artist in the colony felt concern when Elmer began to experience difficulty with his right hand, aftereffects of influenza he had suffered in France. Month by month his condition grew worse. As the second autumn came, and the third, and the fourth, it grew harder for him to reach to the far side of the paint box to mix the ambers and golds and reds. His right hand shook as he held the brush, but he tightened his fingers around it, set his teeth, and made the strokes to finish his paintings.

Then the right hand failed.

Every artist in Taos felt a glow of pride in their townsman when Elmer quietly picked up the brushes in his left hand—and learned to paint all over again.

One of his radiant mountain scenes of Longs's Peak in Colorado made the May 27, 1927 front cover of one of the country's greatest national magazines, *The Literary Digest*. His *Along the Rio Grande* took first prize at the Phoenix art show. Galleries far and near exhibited his works. Art lovers from a dozen states bought his paintings.



Indian horses and wagons in Taos, New Mexico plaza, drawing by Ila McAfee Turner

Elmer's left hand became weaker. His brush strokes again wavered. Paralysis, an aftermath of the influenza, crept over his body. Ila mixed his paints to save him that effort.

One season he lay down his brushes. The next season he could not pick them up. At this point Elmer began giving much attention to the garden. A winsome smile stole across his features as he said to Ila, "I'll *grow* a picture instead of painting one."

At that wedding ceremony in the sparkling autumn of the Colorado Rockies they had made a vow, "for richer or poorer, for better or worse, in sickness and in health." Now one of them was sick, but their love was strong. Now Ila's hands must be hands for both, but Elmer's spirit must soar even to new heights in order that he might buoy her up in her terrific task. They were still partners, still walking life's path as one.

Their little studio-house had become not only a home but a sanctuary of beauty, creativity, and love, with both of them creating ideas and concepts. In spare moments Ila set about enhancing its loveliness. She could scarcely have done otherwise, for creativity flowed from her fingers. Beds and furniture were carved with Indian motifs. Ceramic dishes were designed and fired, usually with a horse showing somewhere. Interesting mobiles were created. Navajo blankets, collected by Elmer over the years, added gaiety and color.

The kitchen, where Ila and Elmer ate, was another glowing spot of color. As each meal started, Ila and Elmer grasped hands and bowed heads in thanks. A man who could not paint, or talk, or feed himself, and a woman who must now be hands and feet and tongue and almost life itself for her husband, gave thanks that they had their spirit and their love.

Even artists cannot live entirely on love. When Elmer's needs were met, Ila would go into the studio part of their home, switch on the light, take easel and pallet and canvas, and begin to paint.

Horses, of course. Permanently painted in her mind, unerasable, were the pictures of her youth on the mountain ranches of Colorado. She remembered the time she had surprised a band of wild horses near a spring. The lead stallion had stood upright, not from fright but from fury, fighting the air with his front legs as his mane and flowing tail swept in glorious accompaniment. Then, turning suddenly, the whole herd had circled the spring in thunderous beauty and swirled

madly and majestically away. Before the day was over Ila had the memory on canvas—a sweeping, swirling rhythm of horses and beauty and color. In almost mystic metamorphosis, the timeless golden days and experiences of a Colorado ranch became the challenging creations on canvas in a studio in Taos.

Elmer named the paintings, as he had named almost every one she had ever done. It was he who saw rhythms of the swirling heavens in her wild horse picture and called it *Spiral Nebulae*. Helen and I now have that painting of Ila's as our own. It was one of her finest.

The name of an Ila McAfee Turner painting came to have a significance almost equal to the brushwork itself, and probably never have works of art been named with more thought or love or care. With a flare for symbolism and allegory as well as realism, Ila created studies of moods and effects that cried out for the name that was apt. From Elmer those names came. *Black Mesa*, *Stampede of the Waves*, *Entrance to Spring*, *Exuberance*, *Sportsman's Dream*, *Desert Dwellers*, *Turbulence*. His name of *Winds Variable* for a surging powerful study of four horses plunging off in opposite directions helped to sell it to the Agricultural College of Utah. More than one of her paintings found its market because of its name.

One day Ila made a record 50-yard dash from their mailbox out to the garden where Elmer was "growing a painting," using shovel and hoe as best he could instead of palette and brush. "The garden is all weeded and fresh," she began explaining breathlessly. "How would you like to relax for a while? Our letter about the Texas mural assignment has been answered. We've received the commission. I'll paint it. You name it."

The era of post office murals, in which the history of each locale was depicted on the walls of government buildings, found one of its finest artisans in Ila. Who better qualified than she to paint the record of the almost extinct longhorns for the post office at Clifton, Texas? To absorb the spirit of her subject firsthand she put Elmer into the car, packed brushes and luggage, and set off for the plains of Texas to fulfill her first mural commission. The walls of post offices in three states soon carried her conception of the history of early western life.

The golden leaves of the aspens in the mountain meadows surrounding Taos were beginning to drift to the ground when

Elmer took Ila's hand, kissed it and went to sleep. He never awakened. It was in the autumn of 1966.

In those last months together he had talked over with Ila the possibilities of dozens of painting subjects which she might execute. They had made lists of such possible paintings.

With that list as an inspiration, and needing release from her sorrow, Ila loaded her van with easel, palette and paint, and all the paraphernalia of an artist and started out to transfer her world to canvas. She loaded the same van with finished paintings when invitations for exhibits came and she went to help set them up. Through the years she has held such exhibits in many western states. She has seen more than 1600 of her paintings sold to private collectors. Her mural executions—nearly always with horses or other animals as themes—enliven the walls of libraries, post offices, and public buildings throughout the West. To see a woman as mature in years as Ila wielding a brush from a vantage point of ladders and scaffolding while executing such murals is a sight nearly as inspiring as her finished painting.

Ila has traveled with sketchbook and drawing pencils to Alaska, Hawaii, and New Zealand, to Africa twice and to Europe four times. Many of these painting safaris came in her 60s and 70s and 80s. Then she headed off to Florida, to the Rio Grande Valley, and to Yucatan in her 90s. To seek fields of a different character she and a woman companion used a dugout canoe to journey through parts of Ecuador.

Not only did Ila *paint* animals, she trained another kind of animal to a point of perfection such as Helen and I—who saw the results—could not have believed possible. This was a Royal Siamese cat.

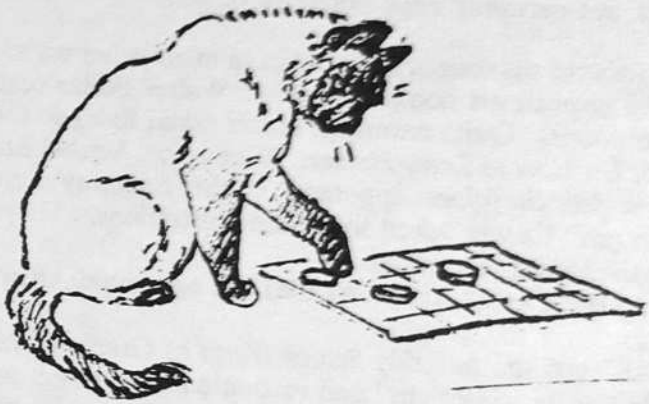
"I've named it 'Sanka,' " she explained. "It doesn't keep me awake at night."

Helen and I made a short documentary color motion picture of the antics of that cat.

"What tricks can it do?" I had asked her. She proceeded to give us a three-ring circus demonstration. On command, Sanka played a small piano, striking enough keys to produce some Siamese music. The cat played checkers, moving the pieces as her turn came, even if such moves seldom produced victory. When Ila arranged a row of capped milk bottles in her studio, Sanka jumped up onto the first bottle and walked sedately, from bottle-top to bottle-top, across the room. She

pulled a small wagon. She could roll over and salute. She could climb up and down ladders. She jumped through hoops and rang a bell on command. In her repertoire were 75 well-executed tricks.

People came to the studio to see Sanka perform. To raise money for her church, Ila decorated a can with a half-moon



April 9 - 1948
Sanka moves that the
Liner get three in a row
and come to Taos.
Elmer & Ila Turner

Ila decorated our guest book on a visit to our California home

slot at the top and invited visitors to see what happened if they put a coin on the can. Sanka promptly pushed it into the slot. "Too bad she can't use bills," one man remarked. "Try her and see," came Ila's reply. As soon as the bill was rested on the can Sanka wadded it up with her dexterous paws and stuffed it into the can. The church treasury was enriched by more than five hundred dollars because of Sanka.

Invitations came from schools and clubs. Ila became as busy putting on feline exhibitions as she was arranging exhibitions of art. Sanka may not have kept her awake at night but certainly kept her busy by day.

Ila's talents sought their outlet in many other ways. Sales of the popular art books by the late Walter Foster reach into the millions. Quite naturally, Foster asked Ila to do the color cover for *How to Draw Horses*. When poet Vachel Lindsay's *Flower-fed Buffaloes* appeared in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, Ila was asked to do the illustrations. They nearly overshadowed the poem.

In the City of Artists, in 1981, Ila was voted Artist of the Year.

In 1985 the monthly *Senior World* of Greeley, Colorado, made her its "cover girl" and recounted some of her achievements. A book would have been needed to recount them all.

Ila created such a book, filled with color and black-and-white reproductions of her paintings, along with poems and descriptions. In an introductory explanation she said, "Some of these poems are looking backward and remembering, to a time years ago when our village was small and the Indians were little influenced by the invaders. One Indian, when asked 'What did your people call this country before Europeans came?' answered 'Ours.' "

Soon to turn 92, Ila is making painting and travel plans for the future. For Christmas, 1988, Helen and I received from her a typed single-spaced two page letter packed with episodes and brimming with love of life. In part, she said:

"We have just had an exciting musical in Taos. I saw it three times, paying the senior citizen price. . . . A friend sent me a book on *Hot Air Ballooning*. It fascinated me. I have been up four times. . . .

"There was one trip to California, for the one hundredth birthday of Catherine Richter, my art teacher in school at Gunnison. I have known her for 72 years. She is still painting,

Dont take me too seriously.
I'm just kidding around.



A page from Ila McAfee Turner's book of paintings and drawings

has a strong voice and a steady hand. She is a remarkable person, and was the one who started me off in my life in the art world by sending me to Chicago to meet Lorado Taft, who then told me about James E. McBurney. It was in his studio that I met Elmer Turner.

"Two other special events in 1988 were *The Retrospective Show* that the Art Association of Taos gave me last January, and a big birthday party given for me on October 21st. My 91st! I seem to be getting a lot more attention now than when I was younger.... It may be true that time is a great healer, but it's no beauty specialist. A small girl, about six, asked me recently, 'What is the matter with your face?'

"My winter plans are to go to Yucatan with Catherine Fels. We have gone to Tucson twice together, painting, so get along very well. We have painted the Rio Grande three times this year—Spring, Summer, and Fall. I don't know what I'll paint in Yucatan, but I can paint horses any old place. I am looking forward to it."

"I am looking forward to it." Those words are a capsulated summary of Ila McAfee Turner's 91 years of life so far.

"She has really captured the secret of living," Helen said to me as we finished reading her letter.

"She creates fine pictures of horses, without models," I replied, "because she has studied them all her life. She knows how to live because she has been putting into practice the real art of living every day of her life, rain or shine."

We are looking forward to her next letter, describing her ongoing adventures.

The Governor's Gallery

presents

A Retrospective Exhibition of Paintings

by

Ila McAfee

June 6th through June 30th, 1989

Governor and Mrs. Garrey Carruthers
cordially invite you to attend
a reception for the artist on
Monday, June 12th, 1989
5:00 pm to 6:30 pm

Fourth Floor, State Capitol, Santa Fe

A June 1989 letter from Ila brought this invitation to a reception for her by the Governor of New Mexico.

Chapter 2

Four Remarkable Seniors

Who Have Brightened the World

1. Peggy Kay, "Live Young as Long as You Live"

In high school, back in Ohio, they called her "that girl with the crazy voice." She was not a soprano. Not an alto. Not a contralto.

Peggy was a baritone! Even a bass.

Baritone or not, she was a superb singer. A born musician. Her voice may have had too much depth for her sex, but it had quality as well. Superb quality. Her teachers recognized her talent and sent her to Chicago for an audition with a voice teacher, one of the most outstanding in that city.

"Don't play tricks," the teacher said, in essence. "Forget the baritone. Now let me hear you sing contralto."

Peggy was a musician. She had a voice. She sang as the teacher requested, raising her pitch two octaves to satisfy her. So impressed was the teacher she gave Peggy voice lessons without receiving pay. But never, during that time, did this young girl use her normal voice. Though the teacher never realized it, she was a baritone.

A woman baritone.

In all other respects, the voice training under the Chicago expert had been valuable. Peggy had learned the techniques required to make her a professional. Returning to the use of her normal baritone voice, she at once attracted attention in the music world. An invitation came for her to appear on a Chautauqua program. The audience gave a collective gasp as they heard deep baritone notes coming from the throat of this attractive young woman. The gasps changed to silent riveting attention. Here was baritone singing of the highest quality. Flawless. A superb rendition. On the final note, the audience broke into wild applause. When Peggy chose as an encore a bass solo, done with the same flawless technique and with the highest quality, the audience reaction changed the entire course of her life. The Chautauqua manager signed her as one of their permanent attractions. This was the beginning of

a lifetime on stage, on the Chautauqua circuit and in theaters, with a sextet and as a woman baritone soloist.

Her singing did not end with the termination of her professional career. She became a member of the church choir wherever she worshipped.

Helen and I first met Peggy in 1962, when she joined the St. Andrew's by the Sea United Methodist Church which we attend in San Clemente, California. For over two decades we have been privileged to hear her in the choir, and as a soloist. For more than a dozen years, her birthday has been a special event in the church. We saw her turn 80. We saw her turn 90. Her "birthday solo" each year, for me at least, was the musical highlight of the entire year.

Peggy outlived two husbands. Mr. Kay died at age 93. She and her first husband, Jackson Ingham, had four sons. All are musically inclined. One son has constructed a complete pipe organ with his own hands. Another son directed a church choir in Seattle, and every year Peggy made the trip north to appear at her son's church as a soloist.

On August 24, 1987, Peggy Kay passed away. The letter I wrote to the *Sun-Post* in San Clemente was read by Dr. James King at her memorial service at St. Andrew's by the Sea.

August 25, 1987
To the Editor:

Beautiful 94-year-old professional soloist Peggy Kay, a member of the St. Andrew's United Methodist Church choir of San Clemente, just took her final curtain call. At church on Sunday, my wife and I hugged and kissed her and told her how much we loved her, as we have done every Sunday for a dozen years. Early next morning she was gone. It was a blessing there was no lingering illness.

For years, Peggy was a stage and Chautauqua singer, not as a soprano or alto but as a baritone, sometimes a bass. Hers was a miracle—a deep resonant bass voice which thrilled audiences from coast to coast.

The climax of her life came at age 93—just a year ago. She attended and sang at her 75th high school reunion in Prospect, Ohio. There was to have been one other classmate there, of the Class of 1911, but she had died before Peggy arrived. The entire town, however, turned

out for that "reunion of one" and gave Peggy deafening applause and a standing ovation as she sang "Live Young as Long as You Live."

Peggy Kay did just that. She has taught us to "live young." She was an inspiration to her four sons, who carry on her musical tradition. She was a blessing to everyone whose life she touched. The angelic choir will be forever proud of its new soloist.

Sincerely yours,
Francis Raymond Line

2. Mae Berg, Indians, Cowboys, and Covered Wagons

Mae Berg was born in the West 97 years ago. Not only is she a westerner by birth; she has lived in the western spirit perhaps as much as any woman alive.

How many persons, now living, can say that they journeyed by covered wagon from New Mexico territory to the territory of Arizona?

How many persons alive today had a father who was three years old before the Civil War ended? But, of greater significance, whose father was shot through the back with an arrow by a band of marauding Indians, yet lived to tell the story?

How many women, still living, rode the range as a working "cowboy" on a 400-square-mile western ranch, and helped drive cattle herds into the Apache Indian country of Arizona?

I am proud to say that Mae Berg is a distant relative of my wife, Helen. Mae is the oldest in a family of eight girls; Helen is next to the youngest. Though 15 years apart in age, they are sisters.

After he recovered from the Indian wounds inflicted when he was a boy in Texas, Albert Gibson, Mae's father, journeyed by covered wagon to Silver City, in the territory of New Mexico. At a cowboy dance he met a young woman who had also migrated from Texas by covered wagon. They were married and had the first of their eight daughters, Mae, born May 28, 1892. The unknown regions still farther west were beckoning again. Father, mother, and baby daughter—again in a covered wagon—made their way through a western wilderness to a new homestead in Globe, in Arizona territory.

Mae was too young to remember that trip. But memories of Globe, and life on the 400-square-mile cattle ranch that her father eventually acquired, have burned deeply into her life. Their new home was close to Indian country—Apache land. Indians! Back in Texas, Indians had shot her father. Mae was apprehensive.

Hard times were besetting the Apaches. To aid in that crisis, the government bought a herd of cattle from Albert Gibson, to be delivered to the headquarters of the tribe far to the north. It was a cattle drive through Indian country much of the way. Mae was one of the working cowhands on that drive, herding the cattle through canyons and across deserts by day, camping out by night. Indian country. Mae was still apprehensive.

Eventually she married and had two sons who grew to manhood. The leaves of the calendar turned. Her husband died. Mae went on to pursue new goals.

Indians. They had been a part of her life—a part that had at times caused her deep concern. What was it, we wondered, that impelled her to respond to an appeal of her church to go as a volunteer to a remote missionary station on the Navajo Indian Reservation in northern Arizona? But go she did. There she became the "mother" to a dozen or so Navajo girls. She taught them to sew, she aided them in their schooling, she told them Bible stories she had learned back in Globe.

When the Navajo mission assignment ended, what impelled her—we still wondered—to travel to the remote outpost of Peach Springs, Arizona, on the Hualapai Reservation, to devote more years of her life to the Indians? She lived in a tiny trailer, from which she went out on visits across the reservation, far and near, again teaching her sewing skills to young Indian girls, serving and helping in any way she could.

Throughout all of her early life, Mae had had a fear of Indians. In going to serve the Navajos, and then the Hualapais, she had overcome that fear. Apprehension had turned to respect.

Mae, now 97 years old, remarried at age 87. She still writes letters, with a steady hand, to relatives and friends and cares for her husband when need arises. Of the eight "Gibson Girls," she, the oldest, and the three youngest (Thelma, Helen, and Louise), are still living. Helen and I recently returned from a trip to visit Mae. She reminisced over the episodes of a life that has encompassed the broad

scope of the Old West. But some of her most cherished recollections are of the Indian girls she had mothered and taught to sew on the Navajo and Hualapai Reservations. That—rather than the covered wagons and the cattle drives—is her most endearing memory. As a result of her years with the Navajos and the Hualapais, her fear of Indians had been transformed into caring and love.

3. Marla Gitterman's Beauty Defies Her Age

Marla Gitterman of Laguna Niguel was California's Ms. Senior America of 1987, competing in a pageant "to emphasize and give honor to women who have reached the 'age of elegance.' "

Judges were looking for senior women, 55 or older, who displayed dignity, maturity, and inner beauty. Marla was over 75, but won this Senior beauty pageant in competition with contestants 20 years younger than she.

Marla lives just eight miles from us, but I first became acquainted with her by telephone.

"I have never met you," I said to her over the phone, "but I've read an article you wrote for the Dana Point *Beacon*. It conveys the message I am emphasizing in a new book I'm writing about Super Seniors. May I quote from your article?"

Marla was delighted at my request and a fine new friendship began. She had helped start the newly organized Laguna Niguel Seniors and had become its first vice president.

In selecting the Ms. Senior America, the judges had considered physical attributes. Marla is insistent that mental qualities are of equal or greater importance for Seniors. She once wrote:

> *As obvious as a bulging waistline, the "waste line" of the unexercised mind is a major disaster. "Use it or lose it" is as true of the mind as it is of our physical selves. Creative minds don't count birthdays, creative minds don't get wrinkles. Creative minds are aware that even being a Shut-In does not mean being shut out, if we are willing to contribute what is truly important, our ability to think.*

The article in the Dana Point Beacon that first brought *Marla Gitterman to my attention was a heartwarming bit of writing, intended to make one proud of being a senior citizen:*

As May, designated as Older American Month, draws to a close, perhaps a personal viewpoint of an older American on what life is like is in order.

Within but a few short years the entire field of geriatrics will become big business. More than half of the population will become fifty-five years and older.

Alert younger people, now studying career possibilities, realize the potential in these vast numbers. Yet, for the most part, gerontology is being taught in college and universities by middle-aged instructors for very young students. Neither can know by actual experience the realities of being older.

In the courses there is often an attitude, benign but condescending, which emphasizes negative aspects of aging . . . sort of "how to deal with this terminal stage of deterioration."

Wait a moment, please! We Older Ones are touched by your regard, Young Ones, but there is the possibility that in your study of how to help *us*, there is something to be studied in how we can help *you*.

Here is a letter written by a grandmother of a student who was considering a career in gerontology. The granddaughter wished to assess the scope of problems with which she might be dealing. The grandmother made an in-depth analysis of what her life really was, how she regarded her situation and how she was coping with the "Problems of Being Old."

My Darling Grandkin: As my seventy-fourth birthday nears, you have asked me to describe what life is like as a "widowed-senior-who-lives-alone." To label is to categorize. To categorize is to separate. Remember, dear, we so-called "seniors" are just young people who have lived long. Long enough to find 20/20 eyesight often being replaced by 20/20 insight. Long enough to be dry behind the ears, but not necessarily cocktail. "Senior" does not mean "senile," "retired" does not mean "retarded." Having learned to be alone, I have not learned loneliness. I embrace an elegantly quiet what I term Creative Solitude. Solitude is the best source of wisdom, besides, it cuts a lot of complications!

While youth is the time for adventures of the body, age is the time of triumph of the mind. Thinking is the key which unlocks the world.

Thoughts, like years, can be the pleasant furnishings accumulated to enhance decor of enjoyable living. The mind, like the tortoise, comes well equipped. His shell protects him from the rain; thoughts can protect us from the rain of anxiety and fear. However, recall that neither species can get anywhere without sticking his neck out once in a while!

Serenity, Sufficiency, Strength and Simplicity—these are my blessings now. I count my blessings but, more importantly, I try to make my blessings count.

Luxury, to me, is simplicity—with plumbing! Since to possess is to be possessed, I've divested myself of status symbols. "If it ain't comfortable, fun or functional, fergit it!" is my motto. Happiness lies not so much in having what one wants as in wanting what one has.

My small zoo of pets keeps my channels of love and companionship flowing freely. Habit patterns of expressed affection and responsibility are reinforced and duly exercised. Kept alive are the delights of touching and being touched.

This vehicle called "me," in its physical aspects, is well disciplined and functional to an amazing degree of competency and comfort.

That which is my privilege to contribute to the lives of others I give materially, mentally and spiritually with all the zest and enthusiasm of a hobbyist . . . and I am overly paid and repaid with joy and interest.

Our family heritage of longevity may well indicate that I'll have perhaps thirty more birthdays, but I shall count them as Re-birthdays. Re-birthdays marking continued learning, the accomplishment of new goals, and always, always, new ways of making my blessings count.

Longevity pretty well sums up what life is like
at this point:
Age is opportunity no less
Than youth itself, though in another dress.
And as the evening twilight fades away
The sky is filled with stars, invisible by day.

Love from your Maternal Ancestor.

4. Pauline Hoit's New Beginnings

At 73, Pauline is slightly below the "75-year-old" cutoff age we arbitrarily established for Seniors in this book. She is so Super, however, that an exception must be made. It is refreshing and inspirational to meet a person who, at 73, has so many new openings in her life. A move from Arcadia, California to Tucson, Arizona has resulted in: A new state. A new city. A new home. A new church. New friends. And, perhaps most important of all, a new occupation in the pediatric pulmonary laboratory at the University of Arizona Medical Center. In connection with her training there as a research technician she wrote us this letter:

> This new career has proven to be a challenging experience. I find myself immersed in a confusing array of letters in varying combinations such as: RV, TLC, PEEP, and a host of others. By the end of the first week I'd learned that RV did not refer to "Recreational Vehicle" but to "Residual Volume," that TLC was not an abbreviation for "Tender Loving Care" but stood for "Total Lung Capacity," and that PEEP was not the call of a newly hatched bird but signified "Positive End Expiratory Pressure."

The letter went on to describe the complicated computers and complex medical equipment which she is learning to use. For many years Pauline was a teacher in her own private school. A month after retiring from that position, at age 70, she moved to Indonesia for six months to teach English at University Sriwijaya in Palembang, Sumatra. Since her return she had been contemplating a new career.

Changes can be frustrating, especially to older people who so often settle into easy ruts and enjoy "staying put." Pauline has handled them all. She has handled them so well, in fact, that in May and June, 1989, to celebrate all this newness and since she is now a citizen of the "Grand Canyon State," she and her daughter and three friends made the 16-day trip in dories down the Colorado River. They navigated completely through the Grand Canyon, from Lee's Ferry to Lake Mead, over every rapid of that turbulent stretch.

Even in midsummer we say "Happy *New* Year, Pauline."

Chapter 3

Dr. Bertholf's

Symbolic Cars and Boats

Dr. Lloyd Bertholf, within a few months of being 90, has been president of Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington, and academic vice-president of University of the Pacific in Stockton, California. But that is not the reason he is included in this book.

He has been a Professor of Biology and has taught that subject and physiology in a university setting for 35 years. Nor is this the reason for his appearance here.

For 14 years, after formal retirement, Dr. Bertholf was national president of an interdenominational group, the Disciplined Order of Christ, open to persons of all faiths. But there is still another reason for his inclusion.

Lloyd Bertholf has an important place among my choices of Super Seniors, and has vital insights for those who have aspirations in that direction, because of one letter he wrote me many years ago. It was in regard to a question I had put to him about the healing and recuperative powers of the human body. As a professor of biology for 35 years I felt his knowledge of the science of life, and the way he could explain it to me, would be valuable. It was. What he told me in that short letter became an important guide enabling me to maintain a vigorous life style through all the years since. His few simple words, reinforced with physical examples, saved me untold doctor bills, brought me untold blessings of health, and left me indebted to him forever.

In his letter, Dr. Bertholf compares our bodies to an automobile or a boat.

He points out that a car is constructed so that, if the tires are properly inflated, it will maintain a straight, normal course. If the car is deflected from that course by a bump in the road, its built-in mechanism will turn it back to the proper direction.

Similarly, a boat is also built so that it tends to sail in a straight line and in an upright position. If currents, or wind, or the rudder deflect it from its normal course, its built-in construction tends to make the boat right itself and get back

on course.

Then the letter continues:

> In the human body also there is a similar, though infinitely more complicated, built-in system of adjustments that causes the body to behave in a healthy, normal way. For example, the body resists any tendency for the blood to change its composition beyond certain very narrow limits. When the sugar content rises above normal (as immediately after a meal) the excess sugar is taken out by the liver and stored there as glycogen granules; and when, e.g. after hard exercise, the sugar content is lowered, then the liver converts some glycogen back into sugar and dumps this into the blood stream, thus restoring the normal sugar concentration.
>
> The kidneys do the same in regard to the amount of water in the blood, as well as the amount of urea, uric acid, and a large number of other materials. There is a breathing center in the brain which continually tests the acidity of the blood, and stimulates us to breathe faster or slower, depending on the amount of carbon dioxide in the blood.
>
> Healthy skin and epithelial tissue tend to resist bacterial infection. Rate of heartbeat, size of blood vessels, amount of peristaltic activity of the intestine, amount of secretion of the glands—all these things change in response to changed conditions, so as to bring the body back to an "even keel," back to normal functioning. This is what physiologists call "homeostasis." Homeostasis is, of course, nothing new, nor is it peculiar to the human body. God built this principle into living organisms almost as soon as He invented life itself. Otherwise all life would have perished millions of years ago.

Dr. Bertholf's letter concludes with this profound statement:

> God apparently made our bodies to be healthy. If something comes along to deflect them from that normal course, they struggle to return to the healthy path. The things that deflect may be internal or external, physical or psychical, organic or environmental. All a physician or a psychologist or a minister or anyone else can do is to try to remove the cause of the deflection, and allow the built-in mechanisms of the body to normalize the various functionings. To a believer, then, all healing is Divine—an expression of the God-given homeostasis principle.

That letter has meant life to me. It has meant healthy life. Two short phrases, however, need to be underlined and heeded with the greatest care. In the closing paragraph he says: "All a physician or a psychologist or a minister or anyone else can do is to try to remove the cause of the deflection . . ." That anyone else is *me*. That anyone else is *you*. It is up to you and me, even more than the doctors—be they of the body or of the mind—to remove causes of deflection. Or to see that those causes do not materialize in the first place. By proper exercise, by a health-building and health-sustaining diet, by sensible habits, and by a correct mental outlook and uplifting spiritual concepts, we can help to keep our bodies—our sailing boats—gliding on course and upright.

The second phrase that needs special heeding augments the first, in this case referring to the car. Dr. Bertholf said: "A car is constructed so that, if the tires are properly inflated, in its very nature, it will maintain a straight, normal course."

It is up to me, it is up to you, to keep the tires inflated properly. The doctor cannot do it. It is not the task for a psychologist or psychiatrist. It is up to us. Again, exercise, diet, habits, mental attitudes and spiritual concepts—those things keep the tires from going flat. Those things keep life itself from going flat. The fact that our bodily cars are in proper order can aid us in ascending the hills which may confront us.

Dr. Bertholf's concepts have seen him through nearly 90 active and service-packed years. He was born December 15, 1899. His wife Martha was born June 19, 1898 and they have celebrated their 68th year of marriage. A 1989 letter of his to me adds an interesting final touch:

> The "homeostasis concept" has thrilled me for a long time, and I used to dwell on it considerably in physiology and biology classes. For God to give us life is one thing, and for this we should be eternally grateful, but most of our enjoyment of life is due not so much to the bare fact of life itself, it seems to me, but to the freedom we have to eat a variety of foods, and expose ourselves to a variety of temperatures, altitudes, humidities, and other environmental conditions (both physical and emotional) without suffering fatal discomfort or dysfunction.

Dr. Bertholf's symbolic cars and boats have provided me with some high-level transportation through many years of my own life.

Chapter 4

Lillian Bronson

Was a Super Senior Even as a Girl

For a quarter of a century Helen and I owned the large 12-million-year-old Eagle Rock natural landmark which lends its name to the community—a part of Los Angeles—stretching from its base. Our home was beside the rock; just behind the great landmark we had fashioned a garden which community groups often requested permission to use. The setting was historical and beautiful; the fame of the rock itself lent importance to any occasion.

"The Southern California Herbal Society wants to hold its first Herb Fair here," I explained to Helen as I responded to a phone call. "They want to raise money to help with the opening of the Arboretum."

"Wonderful!" was her reply. "Tell them we will be delighted. I love herbs. Maybe I'll get acquainted with some new varieties."

She did. The fair was a success. Members and visitors came from Pasadena, Pomona, San Diego, Hollywood. Helen became acquainted with new herbs. I became acquainted with a new friend.

"Lillian Bronson? Why, I know you. Not personally perhaps. But haven't Helen and I met you on the screen?" My response on being introduced to this Hollywood movie actress had been more than enthusiastic. "But your age—I thought you were an elderly woman."

My new friend smiled. "I am—on the screen. Always have been. Even back when I was in plays in Ann Arbor, more often than not I was cast in some elderly part. I guess it became a habit."

"Ann Arbor? The University of Michigan, you mean? Did you go there?"

To her affirmative response I told her that I also was a University of Michigan graduate.

"What year?"

"Class of '28."

"I was ahead of you," she replied. "I was class of '27."

"Quite often I went to the campus plays," I told her. "They were open to the public, you know. One of those plays—I don't recall its name—was among the finest things in drama I have ever seen, even to this day. The girl who took the lead was so good I went home that night and wrote her a 'thank you' letter. I just had to tell her how much she impressed me. She was really good."

A strange look came over Miss Bronson's face. "Do you remember how you signed that letter?" Her question came swiftly as an incredulous expression spread over her features. "Did . . . did you just sign it 'A Freshman Boy?' "

Now it was my voice which expressed incredulity. "Why, yes. I often wrote anonymous letters that way. Too bashful, maybe. But . . . how did you know? It can't be . . . Miss Bronson, you don't mean? . . ."

In the exchange which followed, Lillian and I realized that we had not only attended the University of Michigan together but she was the budding young actress to whom I had written a letter of deep appreciation. A letter unanswered, because I had not signed it with my name.

"Miss Bronson, I can't believe it."

"Please call me Lillian. 'Miss Bronson' is only for strangers. We've been friends for years. Without even knowing it."

Lillian Bronson's interest in herbs expanded. Herbs are not much to look at, but, oh, the fragrances they exude. Laden with all the herbs she could carry, she often went to the Sawtelle Veterans Hospital where she gave talks to the blind men there.

"Can you recognize this one by its fragrance?" she would ask. "Or this one? Its scent fairly fills the room." The men loved to scrunch the fresh herb leaves.

For the next two years 'scenting parties' became a part of her life. She encouraged other actors, such as Jim Whitmore, to visit the men at Sawtelle.

Years flowed gently by. Lillian was becoming older, beginning to approach the age of some of the characters she portrayed on the screen. Her hometown in upstate New York wanted to honor her; she returned to Lockport for a "Lillian Bronson Day," was given the key to the city, and became the honored guest of those who had, on the screen, literally watched her career unfold.

Then—the unexpected happened. Lillian Bronson's horizons expanded in ways she could never have dreamed.

Freeway murals are now commonplace in Los Angeles. They blossomed widely to greet those who came from around the world to see the 1984 Olympic Games.

But there had to be a "first," a mural that would set the pattern for all the rest. In 1974, Lillian Bronson was the model for the first-ever Los Angeles Freeway Mural. Muralist Kent Twitchell wanted to do something in an important way to honor his grandmother as he had remembered her back in his growing-up days in Michigan. Also, he wanted to impress on viewers' minds the importance and dignity of the elderly, in a city where youth culture has a tendency to crowd out thoughts of aging.

He needed a model. Who else but the lady who portrayed elderly characters on the screen? As a location he chose the wall of a building on the Hollywood Freeway just beyond the four-level interchange, at the very center of L.A.

The Old Woman of the Freeway became a reality. Uncounted millions of viewers glanced at it affectionately as they drove by. As one social commentator stated, "Unlike in pedestrian-oriented cities, the middle class in Los Angeles can successfully avoid . . . the elderly in the routine and rituals of daily living."

They could not avoid Lillian. Her beautiful elderly presence radiated a blessing, day and night, to all who passed. She became a stately and endearing symbol of this City of the Angels.

Then suddenly, in 1986, the mural disappeared. People were aghast. It had been painted over. That location, so accessible to the millions of viewers, was too valuable. An advertising sign would replace it.

So the owner of the building thought. He did not count on the public outcry. Newspaper headlines leaped out of the news racks. Editorials pleaded for the return of Lillian. Television newscasts made "The Old Woman of the Freeway" a household phrase. The Los Angeles Mural Conservancy was organized to bring the Freeway Lady back, and to preserve all of the other important outdoor murals in the city. As this is being written, progress is being made in restoring *The Old Woman of the Freeway.*



Spectators are dwarfed by Kent Twitchell's "Old Woman of the Freeway" mural of Lillian Bronson.

Lillian Bronson has now definitely reached the age of the characters she once portrayed on the motion picture screen. On October 22, 1988, Helen and I attended her 86th birthday party in nearby Laguna Niguel.

One or two former movie actresses were at the party. Lillian's niece from back east was there; she had spent the summer promoting a play about Bronson Alcott in Concord, Massachusetts. Lillian has connections with Louisa Alcott, author of *Little Women*.

Perhaps of most importance, muralist Kent Twitchell had come out from Los Angeles to attend the party, bringing with him for each guest a beautiful poster-sized color copy of the famous Old Woman of the Freeway.

Lillian was quite frail, and had been so ever since a fire in her former home. A neighbor of hers, who was also at the party, had literally dragged a blackened and ash-covered Lillian to safety.

Her frailty was evident as the party began. She greeted the guests but was reticent to take much part in the conversation. Then a metamorphosis occurred such as we have never experienced. Lillian became a transformed person. Her frailty seemed to drop away. Her voice—now enlivened and firm—captivated us all. She began reliving her past, recapturing the lives and accomplishments of her cherished friends. She explained her positive philosophy of life and what it had meant to her, coming as an unknown young actress to Hollywood. She had persevered and won out.

Lillian's eyes sparkled with a new intensity. Her complexion glowed. The fragility was fading. Her gestures, her voice, her expression were those of a rejuvenated person. None of us had ever seen a transformation like this. Lillian herself commented: "Fifteen minutes ago I could not have talked for two minutes. Now I can't stop. This shows what the mind can do."

She revealed some background about the painting of the Freeway mural that we had never known before, which emphasized her positive philosophy. "Kent Twitchell took snapshots of me in preparation for painting the mural," she explained, "and I would think various thoughts to give myself the expression I wanted. The snapshot Kent picked for the mural was one in which I was thinking and projecting an intensity of determination." Lillian feels this is an important reason for the mural's success and effect on people. The

expression of sheer determination came through the gentle grandmotherly face, and touched all who saw it.

For an hour-and-a-half she held us spellbound. All the guests at that 86th birthday party of Lillian's left with the feeling that they had experienced a high moment of living. For Lillian, it was not only a high moment; it was a climax. She had relived almost her entire life.

On our way home from the party I said to Helen, "How glad I am I wrote that letter of praise to a young actress back in Ann Arbor 63 years ago."

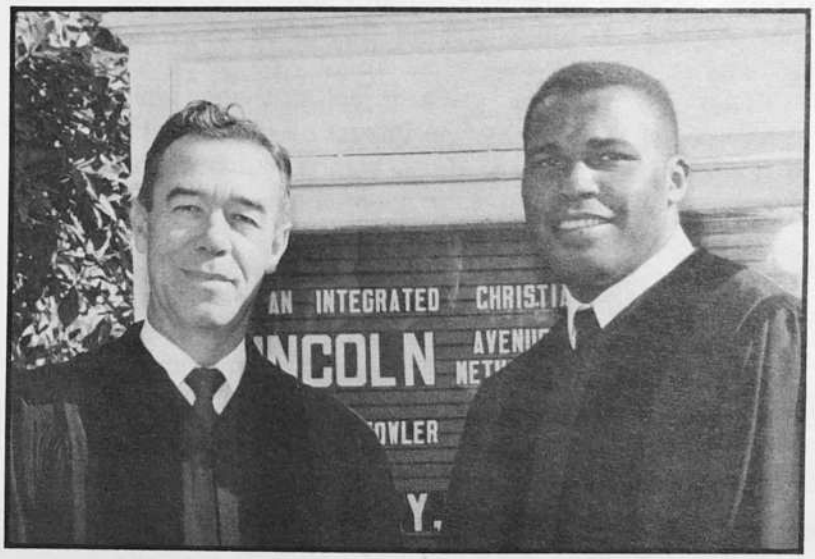
Chapter 5

Marion Downs

Through Her We Met Super Seniors Galore

For years, when anyone would ask Marion Downs's age she would coyly reply, "39 and holding." Later it became "49 and holding." Now, in 1989, she has confessed, "I am 73 years old." Marion is still active, but not in the professional role as a singer that brought her fame. This chapter is not only about her, but about other Super Seniors we were able to know, largely because of Marion.

In 1955, Pasadena, California, was an interracial city without an outstanding interracial church, and United Methodist Bishop Gerald Kennedy determined to do something about it. He appointed the professional black Los Angeles Rams football player "Deacon Dan" Towler as senior pastor at Pasadena's Lincoln Avenue United Methodist Church. Helen and I attended the largely all-white First Methodist.



Methodist Bishop Gerald Kennedy and "Deacon" Dan Towler

"Helen," I said to her after hearing of the Rev. Towler's appointment, "I want to go join Dan's church."

"I've been thinking much the same thing," Helen responded. "If you join, then I'm certainly going with you."

With the blessing of Dr. Morgan Edwards, we left First Methodist and became a part of Deacon Dan's congregation.

Helen and I decided we should ask our black friend, professional singer Marion Downs, if she would not transfer her membership from Pasadena's all-black church and join Lincoln with us. Marion agreed. She and Helen and I became members of the church together. In so doing we helped initiate an era that revolutionized that church and, to some degree, the entire city.

Marion was not only a professional singer, she was a go-getter. In her early years she had come to Pasadena as the young bride of the Rev. Karl Downs, who took over the pastorate of the city's black church. Those were history-making times in Pasadena.

"You better come down to the police station; some of your kids are in trouble," was the telephone message the Rev. Downs received shortly after he took over his new pastorate.

He went down to the police station as requested. Six young black youths were in custody; they had been drag racing up and down Pasadena's streets, and were arrested for speeding. After considerable discussion, the boys were released to Karl Downs.

That seemingly insignificant act not only changed the history of Pasadena, it had an impact on changing the history of the United States. If those youths had been put in jail, without benefit of counseling and guidance, it might well have started them on a long downhill route. Instead, although it was far after midnight, Rev. Downs took them to his home—all six of them. One of those boys was Jackie Robinson.

"I fixed breakfast for them," Marion related, in telling us about that eventful time. "We had a warm period of soul searching with prayers. The night ended with those young men promising to become active in the church, starting the next Sunday."

Jackie kept his promise. Years passed. He attended church and later became a Sunday School teacher. Marion's husband coached him in making his first speech. More time passed. Jackie Robinson became the first black baseball player in major league history. He broke the color barrier.

Often, wherever he was with his team, he would call Rev. Downs to discuss pressing problems. Breaking that color barrier was not easy. Rev. Downs attended some of those first critical games. A warm, powerful friendship existed between them. Karl Downs was Jackie's stabilizer. Marion explains, "No wonder this brilliant athlete was able to ignore the epithets from the bleachers, to not hear the slurs, to endure the lonely role of being the only black on an all-white team."

"If it weren't for Jackie Robinson," Deacon Dan Towler once said to me, "I wouldn't ever have been able to play football for the L.A. Rams. Jackie opened gates in sports for all of us."

Marion's husband was appointed president of Sam Huston College in Austin, Texas (named after Samuel Huston of Iowa) and they moved to Austin. After Jackie's stint in the army he came to Austin and for a brief time coached the college basketball team.

While in Texas Marion's husband died. To drown her grief she plunged into a career as a singer, taking instruction at New York's Julliard School of Music and receiving a master's degree in music at Columbia University. She was the recipient of a Fulbright Grant for study at the Verdi Conservatory in Milan, Italy and the Atkinson Foundation award for study of opera and folk music. To put her talents to the test she began concertizing widely in Scandinavia, Italy, and Mexico, and across America from New York to Hawaii. "The singer with a soul," people called her.

At Lincoln Avenue Methodist Church Helen became Dan Towler's secretary on a volunteer basis. She and Marion proceeded to make history. They organized once-a-month "Sunday Evening Sings." When the side wings of the church were opened it could seat a huge congregation; on those Sunday nights every seat was taken and people often had to listen from outside. Helen did the organizational spadework; Marion led the singing and, because of her fame in the music world, brought in great church choirs from all over the Los Angeles area, free of charge. Not only choirs but noted individual singers participated. John Raitt had a free Sunday evening when he was not taking the lead role in *Oklahoma* or some other musical; he sang on two different occasions. The church overflowed. Raitt had a strong social consciousness and was glad to take part in the activities of this exciting new

interracial church.

One Sunday evening Jester Hairston brought a choir and led the singing. Helen and I had the opportunity to meet this great man, a Super Super Senior who is now 88. His grandmother had been a slave and he himself once played the part of a slave in a John Wayne movie. He became one of the great choir directors and musicians of the West. He and Marion often argued good-naturedly as to whether it was he or she who created the now famous song, "Amen." We on the sidelines do not much care who created it: we are always thrilled when one or the other of them gives us the pleasure of enjoying it.

Jester Hairston's appearance at Lincoln was back in the late 1950s. I must here make a confession. For one hour I sneaked away from Jester's evening of song. I went down to Cal Tech and heard the last few minutes of a speech being given by Martin Luther King, Jr. As soon as it was over I was the first one up to grasp his hand in appreciation; I thanked him for what he was doing, then back I rushed to Lincoln Church. Almost no one missed me.

This book is about Super people, but the actual building that housed Lincoln Avenue Church was Super in its own right. When the church was built, in 1898, William McKinley was president. Theodore Roosevelt, who was later to create a national furor by inviting Booker T. Washington to dine at the White House, was little known. The Wright Brothers were busy making bicycles. Lincoln Church had hitching posts instead of a parking lot, for there were no cars; oil lamps lighted the sanctuary, for there was no electricity. The office had no phone.

When the ground on which it stood was sold, the congregation was merged with another church and the structure itself was moved. That enormous building was cut in half, its steeple removed, and transported ten miles down the Pasadena Freeway to Heritage Square, to be preserved for posterity along with other noted 19th century structures. Now 91 years old, it is being refurbished. Helen and I have a hope that someday, when the refurbishing is complete, Marion Downs will lead another memorable Sunday Evening Sing in that historic church.

Marion's mother, Mrs. Lillie Mae Jackson, who often came out on visits from Baltimore, was not only a Super Senior, she was a superior person in three dramatic ways that made us proud to know her. First of all, she was the mother of three daughters and a son, who made up the Jackson family. *Ebony* magazine said of them:

"Measured by the yardstick of resolute, unswerving dedication to the Negro's crusade for civil rights, Baltimore's remarkable Jackson clan must certainly be rated one of the foremost Negro families of America."

It all really began when "Fearless Lil," as she became known, selected a blouse at one of Baltimore's largest department stores, then was refused service.

"I want to see the manager," she demanded. The manager, she found, was Jewish. Lillie almost broke into laughter. "This is ridiculous," was her initial comment. "We Negroes are persecuted in some areas, and you Jews are persecuted in others. Why don't we get together and fight to change things?"

That manager and that fearless woman did get together. He ordered the store clerk to sell her the blouse. His store became desegregated. The first battle had been won.

The Baltimore branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, of which Mrs. Jackson was president and which she continued to head for 21 years, became the second largest branch in the nation, under her leadership.

The quality that made Lillie Mae Jackson a truly superior person has yet to be told here. In 1919 the right side of her face became paralyzed when a surgeon accidentally cut through a nerve during an operation. Seen from that side, her face was so misshapen and blemished that at first one was almost afraid to look at her. It took rare courage to overcome a handicap like that but Lillie Mae Jackson never let it stop her even for a moment. "God made me in his image," she told those who stared at her. "Man did this."

Marion's mother was deeply religious. Helen and I made frequent visits to Marion's home, at first in Pasadena and then later when she remarried and moved to Los Angeles. (She is now Marion Downs Smith.) Sometimes we talked with Mrs. Jackson by the hour when she was visiting her daughter. I was at first secretly amused, then amazed, then deeply moved, at the way she would sprinkle apt Bible quotations throughout

her entire conversation.

Ebony said that, on occasion when a meeting got off on an angry note, she would stop the meeting, then, in her booming voice, start singing the hymn, "God Will Take Care of You."

"Christ had only 12 men and one of them was the devil," she was quoted, "yet he changed the course of history."

Lillie Mae Jackson died at age 87, fighting for human rights to the very last. She changed the course of history in Baltimore. A museum in that city, named after her, chronicles her work.

Dozens of international students from around the world attended Pasadena Junior College and other similar colleges near by. At Lincoln Church we decided to promote an annual International Student Dinner. As a result, Helen and I made a lasting friendship with an unusual man, Augustin E. Turner—a true Super Senior—who helped us with those international get-togethers.

The Pasadena Rotary Club and the YMCA, of which he was a member, published a book about this great man. It opened with this appraisal: "Only occasionally does a human being arrive on earth who is, at one and the same time, durable as steel and soft as drifting snow. Augustin Elmer Turner was such a person."

We at Lincoln would have had difficulty staging the international dinners without his help. His life work, before retirement, had been to carry on peace and humanitarian activities throughout the world as a roving ambassador for the YMCA. He visited most of the countries of South America and Asia in this capacity, although South America was his principal stamping ground. For 32 years he served the YMCA in Valparaiso, Chile. Much of his work brought him into contact with students.

Upon retiring in Pasadena, he and his wife, Dell, devoted the rest of their lives to helping the international college students who came to the city. He became known as Pasadena's "Citizen of the World."

He knew, and helped, every international student in the city, visiting them in their homes, arranging events for them to attend, addressing himself to their needs. Wherever he went, he walked—25 miles a week, someone figured. He once won a Rotary contest by walking, in one day, to the places of business of each of the 270 members of the club.

He would arise at six, have an oatmeal and dry toast breakfast, then, before starting his walking visits throughout the city, would write letters to friends in many lands. During the holiday season that meant personally answering many hundreds of letters from students and admirers around the world. At a "ritzy" birthday breakfast given him by the Rotary and Y's Men's Clubs at the prestigious Huntington Hotel everyone had oatmeal, dry toast, and coffee. Everyone except Augustin. He substituted a cup of hot water for the coffee.

In connection with the Lincoln Church International Dinners, Augustin and Dell Turner, along with Marion Downs, Dan Towler, and many others involved, held planning meetings in the spacious living room of our Eagle Rock home.

Augustin rose to speak. He was tall and stood straight as a soldier at attention. Some of us had been talking privately about the endurance it took to walk everywhere he went, every day. I thought he must be in his late 70s, although he scarcely looked it.

"Augustin," I said, "I am curious, and several others here in this room are also. We want to ask you: How old are you?"

Augustin was taken aback. He did not answer directly. Instead, he related a story. "One night at a dinner a young girl looked at me wide-eyed, and said: 'Seventy; that's awfully old.' "

Augustin paused. "I didn't tell her I was 88. That was four years ago."

This international ambassador of goodwill was 92! His wife and helpmate, Dell, was also certainly a Super Senior. As part of our planning that night we scheduled Augustin Turner to give a speech at the International Dinner. As it turned out, the short talk which he delivered was an inspirational gem. But that was only one of the reasons the students gave him an applause that must have registered at least eight on the Richter Scale. Everyone of them knew him personally, and knew what he had done for them, just as he had done for students who had come to Pasadena from 60 different countries. Those students were applauding a life.

As the ovation finally subsided, Marion Downs jumped to her feet. "Let's all thank Mr. Turner with our voices. This song is dedicated to him. Let's all join in singing 'Amen.' "

Augustin Turner lived to merit similar rafter-shaking applause, and continued making his walking rounds daily, until nearly the time of his death at the age of 97.

Chapter 6

Artists

Who Have Touched Our Lives with Brightness

1. Millard Sheets, Artist, Teacher, Muralist, Planner

Havelock Ellis once said that "art is its creator's autobiography." If that is true, Millard Sheets painted his autobiography, becoming known as the father of the California Watercolor School. But he also created murals and mosaics and tapestries that are part of that autobiography. He designed important buildings and planned intricate projects. He had a full career as a teacher of art. He wrote books. He has been an entrepreneur and businessman. Midst all of that he found time to paint the face of tragedy in India and Burma and Ceylon as a war correspondent for *Life* magazine during World War II.

Millard lived a full life of 81 years and he and his wife celebrated their 58th wedding anniversary. Their three sons have achieved success in art, design, and business careers; their daughter is an ordained minister. There are grandchildren. One has taken art lessons from his grandfather and, according to that proud teacher, has a natural feeling for art.

Millard once said that "to become an artist one must become a total person." According to that concept he has possessed and given to the world the talents of half a dozen persons rolled into one. Of Millard, his sister-in-law says: "There's no one like him and there's not likely to be soon."

As I began writing this, in 1989, Millard was beset with a recurring illness. He had been in and out of a sick bed, in and out of hospitals. When he was in, he had dreams of painting, or creating in other ways. As soon as he was out, he painted, or created in other ways. It was my prediction, which I put down in writing, that he would die at his easel, and I think he would have liked this. Millard died in his sleep at 11:25 p.m. on March 31, 1989, after I had written this chapter and sent it to him and his family for review. Except for the changes from present to past tense in the paragraphs above, I leave the chapter just as I wrote it, in the weeks before his death.

In taking a sweeping glance at the varied facets of Millard's career, one can well start at the Chouinard School of Art in Los Angeles. There the seedbed was laid for much of the phenomenal growth that made his entire life so fruitful. In his youth Millard had determined he would follow art as a career and in 1925, at the age of 18, he took the bus from his Pomona home into Los Angeles, intent on looking for an art school to attend. He settled on Chouinard.

One of his instructors there was F. Tolles Chamberlain, an authority on mural painting. Under this gifted and dedicated man he studied and worked with the intensity that was to direct his whole life. As a result, in a few years, important mural commissions began coming his way. In his lifetime he would create more than 100 murals and mosaics, at such places as the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota and Notre Dame in South Bend.

Dalzall Hatfield had an art gallery nearby. One day in 1917 he phoned the 20-year-old Millard, busy at his art study at Chouinard. Saying he'd seen and admired Millard's work, Hatfield asked the young student to come see him at the gallery.

Hatfield said he would like to represent Millard, explaining that a young artist, no matter how good he was, first needed to make many sales of his works in order to get himself established and accepted. Millard knew of Hatfield's fine reputation; he jumped at the offer. Their association lasted for just four years less than half a century; Dalzall Hatfield and his wife Ruth sold more than 3,600 of Millard Sheets's paintings.

In 1926 Hatfield sponsored the first Sheets one-man show, and the laudatory criticism of Los Angeles art critics gave the young 22-year-old artist a new impetus to forge ahead in his chosen career.

In that same year Millard received an invitation to enter a highly important competition in a San Antonio museum. In error, Ruth Hatfield sent the wrong painting. What the fate of the right painting might have been, no one knows. The wrong one took second prize. Sheets received a $1,750 award, which paid his way on a career-shaping trip to explore galleries and meet well-known artists in Europe. He virtually painted his way there, travelling by ship which stopped at 17 different Central and South American ports. He painted at nearly every stop, including Cartagena, Colombia.

Millard had heard of the desirability of exhibiting in a Paris

Salon show. Brashly he submitted an oil he had done enroute, *Women of Cartagena*. It was accepted!

Just before the start of his European safari something of lifelong importance happened, and Chouinard had a small part in that. Beth Baskerville was a student at Chouinard and through her Millard met Beth's sister, Mary. It may not have been love at first sight, but it was certainly "deep attraction." Millard went ahead with his overseas trip, leaving June 1, 1929. On December 16 he was back in Los Angeles. The stock market had crashed, the Great Depression was on its way, but that did not matter. Just over four months later, on April 25, 1930, the team of Millard and Mary began married life together.

That marriage was no gamble; it was built on love and mutual respect, and lasted almost 59 years [until Millard's death].

Millard did take a gamble, however, in that same year of 1930, a gamble which, at age 23, would put his name high on the list of American artists. The prestigious Carnegie International Watercolor Exhibition in Pittsburgh had never accepted the work of an artist west of the Rockies. "Why not take a chance?" Millard wondered, and Mary concurred.

The *Women of Cartagena*, which he painted in a Colombian port on his way by ship to Europe, had been accepted in a French Salon show. Paris had taken it with open arms, so why not Pittsburgh? This confident young artist built a wooden box for the 40- by 50-inch painting and shipped it off to its destiny.

The verdict issued from the juried show was unanimous. Its decision to accept his painting not only gave an impetus to Millard's career but proved to be an initial wedge in opening the door for other artists of the West.

One more all-important aspect of his multifaceted career had its beginnings at Chouinard. As a 20-year-old student, with no teaching experience, Millard became a teacher of watercolor painting. Nelbert Chouinard said she hired him because she saw in him, despite his youth, an artist with an innate knowledge that transcended his years.

Five years later, as a result of his Chouinard teaching experience, he was asked to fill in during a semester at Scripps College in Claremont, California, while the head of the art department was on leave. This initial one-semester assignment extended through 26 years. He became head of the department

at age 29, and during his tenure his influence in the fields of painting, architectural planning, and design extended worldwide. His influence on students took on equal scope. Among them were men and women who were to become noted artists in their own right: Milford Zornes, Tom Craig, David Scott, Douglas McClellan, Jack Zajac, Susan Lautmann, Robert George, and many more.

The influence of the now-famous *Women of Cartagena* popped up again at Scripps. Mrs. Josephine Everett had bought it and she asked Millard to show some of his other paintings at her home and speak about them. Among the guests was Florence Rand Lang, from New Jersey. Florence Lang liked what Millard Sheets said. Next day she showed up at the Scripps Art Department and asked him to show her around. The building and facilities of the department were run down and poor. Suddenly she asked what would be the cost of a new art building. Millard gave an estimate; then and there she pledged the money for it. A few years later she paid for the construction of a second such structure, and still later matched dollar for dollar the cost of a third building, all of which made the Scripps Art Department the most functional in the entire area.

Scripps was generous with Millard in granting leaves of absence. He was given several weeks each year to lecture at colleges throughout the country. Then came international trips, with leaves of absence granted by Scripps. First to Turkey, on assignment by the State Department. Millard paid Mary's way so she could accompany him.

Then to the USSR. Again he paid Mary's way. Moscow, Leningrad, Armenia, Samarkand were just a few of the places visited. He lectured and, as always, painted, bringing back new impressions of Russia and new paintings for his exhibits. The State Department had him come to Washington to speak about his Soviet experiences before 2500 of its members.

Most significant of all his leaves of absence from Scripps came during World War II. The War Department brought 20 artists to Washington, giving them the assignment of going into battle zones to record the war on canvas. Sheets was given the rank of colonel. There were some bureaucratic hitches and eventually he went to the war zone as an artist correspondent for *Life*. He chose India, Burma, and Ceylon as his field of operations.

That assignment lasted nearly a year and was perhaps the

most sobering of his life. In Calcutta, he saw streets cluttered with the bodies of men and women who had starved to death. His Famine paintings appeared in the November 22, 1943 and the April 30, 1945 issues of *Life*.

In the Burmese jungles he found himself surrounded by combat. The tank in which he was traveling was struck by a bomb. The tank commander was decapitated but by some miracle Millard escaped harm. He escaped physical harm but the mental and psychological scars resulting from what he saw and endured had a sobering effect on his life.

Volumes could be written about Millard's career as a designer of buildings. For lovers of art it is not necessary to visit art galleries to enjoy his creations. The Home Savings and Loan structures throughout Southern California are examples of artistically and functionally designed facilities planned by him; the facades of nearly all of them are the background for a Sheets mural, usually massive in extent and exciting in concept.

Both the exterior and the interior of the Los Angeles Masonic Temple, which Millard designed, have great sweeping murals depicting Masonic history and concepts. So too with the San Francisco Scottish Rite Temple.

Artist, teacher, muralist, war correspondent, architectural designer—all have been the subjects of chapters in the Millard Sheets "autobiography" that he has created with brush and easel and designing board.

Helen and I were included in part of one page of his life story, for which we are deeply grateful. Millard was a friend of ours for 48 years, but we met up with his work long before we met or knew him.

One of his early exhibits was on display at the Laguna Beach Art Gallery; some paintings and drawings were listed for sale.

"Look at this one." Helen motioned to me as she studied a work which was small but appealing. "It isn't large but the price isn't either. Do you suppose we could afford the ten dollars?"

Those were in the lean times shortly after our marriage. Ten dollars was half a week's wages. We did not make the purchase. Many years later, through our friends Dalzall and Ruth Hatfield of the Hatfield Galleries in the now-closed Ambassador Hotel, we did buy a fine Sheets watercolor, which has hung over the fireplace of our home for 29 years.

Achievement in art is not measured in monetary terms, yet the price a painting commands is an indication of the artist's success. Three years ago a man walked into an exhibit of Sheets's paintings, considered their value, and purchased the entire exhibit for $450,000. Those paintings have enhanced in value considerably since then.

It was in 1941 that we first met Millard and Mary Sheets. Helen and I had just founded the Chaffey Community Art Association in Ontario, California, in memory of our eight-year-old daughter Barbara who had died of leukemia. Millard was head of the art department at Scripps College in nearby Claremont. He became greatly interested in our project. Two of his paintings were part of our first Purchase Prize Annual Exhibit. He gave us encouragement. He offered helpful advice. Often we called on him to give talks or art lectures to our association and he gladly did so. That continued through the years. Even though he had moved from the Claremont area he was in the receiving line and part of the program at the association's 25th anniversary. He presented one of his fine paintings to our permanent collection on the 45th anniversary, and drew a standing-room-only attendance at an art talk he gave for us that year. If his health would permit it, he promised to write the foreword to the comprehensive book the association is planning for the 50th anniversary. Health permitting, he said he would be there to participate at that occasion.

The 1988 year-end brochure of the Stary-Sheets Gallery, operated by Millard's son and daughter-in-law, carried this announcement: "For August 1989 we have arranged a special exhibition of the most recent paintings by Millard Sheets, which will be held at the Claremont Graduate School Galleries. This collection of work was completed in 1988, and thus comprises the most current work of this incredible painter . . . that will enhance the walls of the world for time to come. The pain that he endured through the creation of these masterpieces is conquered in the results of each one. The love of life and nature depicted is haunting and brilliant. Perhaps his greatest personal effort ever is included in this heartrending group of paintings . . ."

Millard Sheets, Super Senior, Super artist, and Super human being, has completed the portion of his autobiography

that was his to write. As the years enhance his reputation, the future will see many chapters added to the story of his greatness.

[See After Words at back]

2. Jan de Swart, an Artist in Every Medium

Jan de Swart turned nearly everything he touched into an art creation. If he did not turn it into art he made of it a practical invention. He was active almost until the time of his death in April of 1987, just two days short of his 79th birthday.

How fortunate it was that the prestigious Laguna Beach Art Museum, after its complete remodeling, chose to open its new galleries with an exhibit of de Swart's life works in wood, lucite, aluminum, and bronze. Although recovering from a stroke, Jan fought off the illness so he could attend the exhibit. His great secret was that creativity is the most healing power available, so, after his stroke, when he could barely walk, he recovered his vitality and skill by deep involvement in his creative work. In his own particular way, Jan de Swart was a genius.

It is not too often one can hire a creative artist of this caliber for a modest fee. Helen and I did that in the early 1950s. Jan was a close neighbor of ours in the Eagle Rock area of Los Angeles. His genius had not been recognized then and we all thought we were paying him a handsome wage. In return for it, he gave us some handsome results.

We were creating a scenic garden back of the Eagle Rock, beside which our home was located. All materials involved were to be natural as much as could be, and discards whenever possible. Rangers of the Angeles National Forest up on the mountaintop 20 miles from our home told us we would be doing them a favor by cutting down the large evergreen trees that had become infested with disease. We cut down such trees, loaded them on a truck we rented, and hauled them to the nearest sawmill, in Monrovia. How we accomplished it all, physically, I'll never know; he and I were both short in stature. Jan directed how the logs should be cut, then with his own tools he fashioned wooden seats, or totem poles, or graceful long wooden "natural" tables for our garden.

The Edison Company had old cedar poles they wanted to get rid of; we took them off their hands. One day, after work

in our garden, Jan spied a six-foot piece of a bulky pole remaining after our work.

"Just a moment," he said. "I can't leave just yet. This will not take long." Grabbing his tools he began sawing, and shaving, and shaping that old cedar pole. Before our eyes a lovely statue of Francis of Assisi came to life. Another piece of the pole was shaped into an outstretched arm of St. Francis. This arm, affixed to the body of the statue, was for birds to light on. For many years that St. Francis statue graced our Eagle Rock garden. Doubleday and Co. used a color photo of it for the cover of our book *Man With A Song*, which Helen and I wrote about Francis of Assisi and which they published. For 29 years it has graced our garden in Capistrano Beach, overlooking the ocean.



View of the Eagle Rock from the Line's home

In those early days Jan and I would tour the back alleys of industrial streets in Los Angeles, looking for discarded items of beauty. We found strips of aluminum from which he fashioned art creations. We found pieces of plastic which he reshaped into delicate vases. One day he imbedded old nails and stones into a square of poured cement and a *Christ With Crown of Thorns* resulted.

By the time we moved down to Capistrano Beach, in 1960, Jan had become famous. Our St. Andrew's by the Sea United Methodist Church, in San Clemente, wanted an unusual cross for its new church building. We recommended Jan. The great wooden cross which he designed and made still graces the church, a gift of the Marvin Browns.

Examples of Jan's creative works are found in such varied locations as the Winrock Shopping Center in Albuquerque and the Kaiser Center in Oakland. When entrepreneur James Real bought the great Eagle Rock from us and built his unique studio there he quite naturally chose Jan de Swart to create exterior wood screens, sculptures, and free flowing designs.

Jan's young son also became an artist and received $60,000 for a hanging lacework web, made from two miles of blue and red mountain climber's rope, suspended high above ground level in a shopping center of a Westminster, California mall.

When Jan was not creating art he was inventing something. Nearly a hundred patents are registered in his name. John D. Entenza, Director of the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, says of him: "One is constantly and unendingly amazed at the sense of expanding growth inherent in the broad, rich talents of Jan de Swart."

His home is the supreme example of his creativity. He and his lovely wife Ursula lived together there for almost 50 years. She now lets all its haunting beauty bring back the memories of what Jan created in every room of the house and in every available nook of its surroundings. Every table, each chair, or the beds or the stools or the wall hangings—everything is of Jan's design and workmanship.

Ursula has turned his workshop into a gallery where some of his finest creations may be viewed. The home and gallery are living proof of the fact that whatever Jan touched turned to art. He gave the world lasting messages in wood and plastic and aluminum and bronze.

3. Anders Aldrin Can Be an Inspiration to Other Artists

If an artist knows his paintings are superior, but he does not find enough buyers to provide support, that artist may find some consolation in studying the life of Vincent van Gogh. During his lifetime van Gogh made only meager sales but in the late 1980s his *Sunflowers* brought 39.9 million dollars and his *Irises* sold for 52.9 million. Armand Hammer, who owns his *Hospital at Saint-Remy* declares: "Some people say I could get 150 million for it."

The 20th century painter, Anders Aldrin, who was born in 1889, the year before van Gogh died, has several things in common with the great Dutch painter. Anders knew himself to be a superior painter, but his works did not sell. In his case, as contrasted with van Gogh's, other artists also knew his paintings were superior. As far back as the early 1940s, Millard Sheets had said of Aldrin:

"The work of this man is a declaration of independence from the styles and manners of his contemporaries and is the most forthright work I have seen in California. Strong poetry—flavored with color—free from imitation—solid construction—make his painting as honest as the man is himself. His work [is] outstanding." Forty years later, in 1983, Sheets added: "Today I realize even more clearly the importance of his work."

In 1941 Aldrin, with his wife and three young children, lived in a small house close to the channel of the Los Angeles River. He had leveled a lot with pick and shovel and built the house and a small studio with his own hands. In that studio Helen and I first met Anders Aldrin and saw his works. It was one of the most interesting art experiences of our lives.

He pulled paintings from closet shelves to show us. A partly completed work was on his easel. The studio also served as an extra bedroom. Reaching under the bed, Anders pulled out more paintings. We went into the house and met his wife, two small daughters, Betty and Inez, and his son Vincent, named, incidentally, after Vincent van Gogh. In the house we saw more of his works. Of all those we viewed that day, most were superior creations. On that first visit we became Aldrin addicts.

We had recently organized the Chaffey Community Art Association in Ontario, California, with the idea that there would be a purchase prize exhibit each year, displaying the

best works of both western and eastern American artists. For several years Helen and I selected the paintings to be exhibited, and for the first year included both an oil and a watercolor by Aldrin. For the second annual exhibit we featured one painter as a special "guest artist." It was Aldrin, and eight of his finest oils graced that show.

There was no regular exhibit the third year—1943. World War II made it impossible to ship paintings from the East or to collect works of western artists. Our fine exhibit hall, which was the spacious Chaffey College gymnasium, was being used by troops. In place of a regular exhibit our association invited eight different artists to come out to our area to paint a "Portrait of a Community."

Anders Aldrin stayed at our home for a week. We took him to the Chaffey campus where he did paintings of the students and the troops drilling. He painted with swift, deft brush strokes and captured the troop movements on canvas.

An entire block of quaint 19th century brick buildings still stood in Ontario. He did an oil painting of these. We took him out to the grape vineyards, to the mountains, to interesting scenes throughout the area. He captured aspects of them all in oil or watercolor.

Aldrin did two portraits of our young daughter, Adrienne, one of the three of us together, and an unusual oil portrait of me which is one of our prized possessions to this day.

People liked his paintings, other artists openly expressed envy at his skills, competent critics praised his works. Many of them were accepted for display in important exhibits. But they found few buyers. He went through frequent spells of despondency. Once, in a mad symbolic outcry of despair, over a three-day period he burned several hundred of his creations. His family stood by him through thick and thin, though thinness seemingly became the daily fare. His wife worked to help support them. When she died, conditions became even harder.

Helen and I seriously discussed what we might do to help, and ended up purchasing some fifty of his works for our own collection. By having them on view in our home, by exhibiting them in various art galleries when we could, we felt others might be induced to recognize the inherent worth of his watercolors and oils. People saw the paintings, but our plan had little effect. As years passed the children grew to adulthood and found well-paying occupations.

In 1951 Aldrin visited Varmland, Sweden, where he had been born in 1889 and where he had begun work in a paper mill at the age of ten. As a boy there he had taken a correspondence course in drawing and painting. "But I had to work in secret," he once said. "My father was opposed to such impractical pursuits."

On that 1951 visit and on a second trip to his native land ten years later he roamed and painted widely, catching wide-open Swedish landscapes in watercolor. And they sold! He wrote: "It is most unusual this, that an artist sells his work, something that never happens in the U.S. I was in many exhibitions in Stockholm and in several practically every picture was sold."

Aldrin would not accept financial aid from his children but Betty's husband, who was a pilot for Japan Airlines, arranged for him to take a trip to the Far East in 1958. He spent seven months painting in Japan and other Far East countries. An American from New Jersey, Margaret Cromer, saw an exhibit of his in Japan and fell in love with his works. She and her husband bought many of them and encouraged their friends to do likewise, easing Aldrin's financial situation temporarily.

Back in the United States, Aldrin continued to paint with undiminished zeal and his unsold works continued to mount.

Vincent built an attractive home for his father on the acreage where his own home was located near Fallbrook. He constructed special facilities for storing completed paintings, as well as space for the new ones his father was constantly creating.

About six months before Anders Aldrin died at age 80, he was painting in the new home Vincent had built for him, looking out the window at the spring colors. He was working on an eight-foot high by six-foot wide "canvas," actually two doors that covered a closet.

He had been there for hours. A bit concerned, Vincent's wife went to check on him, only to find him on his knees, but still painting. His left arm hung limp and useless. He had had a stroke—his left side was paralyzed—but he kept right on painting. He had been able to lift the heavy paint box off the stand down onto the floor, then pushed it up to the doors so he could continue with his work.

Anders painted till the day of his death in 1970. A beautiful memorial service was held at the First Baptist Church in Los Angeles. Helen and I attended and were

rewarded in two remarkable ways.

His son and daughters had arranged an exhibit of their father's finest works in the large social hall of the church. Following the service we spent much of the afternoon viewing that exhibit and visiting with friends of the family.

Vincent came up to Helen and me. "I want you to meet my cousin," he said, and led us over to meet Anders's nephew, Buzz Aldrin, who had just recently become the first person in world history, along with Neil Armstrong, to walk on the moon. One gets a definite vicarious thrill in sharing that moon experience with one of the few persons in the world who can describe, from personal experience, what it is really like.

That was in 1970. Anders Aldrin's paintings languished in storage in Vincent's home and the special building constructed to store them. They found a most limited market. Until 1988.

Helen and I had annually given one of our Aldrin paintings to the permanent collection of the Chaffey Community Art Association. Once a year the entire collection of the association is put on display in the fine new gallery now available to them. A wealthy art collector visited that annual display in 1988 and saw all the Aldrin works we had given through the years. He was captivated. He and his wife came down to our home to see the 44 Aldrin paintings we still have left in our own collection, and in early 1989 went down to Vincent Aldrin's home to see the many hundreds of Aldrin paintings there. At once he purchased all 15 of Anders's woodblock prints and a number of oils. In May he and his wife spent 12 hours at Vincent's, going over the paintings again. They bought 25 oils, eight pastels, and six watercolors. He plans to arrange exhibits of them in prominent galleries before they become a part of his own collection in a spacious gallery at his own home. The enthusiasm of this noted collector has opened the door for other buyers.

Anders Aldrin, whose life overlapped van Gogh's by one year, whose son Vincent was named after Vincent van Gogh, and who knew—as did the great Dutch artist—that his works were superior—is at last coming into his own.

Chapter 7

Joe Doyle

A "Leprechaun" on Loan For a Lifetime

Helen's brother-in-law, 86-year-old Joe Doyle, died this past year. He was a Super Senior if for no other reason than the outpouring of love expressed for him by his adopted daughter. Immediately after the funeral she sat down and pounded out on an old typewriter a 30-page story of his life. These are a few excerpts from what she wrote about her jovial Irish daddy, who began life as an orphan, who had a loving nickname for everyone he knew, who called every woman "daughter," who relished Irish folklore and who, as a gardener most of his life, drew this description from his daughter: "I am sure that when he 'comes back again in his next lifetime,' you'll find him in a big garden somewhere. He will be blooming and he will be the most beautiful flower in the garden."

Daddy
by Kathy Doyle Clinton

There have been great men who are remembered in this world, but to me this one man was and will always be the greatest, most caring, giving, jolliest, loving man I have ever known. It was a very special privilege to have been adopted by Joseph Murphy Doyle.

He was born on March 3, 1901, in Parkplace, Oregon. The people that bore him had the last name of Girdes. What happened to them is not known but he was placed in a Catholic home. When he was about two years of age he was adopted out by a couple with the name of Joseph Matthew and Emma M. Doyle.

His adopted father Joseph died. The mother Emma placed her adopted son in a Catholic home for boys in Watsonville, California. He was probably four or five years of age then. When asked his name all he could recall was the name of his dad who had adopted him, and he couldn't really remember that correctly, so he said his name was Joseph Murphy Doyle. He partly named himself.

While he was at that school he could remember that a lady came to visit him twice. She was in a horse-drawn carriage. He wasn't really sure if it was his mother or not but liked to think it was.

He was not treated well at that school, but it was all he knew. When he looked out of his bedroom window he thought that was all there was to the entire world—just as far as he could see. The boys were expected to get jobs in other people's homes. When he got such a job he left the school for good, never to return. He was on his own at the age of twelve.

In the next 22 pages Kathy tells of the various jobs Joe had, all over the States, ending up by becoming head gardener at a 2100-acre estate near San Juan Bautista, California.

Taking a year off, at age 26, to "see the world," he then returned to that estate to supervise the gardening operations of the 70 acres surrounding the 52-room mansion. He married Louise Gibson, and they adopted Kathy. All his life, until retirement in Paradise, California, he was a professional gardener, noted for his skills in growing beautiful flowers. Kathy continues her writing:

To me, my dad showed and lived love! Love to everyone. One thing he told me was, "Daughter, the one way I have gotten along with all the women in the world is I've called them all 'daughter.' Even if they are 19 or if they are 90, no woman likes to look or feel old, so they love it."

Daddy told me not to be too quick to judge people. He also said to have a sense of humor. He explained he was a small man. So the way he said he made it through life without "getting the stuffing beat out of him" was to say everything as a joke or with a smile on your face. That throws them off guard and folks are apt to get less mad at you that way. But he was a charmer, and everyone got stuck by Cupid Joe's arrow, or Joseph Murphy Doyle's Irish blarney.

When he lived at Holly Hills Mobile Estates in Paradise, California after retirement, he not only created a lovely garden about their home, he began making a lot of friends as usual. He of course nicknamed all of them. Lloyd and Velma Kulp were the Lloyds of London. Mildred Williams was either Little Willie or Sweet William. A man who lived down the hill was Hazelnuts. He was well liked in the park and did a lot of work for his neighbors. Many were widowed ladies. He

loved the ladies all his life but he also believed ladies should be treated as such. He helped them by working in their yards, watering, raking leaves, hauling trash and being an all-around "good neighbor Sam."

The last week of Joseph Murphy Doyle's life was the hardest week I have ever had. He was in the intensive care unit at the Feather River Hospital in Paradise. He had suffered from a heart attack. There he lay, hooked up to all sorts of machines going "beep, beep, beep." My daughter Kim, my mom, and I spent a lot of hours there. I stayed day and night for the week. I held his hand. I told him how much I loved him, and we talked a lot. He kept his sense of humor and even cut up with some of the nurses, calling them "daughter." We talked about the past, our personal screw-ups in life and the good decisions we had made in each of our lives. We talked about my children, his treasured grandkids!

One night he said to me, "I'm not going to make it, daughter," and he told me he loved me. He then went into a coma and later on he left us.

There will never be another Joseph Murphy Doyle in my book. He was first class, an original and a classic. He spent 86 years of his life loving people and making other people's lives happier with his smile.

We all know really and truly he was just a loan to us for a lifetime. The last time he lived, he must have lived in Ireland and was for sure one of the "little people; a leprechaun!" They decided we needed some sunshine and happiness, so they loaned him to us for a while. We sure do thank them!

I am certain that when he "comes back again in his next lifetime," you'll all find him in a big garden somewhere. He will be blooming and he will be the most beautiful flower in the garden.

I loved you Daddy! And I miss you!
Love, Your daughter, Kathleen Ann Doyle

These are also my memories of the man nicknamed by others. First by his wife Louise, her "darlin' Joe." Also known as: Father, the dummy, the Irishman, the Shanty Irishman, Jo Seefus, Uncle Dooley, Pappy Handsome Joe, Little Joe, and Murf.

You know, he never knew where the name Murphy came from.

Maybe the "little people" named him that.

Chapter 8

Thumbnail Sketches

of Some Super Friends

Mary Erickson, Her Drive Made Her a Champion

With a powerful drive and discerning eye Mary served the ball into the opposite court, wearing down her opponent and winning the game. That drive and the ability to direct the ball exactly where she wanted it won her the tennis championship of Washtenaw County, Michigan, where she was born and where she attended the teachers' college at Ypsilanti.

Forty years later, in the Orange County city of San Clemente in California, her ability to aim directly at her goals and her powerful drive in furthering those goals wore down city and county opponents of affordable housing and human rights and brought permanent social changes in conservative Orange County.

Mary Erickson has had a passion for helping to provide affordable housing for those who needed it. She petitioned San Clemente council members. She wrote letters on the subject to individuals and to newspapers and insisted that her friends and acquaintances do the same. She used the phone endlessly to promote her objectives.

When her husband died she threw herself with even added zeal into the cause.

She had been in poor health and an injury to her left knee, caused by a fall, meant hospitalization. But she was able to leave the hospital in time to attend the opening of a Senior Citizen housing project that she had helped bring to fruition.

Then the right knee required another hospital stay. After that she used a cane as she made her way to the council chambers to speak at their meetings.

Mary's health continued to be a problem; there were indications of cancer. Despite this she did not lessen her activities but actually broadened them, reaching out to work for affordable housing and better living conditions in other parts of Orange County.

Her crusades made progress. An award came to her from

the Orange County Board of Supervisors. That was followed by an award from the San Clemente City Council. She put them on the shelf, along with her health concerns, and kept on fighting. Her 78th birthday came and went. The event was celebrated by an extra heavy day's work promoting the projects that would bring help to so many in need.

In March of 1989, in a symbolic and a real sense, Mary went to her reward, just two days before her 79th birthday. At the service of celebration in her memory, in a sanctuary filled to overflowing, one person after another arose to express heartfelt thanks for her achievements that touched the lives of so many in such vital ways. Whatever life served her, she had volleyed back and had faced all her challenges confidently.

Back in her tennis days, the word "love" meant "no score; zero." Mary's life completely metamorphosed that term. Through her, love has not only zeroed in on Orange County, but it has also overflowed into the hearts of untold numbers of grateful people who are thankful for what Mary did with her life.

The Pashgians Are Still Reaching Out

The first time Helen and I ever knew about Margaret and Aram Pashgian was when we saw Margaret on her knees in a Pasadena, California, parking lot, packing boxes with clothing. Through her we soon met Aram. This was just three years after the end of World War II. Those boxes were being packed for shipment to Pasadena's recently adopted sister city, over in Europe. Not a city in England, or in France, or in any of the other allied countries. Pasadena had adopted a war-torn city in the country of our recent enemy—Ludwigshafen, Germany, which had been bombed 107 times during the war.

"Why Ludwigshafen? Why any city in Germany?" some people asked. And others, including the Pashgians, had an explanation for this "reaching out" in peaceful ways across the sea. "If the people of Pasadena can share in a way like this, there is really some hope for eventual peace in the world."

That was 40 years ago. The Pashgians—he is now 86 and she 83—have moved to Santa Barbara. A visitor to their home today might not find Margaret on her knees, as she was when Helen and I first met her. But Aram is apt to be—or at least on a stool, crouched over a ham radio set, "reaching out"

across the seas to almost every part of the world. "I just talked with a young man in Armenia," Aram told me, following the devastating quake in that country. Aram's father came from what was once a part of Armenia in 1889, just 100 years ago. The Pashgians are "reaching out" to that land in tangible ways.

"I often pick up people in the Soviet Union by radio," Aram told me on another occasion. "Just yesterday I chatted with a ham in Peking, China, at the university there. A few years ago we traveled widely in those lands. It is good to keep in actual touch by radio." Aram related how he had once talked with King Hussein of Jordan who is also a radio ham. "We've traveled in Israel, and Egypt, and the countries of Europe. To talk with people personally over the airwaves in those countries keeps us in touch with the world."

At this point Margaret interrupted. "Tell them about our 1966 world trip, when we met 28 hams in person." Aram did so. "I'd become acquainted with every one of those 28 over the air. Then we met them face to face, in Damascas, Katmandu, Singapore—all over the globe. It's a great feeling to put a voice to a face and also to meet their families."

For the Pashgians, ham radio operation is more than a hobby: it's a continual "reaching out."

[See After Words at back]

Ernest Brown

Ernest Brown, at 86, is the oldest person in the St. Andrew's by the Sea church choir in San Clemente, California. He plays golf regularly and is the oldest of all his golf buddies. Recently he made a hole in one—the only person of any age that I have ever known, personally, to accomplish that goal. Ernest's mind runs to figures; he is elected treasurer of almost every group of which he becomes a member.

Ernest and his wife Annamarie leave sunny Southern California to take winter trips up to their former home in Wyoming, or to a relative's ranch in Montana. "I like cold weather," he claims. Even when they became snowed in and eventually had to fight drifts to get back home, Ernest said he enjoyed it.

A later trip to Idaho was for the 100th birthday party of his mother; relatives had gathered from across the country to

attend. Four days after that party word came of his mother's death. "She was looking forward to that 100th anniversary; she set herself to live until it was accomplished," he says.

Ernest Brown may very well emulate his mother's accomplishment.

Floyd Faust's Ministry May Last a Long Time

The Rev. Dr. Floyd Faust, who plays the accordion with a zest that makes people want to dance, has retired from the ministry but not from ministering. Recently the phone rang at his home in Columbus, Ohio.

"This is the Monterey Nursing Home," came a voice over the wire. "Someone has told us you play an accordion. Will you come out? Will you play and sing? We're going to have a luncheon for our old men."

So Floyd went out. "The old fellows came creeping in," Floyd explained. "I walked down the line and said to the first one, 'How old are you?' 'Oh, I'm 77.' To the next one: 'How old are you?' '79.' One man was 82. I found I was the oldest one there." Floyd Faust is 85.

Floyd also makes audio tapes for shut-ins. Such a tape may offer an uplifting greeting, a word of cheer, a sprinkling of humor, some accordion music, a spiritual sharing of his Christian faith. Every tape is different and every one releases a refreshing breeze into the lives of those who listen. Helen and I know; such a tape came from him on the occasion of our 60th wedding anniversary.

In his taped greeting to us, Floyd led off with a veritable barrage of humor about aging. "The other day I saw a picture in the paper of a 91-year-old man. He had just bought a new car. The agent tried to sell him a used one. 'No way,' the 91-year-oldster replied. 'I want it to last.' "

"If we can have that kind of spirit," Floyd said to us over the tape, "we're apt to last a long time."

Floyd continued on the tape: "I heard a reporter talking to George Burns. 'George, when you put your money in the bank do you take out a two-year or a four-year CD?' George replied, 'Four-year? At my age I don't even buy green bananas.' "

Floyd sang a song for us over the tape. He serenaded us with his accordion music. As we absorbed the joy that he was

bringing to us in this unique yet practical way we thought of all the hundreds of other men and women and boys and girls to whom Floyd Faust has brought moments of uplift through his music and his tapes. If he carries on with that kind of spirit he and his ministry of joy and love are apt to last a long time.

Lt. Col. S.G. Weller Gets His Wish

Back in the 1950s Lt. Col. S.G. Weller was dissatisfied with his job as an officer in the Army National Guard. Working conscientiously at his military assignments, he nevertheless yearned for a different outlet for his talents.

Although a young man himself, his consuming interest was in older people. He spent his spare time visiting his elderly friends, helping them with their problems. More often than not, his conversations would drift to concerns about the elderly. They seemed to be almost an obsession with him.

Then—the axe fell. The National Guard was cutting back; S.G.'s unit was abolished. He was out of a job.

Imagine our surprise when he and his wife Faurot burst into our living room one evening bubbling over with joy.

"What's happened?" I asked, almost incredulous.

"Look at this," came S.G.'s reply. He handed me a letter from Presbyterian Apartments, Inc. in Nashville, Tennessee.

"Their manager has just retired. They've contacted me about taking over. They heard about me from a friend. We are to go back at once for an interview."

That was a quarter of a century ago. S.G. became the most "caring" manager that retirement home ever had. Faurot, although not on the payroll, "adopted" first one person after another among those retirees, looking after their needs as a loving daughter would have done.

Eight years ago S.G. reached 70, time for retirement. They "retired" in the home where he had served so long. He is now 78 and she is 76. In informal ways they continue to look after their loved ones, not as managers but as caring friends.

You May Have a Hard Time Keeping up with the Claypools

Kenneth Claypool, at age 90, leads tour groups over much of the world. In September of 1988 it was a group trip to Australia and New Zealand. When he was a mere 89 his group tour to China was a highlight. Autumn tours to the Northeast are taken frequently to drink in the beauty of the fall colors. For 14 years he has maneuvered his groups through the crowds in Pasadena, California on his annual tour trips to the New Year's Rose Parade. In September of 1989 he leads a group to Montreal, Canada, and a voyage on the St. Lawrence River. His wife Neva always accompanies him and does much to help along the way. They met at a Methodist Epworth League Camp Meeting in California. They have now been married for 68 years. She is only 88.

Kenneth was born in Missouri in 1898. His father, a construction man, went to San Francisco to help rebuild that city after the earthquake and fire of 1906. Two railroads were competing for business and the trip to California cost his father just five dollars. Following the San Francisco job his father settled in Orange, California, where Kenneth grew up.

Ninety-year-old Kenneth Claypool, when not on tour, bowls regularly and has a rather good score. He does all his own yard work.

"He really has an upbeat attitude toward life," his daughter, Virginia Lingren, explains. "That helps enormously to keep him active and always looking ahead."

Kenneth's first important job—the one that would affect his future more than anything else—was with the Standard Oil Company where he was trained as an accountant before the office had an adding machine. Calculators were unheard of.

"Dad always had a good memory," his daughter explained. "He can even remember the street names and the patrons on his paper route when he was a boy. But in that Standard Oil job he honed his memory to perfection. When he began leading tours after formal retirement, his memory was a Godsend."

Kenneth Claypool fell into the tour-leading avocation quite by chance. Following retirement he and his wife had begun traveling and had covered much of the world. "In April of 1970," he told me, "as we had traveled so much, our minister,

Dick Kendall, asked me to be the escort for the XYZ Club—that is the 'Xtra Years of Zest' Club. Neva is the hostess."

"Counting our one-day trips," Kenneth continued, "we have escorted the XYZ members on 635 trips and tours. We have been to Leningrad, Budapest, Guatemala, the old forgotten city of 'Amkar Wat,' the Passion Play at Oberammergau, Singapore, Bali, Australia, New Zealand, the Holy Land, Ephesus, Alaska five times, Hawaii 17 times. And of course close-by bus trips to Vancouver, Canada, Lake Tahoe, Bryce National Park, Lake Powell, Grand Canyon. I do it all myself, get the rooms, charter the bus, and all."

Kenneth guides the entire process. He remembers what the costs are, how many have paid and how much, who may have cancelled. He gets replacements as needed. All this bookkeeping takes place in his head. His memory is a huge asset on the tours. That Standard Oil job in the days before adding machines is really paying off.

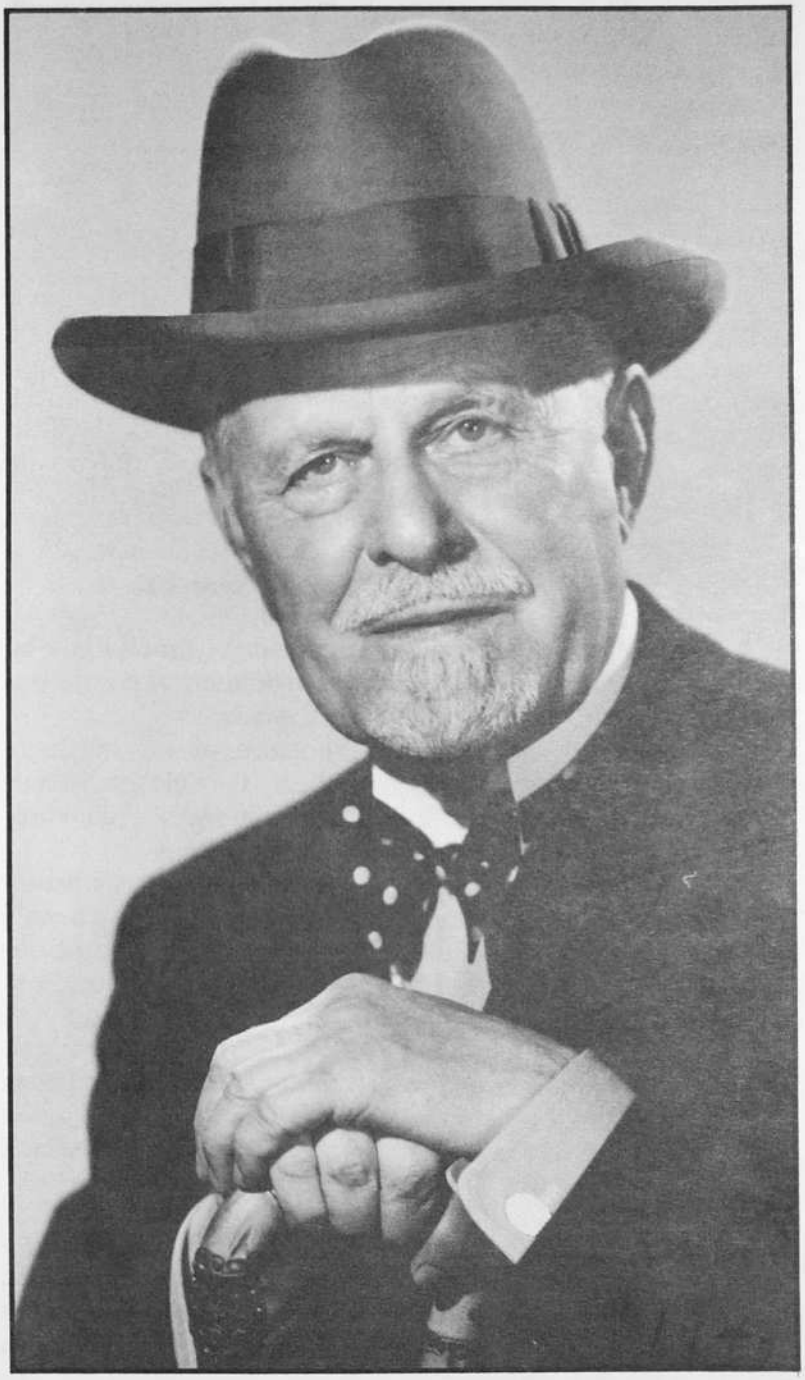
Tour-leading takes up most of Kenneth's time, yet it is not a paid job. It is an avocation. Kenneth and Neva like to travel, and help others to travel also. Their plans for 1990, among many other trips, include another trip to the Passion Play at Oberammergau.

Burton Holmes
Dean of the "Travelogue" Seniors

Two reasonably reliable tests are available to determine whether an individual is of the younger or the older generation. If one sees a penny on the sidewalk and stops to pick it up, that person probably lived during the Great Depression. If the penny is passed by, that person is one to whom the Depression is just ancient history, something grandma talks about.

The second test, although not quite as reliable, is nonetheless revealing. If you were brought up in the TV age or the era of VCRs, you probably never heard of Burton Holmes. On the other hand, if you learned about the great outside world by attending "travelogues" or adventure slide or movie shows on the local lecture course, you probably know who Burton Holmes was, and might even have attended one of his presentations that made him both famous and rich.

Burton Holmes presented the world's first travelogue—although that name had not yet been coined—in Chicago back



Burton Holmes, dean of the travelogue Seniors

in 1897, 20 years before I had ever heard of him and 40 years before I got to know him in person. He and I both followed the same profession. His was a "lantern-slide" show and remained so until many of us youngsters entered the field showing 16mm color motion pictures.

He was on the American platform for 58 years, gave over 8,000 illustrated lectures, never missed an engagement, and grossed over five million dollars—a huge sum of money for his times.

After his retirement in 1948 his home was in the hills above Hollywood, where we visited him often. Helen and I had started the practice of having noted men and women plant trees in our garden by the large Eagle Rock, where we lived. We invited Holmes to plant such a tree. He died in 1958, at age 88. That "Burton Holmes" tree is a memorial to the "Super Senior" of travelogues.

Amy Adsit: for Her, Life Began at 101

In November of 1988 the grand old lady of Linesville, who had started writing a weekly newspaper column when she was 101, wrote "–30–" to her life of 102 years.

Linesville, Pennsylvania, is the town of my heritage, founded by my great-great-grandfather. Our closest friends there through the years have been Amy Adsit's daughter Dorothy Lowing and Dorothy's husband Larry.

Larry's letter of November 8, 1988, told of Amy's death.

"We had noticed that Amy's handwriting (which had been a thing of beauty) had started to waver about the time of her 102nd birthday last January. She gradually became less communicative as time passed. Six weeks ago she was especially bad. Her main concern the day we visited was that the copy she had prepared for her column in the weekly paper was delivered. Her handwriting was hardly legible, but I noticed that she had edited out one period and substituted a semicolon—correctly."

I had not known that this 102-year-old lady was writing a column for a paper. This was unheard of. At once I called the Lowings. "Oh yes," explained Larry. "Years ago, when she lived in Conneaut Lake, Amy had written a regular column for the *Village Weekly*."

Larry went on to explain that Amy had spent the last several years in a nursing home. "Life was a trifle boring for her there," he said. "She occupied herself by writing dozens of letters and sending cards to a list of about 75 friends far and near. But apparently that wasn't enough. She started writing a regular weekly column for the Conneautville *Courier* about the happenings at Rolling Fields, the nursing home. That is the job she tackled at age 101 and continued till her death."

There is something deeply symbolic about the final editing act on her column; with a hand that was weak but determined she had edited out a period and substituted a semicolon. A period is an ending; a semicolon signifies that more is still to come. Amy wasn't about to call it quits just yet.

Over the phone, Larry told me some of Amy's last words. A few days before she died she looked up into their eyes and said, "I know I'm going to die. It's awfully boring."

Death *was* boring to Amy. Life, and thoughts of life, were her nourishment. She savored them almost to the last—until nearly three years past the century mark. That is true living.

The Lowings Represent the Best in America

Larry and Dorothy Lowing, both 75, are representative of the type of couple that are responsible for the greatness of this nation. Couples like them can occasionally be found in many of the small towns across the land, and their inclusion as Super Seniors is meant as a tribute, not only to them, but to others like them who make up the backbone of America.

The Lowings have devoted most of their adult lives to their family and to the community of Linesville, Pennsylvania. Larry was born there and Dorothy moved to a neighboring town at the age of six. They were married in Linesville over 53 years ago. Except for one eight-year period, Larry has lived in this small community all his life. He was born into printing and became a fourth generation publisher of the weekly *Linesville Herald*, founded 108 years ago by his great-grandfather, the Rev. Henry D. Lowing. Dorothy was a reporter for the *Herald*, and then editor.

As publishers of the town's only newspaper, the Lowings played a leading role in promoting their community. Dorothy was a regular chair for its Homecoming celebration, and

headed the big one, Linesville's Centennial in 1966. After they sold the newspaper in 1971, the couple spearheaded a drive that resulted in the founding of the Linesville Historical Society in 1980 and the Linesville Community Public Library in 1983.

Dorothy and Larry have raised two highly accomplished sons. There are six grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. One of the grandchildren, Sarah, age 16, was a soloist with a troupe selected from her dance school for an exchange with dancers in Russia and Poland. Her father, of the Millersville (PA) University art faculty, covered the event with his camera, obtaining some award-winning photos.

Linesville is on the shore of Pymatuning Reservoir, whose 16,000-acre surface straddles the border between Ohio and Pennsylvania. This great body of water—the largest in either state—is the site of a 10,000-acre wildlife refuge. Here 3.5 million tourists from all over the world have come to see the unusual sight of fish so numerous that ducks actually walk on their backs. Over the years, three generations of Lowings have had much to do with promoting and publicizing this unusual feature of their community.

John and Ann Rush Continue Peace Pilgrim's Work

On January 1, 1953 a woman known as "Peace Pilgrim" began walking across the United States. Carrying her only possessions in the pockets of her tunic, she vowed to be a wanderer "until mankind had learned the way of peace, walking until given shelter, fasting until given food." She walked prayerfully and as an opportunity to meet people and share her peace message: "This is the way of peace—overcome evil with good, falsehood with truth, and hatred with love." She spoke to thousands of individuals and groups along the way, discussing peace within and without. Her attainment of inner peace combined with action for world peace inspired people everywhere.

On four different occasions Peace Pilgrim stayed several days at our home in Capistrano Beach, leading retreats here and in our church.

She had walked more than 25,000 miles when her pilgrimage ended in July, 1981, at the age of 73. She made what she liked to call "the glorious transition to a freer life" while being

driven to a speaking engagement.

Many friends of Peace Pilgrim felt her message was so vital and important they wanted it to continue to be spread across the land. John and Ann Rush, both 72, and three friends gathered her writings together and compiled the book, *Peace Pilgrim, Her Life and Work in Her Own Words,* and a smaller booklet containing her *Steps Toward Inner Peace.*

The Rushes turned their home into a Peace Pilgrim Center and have filled requests for more than 100,000 *Peace Pilgrim* books and 400,000 of her *Steps Toward Inner Peace* booklets. Requests have come flooding in from 103 countries.

The *Steps* booklet has been translated into five languages; the *Peace Pilgrim* book has been published in German and is now being translated for printing in Spanish, Russian, and Chinese. The books are sent out free, and those who are inspired send gifts to help in printing more.

When Helen and I last visited the Rushes in their Hemet home, which has been transformed into the center for distributing these hundreds of thousands of books, we marveled at their dedication. They are devoting their lives to this work on a volunteer basis. The answer as to why can be found in a letter another volunteer, who spent a year at the center, wrote: "It didn't take me long to figure out why they are willing to work so hard for no pay. It is the mail. The mail that comes in is truly incredible in quantity and quality. Every day we receive letters telling of the wonderful results people are experiencing in transforming their lives and their relationships as a result of Peace Pilgrim's message. We also receive news of various activities and projects she has inspired, which are making the world a more peaceful place."

It is a deeply moving experience to be, in St. Francis's words, "an instrument of peace."

Peace Pilgrim would be delighted and perhaps a little bit amazed to realize that the pilgrimage she started in 1953 is now encircling the globe.

The Rushes and many others give free Peace Pilgrim presentations, showing videos of her speaking on various occasions. Free copies of her books may be received by writing to FRIENDS OF PEACE PILGRIM, 43480 Cedar Ave., Hemet, CA 92344, or calling (714) 927-7678.

Phyllis Case, a First Lady and a Dedicated Mother

At 84, Phyllis Case has lived a full lifetime of service to the community, to the nation, and—in a very special way—to her family.

For 16 years, as First Lady of Boston University where her husband Dr. Harold Case was president from 1951 until his death in 1967, she and Harold carried on a personal relationship with the students that directed and changed the lives of thousands. At the presidential home, "the Castle," they held regular personalized sessions with the students at which they had far-reaching deep give-and-take discussions. One of those whom they befriended in a special way was a young student at the BU School of Theology, Martin Luther King, Jr.

Phyllis's outreach was broad, and in November of 1987 she was honored by the Boston University Women's Council for her achievements. She has served as vice-chair and member of the executive committee of the National Committee of UNESCO. She was a member of the National Board of Directors of the United Cerebral Palsy Association and of the National Board of United Church Women of America. The National Conference of Christians and Jews had her as a regional board member. She was the first woman ever elected to the Board of Directors of William Filene's Sons Company. She has been active in the Browning Society, the Friends of Albert Schweitzer and other vital organizations.

Her role as a mother took precedence over everything else. The Case's son Robert was born deaf. Phyllis devoted most of her early years as a mother to teaching her son not only lip-reading but how to talk. She instilled in him a confidence that has carried him high in his chosen profession as a photographer. He has traveled at his profession in 28 foreign lands and has won high photographic awards. Without Phyllis's early efforts to shape his life this could not have happened. Robert says "No one should ever attempt to state what the deaf cannot do, because there is probably a deaf person who has done it!" He goes on to give dozens of examples.

The Case's daughter, Rosanna Kazanjian, made headlines over much of the world in April of 1989 when she and her son —the Case's grandson—became the first mother-and-son priests to co-officiate as Episcopal rectors at a worship service of Holy Communion. After Rosanna's husband, an Episcopalian, died, she received her Master of Divinity. The church

Rosanna serves is in a mixed socioeconomic, interracial Boston neighborhood surrounded by the stresses of life. She is working to supply an answer to a question Martin Luther King, Jr. used to ask: "What would it take for the human race to become the human family?"

Helen and I have known Phyllis, Rosanna and Bob for 45 years. Many times we visited the "Castle" at Boston University where Phyllis and Harold guided the lives of so many students. In June of 1989 we had our latest letter from Phyllis saying "My health is stable. I am active in my faith. I write on my video processor two days a week. We love our earth, our world, our Cosmos."

Chapter 9

Howard Thurman

His Whole Life Was a Preachment of Love

Howard Thurman's grandmother was a former slave who could neither read nor write. His mother, whom Howard loved dearly, had to be away from home much of the time, working as a cook or cleaning woman to support the family, so it was his grandmother who nurtured him, inspired him, and turned his life toward greatness. "One of the 12 greatest preachers in America," *Life* magazine called him. He once met Gandhi, at the Mahatma's invitation, and they visited for three hours. They prayed together. Gandhi asked him to sing "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?" The British Broadcasting Corp. made a comprehensive documentary on Thurman's life.

That life began in Daytona Beach, Florida, under conditions of segregation. On one occasion a little white girl stuck a pin in his arm. "Oh, that didn't hurt you," she said. "You can't feel."

As a sensitive youth, Howard found more companionship with nature than with people. He wandered alone in the woods and found solace there. An old oak tree in the Thurman backyard was one of his special places of retreat. That tree had strength, which he needed. "I could talk aloud to it," he said in his autobiography, "and I knew that I was understood."

The all-white high school close to the Thurman home was of course out of bounds for Howard. There were only three public schools for blacks in the entire state. But a church-supported school in Jacksonville was available; Howard prepared to go by train and live there for the full year. As he was departing, two events occurred which affected his entire life.

His grandmother had attended a slave church where Sunday after Sunday she had heard the black minister repeat: "You are not slaves; you are God's children." She passed the feeling of that message on to Howard and, as he was about to leave home for high school, she spoke to him the words that

directed his life. "Look up, not down. Look forward, not back."

Packing an old trunk which lacked handles, he roped it securely and headed for the railway station.

"I can't check that thing on your ticket. It's got no handles," the station agent exclaimed sourly. "I'm not about to attach the check stub to a piece of rope."

That was too much for Howard. Sitting on the station steps he burst out crying. A black man—a total stranger—seeing the difficulty, came over to where he was sitting and asked what all the trouble was about. Howard explained at length.

"If you're trying to get out of this town to get yourself an education the least I can do is help you. Come with me."

The stranger went into the station and paid for the cost of having the trunk shipped to Jacksonville. Without a word, even before there was time for a proper "thank you" the man turned and was gone.

Two years before he died, the Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman finished writing his autobiography. He could have dedicated it to any one of literally hundreds of noted persons who had touched his life throughout that long span of years, including university presidents and world leaders. The dedication read: "To the stranger in the railroad station in Daytona Beach who restored my broken dream sixty-five years ago."

Seemingly small acts of kindness can have a lifetime impact.

One of the deeply moving events in Thurman's life came when the mayor of Daytona Beach declared a Howard Thurman Day. Howard wrote of it: "The 14-year-old boy whose broken dream was restored at that station some 50 years before returned with his family to receive the keys to the city. A brass band came out to meet us . . . and many friends attended the gala reception that evening."

We first met Howard when we journeyed to San Francisco in the late 1940s to attend the Interracial Church of All Peoples, of which he was pastor. Our experiences at that church had a significant influence in our lives, years later.

After our Pasadena minister, Dr. Harold Case, became President of Boston University, he chose Dr. Thurman to be Dean of the Chapel there, and Professor of Spiritual Resources and Disciplines.

Once, when Helen and I were visiting the Cases back in

Boston, we went with them to spend the weekend up at their New Hampshire farm. Driving back Sunday afternoon, Harold Case said to us: "By going to the farm, we had to miss Howard Thurman's morning sermon."

But then Harold remembered it was being re-broadcast by radio right at that moment. He switched on the car radio, but the sermon was almost over. We heard only the last couple of minutes—not enough in any way to get the gist of the message. But then we made a great discovery.

Howard Thurman's voice is a message in itself. The depth and quality of that voice—and the qualities of the man who is revealed through that voice—are an inspiration, beyond and above any thoughts he may be expressing. Hearing just a couple of moments of his sermon as it came over the car radio was like a benediction to us.

There is a vital story in Howard's life concerning this. He and several other ministers were asked by the Canadian government to meet with a group of Indian tribal leaders to soothe some grievances.

Some Indian laborers, having gone down into the United States to get work, had experienced the cruel effects of segregation.

One minister got up and addressed the leaders, using an interpreter. That tribe had no word in their language for the term "segregation." They had never experienced it before. The interpreter had a hard time explaining the word. A second minister also spoke, through an interpreter, with no better results. Then Howard Thurman rose to speak to them. To the interpreter, he said kindly, "No, I won't be needing you right now."

Thurman spoke to the Indian leaders in English. They couldn't understand one word he said, but they understood his message. It came through, in the love revealed in his voice. Added to that was the silent language which he was able to impart just through the use of his expressive hands.

The faces of the Indian leaders lit up. They nodded their heads approvingly to each other in understanding. They got up to extend their greetings to Dr. Thurman.

His message—the quality of his love and his understanding—had come through in the gentleness of his voice and gestures. No one I have ever known has had a voice like that. *Time* magazine once commented on this rich quality of his voice, and the expressiveness of his hands.

The seeds that Howard had sown in the Interracial Church of All Peoples, where Helen and I had first met and heard him, took root in our lives in 1955. When the professional football player, Deacon Dan Towler, who was also a young black minister, was appointed to a small predominantly white church in Pasadena—with the hope that it would become fully integrated—Helen and I at once joined it.

That church—and its young black minister—had many deep problems to face, problems that stemmed largely from that word, "segregation."

Helen and I lived on a high hill up by the Eagle Rock, almost a mile from the nearest bus or streetcar stop. One hot afternoon we heard a knock on our door. We answered it. There, perspiring from the climb up one of the steepest hills in the area, stood Howard Thurman.

"I have heard that your church is experiencing a few difficulties," he said in that gentle voice of his. "I've come to see if I might be able to offer some help."

We had known Howard Thurman—at a distance—before. From then on, for the next 25 years, he became our cherished friend.

We treasured the books he wrote, 21 in all, and looked forward to each new title that came from his pen. In one of those books he said that "Jesus placed a crown above our heads, that for the rest of our lives, we must try to grow tall enough to wear."

That is our favorite quotation of his. For us, that crown was above Thurman's head, and he grew tall enough to wear it. We are forever indebted to him for what his life has meant to us.

America's Public Broadcasting System had made a one-hour version of the long documentary of his life produced by the BBC. After we had moved from Eagle Rock to Capistrano Beach, we rented that film to show to our church. Helen started a "Listening Room" where interested persons could come to hear tapes of Thurman's messages, radio talks, and sermons.

At retreats we sat at his feet, drinking in the inspired wisdom that he imparted.

In Santa Barbara, after the last retreat he led for a group of which Helen was president, we went with him down to the railway station. He had led the retreat even though illness was creeping up on him; he was experiencing the first touches

of cancer. "I only ask God to give me a few more years," he said to us. "I have so much more work to do."

During the last year of his life we attended a Citation in San Francisco given him by Dr. Maxie Dunnam, of the Upper Room. The letter that Howard wrote us after that event gave us the feeling his life might be approaching its close.

Howard Thurman continued giving of himself, through his books and letters and sermons, until the day of his death in 1981 at the age of 80. His memorial service was attended by such a congregation of his followers that there was no hall large enough to hold them. People of all races. People of all religions. Peoples of all the world.

Howard Thurman spoke in a resonant voice the language of humanity.

The Howard Thurman Educational Trust is carrying on Thurman's work. Books, audio tapes, and information about "Listening Rooms" may be obtained from them at: 2020 Stockton Street, San Francisco, CA 94133.

Chapter 10

Hulda Crooks

She is Still Climbing at Age 93, in More Ways Than One

Hulda Crooks climbed Japan's 12,388-foot Mt. Fuji when she was 91 years old, reaching the summit on July 24, 1987, the oldest woman ever to do so. The temperature had dropped to freezing; near the top the wind blew black volcanic dust into her face. Just six weeks after the Fuji climb she made it to the top of Mt. Whitney, 14,495 feet in elevation, the highest peak in the contiguous United States. Someone challenged her to climb the avalanche of steps leading to the top of the Capitol Dome in Washington, D.C. Steps are sometimes more difficult than a mountain trail, but Hulda Crooks accepted the challenge–and won. She became a "cover girl" on magazines, appeared on talk shows, received the personal congratulations of the president in the Oval Office, and inspired millions as her accomplishments were told on the evening TV news. On the ABC nightly news Peter Jennings named her "Person of the Week." The *Hulda Crooks Scholarship and Loan Fund* has been created at Loma Linda University. A *Hulda Crooks Award of Achievement* is now presented each year to individuals who demonstrate the importance of healthful living and are committed to achieving life's fullest potential.

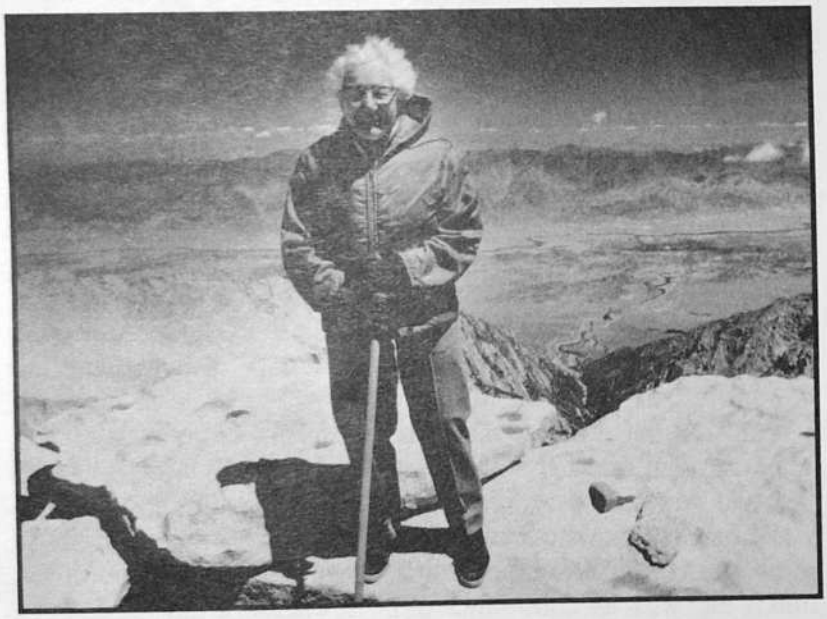
Hulda's life story reveals, in an almost unbelievable way, how one can meet the challenge of drastically altering one's lifestyle when threatening circumstances require it. Born in western Canada, she had become overweight as a child. "I grew up on a farm," she explains, "on a diet of meat, potatoes, and bread with an abundance of milk, cheese, butter, and eggs. In addition, in my father's country store I had free access to a barrel of candy and a gunnysack of peanuts. . . . These extras I munched between meals in addition to three big meals a day. When I was 16, at five-feet-two inches in height, I weighed 160 pounds."

In the area where she grew up, learning how to work was more important than learning from books. At age 18 she had completed only five grades of country school.

Then the pendulum began to swing too far in the other direction. As she explained, "In the long climb from sixth grade to a Bachelor of Science degree I nearly ruined my health. Long hours of study made me neglect almost all physical activity. I had to work to support myself and it was just too much."

Pneumonia struck her; she spent a year recovering from it, but her condition grew worse. "I remember once trying to do some gardening but I became so tired I thought I was going to die," she said. "For years I wasn't worth much. I was nervous, anemic, and perpetually tired."

At age 31 Hulda married Dr. Samuel A. Crooks and with him she began to reevaluate her lifestyle. The results have had worldwide effect.



Hulda Crooks on the summit of Mt. Whitney

"He took me literally for better or for worse," Hulda explained. "He had just finished his medical training and he confidently waded into the task of taking a tired, nervous 31-year-old woman to keep or to cure."

He encouraged her to minimize her housework and spend more time outdoors, at anything she enjoyed.

"Although fond of tasty foods," said Hulda, "he gave me little praise for spending hours in the kitchen cooking, baking, and washing piles of dishes. He gave me outdoor books, everything from flowers to rocks and insects. I'll never forget the first book he gave me. We were out walking one spring afternoon when we came across a field of yellow daisylike flowers with white tips. I wondered what they were. Out of his pocket Sam pulled a book and handed it to me. It was written for laymen and had the flowers arranged by colors. I turned to the yellow section and there it was—tidy tips! The surge of pleasure that swept through me when I found the name of that sunny-faced flower elated every cell in my being. It was better medicine than anything ever ordered on a prescription blank."

More gifts of nature books followed, enabling Hulda to learn the names of all kinds of flowers, trees, shrubs, and butterflies. These interests led to mountain climbing near their home, although, because of a heart condition, Sam could not go to the higher elevations that she was able to tackle.

One summer as they were driving in the vicinity of Lone Pine her husband pointed out the car window. "See that peak? That's Mt. Whitney, highest mountain in the United States." She looked at it with interest as a scenic wonder, never even thinking of it as a goal. But she did continue her outdoor pursuits and her climbing close to home.

Then—Sam died. That was followed by the loss of their only son. Mountain climbing became not just a way toward physical health but a means of easing her grief.

"I climbed whenever I had the chance. My health continued to improve until I was able to hold a full-time job. I found that I felt best when I walked a lot, so I disposed of my car to decrease my expenses and increase my daily exercise."

At Loma Linda University, Hulda became a dietician-researcher and made herself an example of what exercise and a completely proper diet can do. She was in touch with many students and sometimes heard them talk about climbing Mt. Whitney. "I wondered, could I possibly do it? But the years

slipped by and with them the likelihood of my ever trying."

"Then two friends—a young couple—asked me to try climbing Whitney with them. I was 66 years old. That was 30 years after my husband had pointed out the car window and said, 'See that peak?' "

They tackled the peak. It is estimated that more than half of those who attempt it, regardless of age, give up before reaching the top. Hulda Crooks did not give up. They made it. The next year she climbed it again. Preceding those two Whitney ascents she had conditioned herself by first climbing a lesser peak, San Gorgonio, close to her home. For her attempt at Whitney the third time she neglected the conditioning, and could hardly make it to the first camping spot. Two days of mountain workouts, however, changed everything; she made the summit and realized it was not so much a matter of age as it was of conditioning.

Nine years in a row she ascended Mt. Whitney, beginning the climb each time at Whitney Portal, where most hikers start. To celebrate being 75 she sought something even more challenging, coming in from the north. That was 70 miles of mountain exercise. The next year she decided to try the Whitney ascent by an even more difficult route. Starting from Sequoia National Park on the west side of the Sierra she took the High Sierra Trail across the Great Western Divide, dipped down into Kern Canyon, then up and down and finally up again to the peak of Whitney, after six-and-one-half days of hiking with one day of rest.

In 1984 my daughter, my granddaughter, and I decided to celebrate the fact that I had turned 80 by climbing Mt. Whitney. Just as we had left our car, at Whitney Portal, and were searching for the start of the Whitney trail, we met Hulda and her party. She was 88 then, and had been climbing Whitney almost every year since she was 66. To my surprise she told me she'd seen my color motion picture *Sheep, Stars, and Solitude* when I had shown it at what is now Loma Linda University near her California home 40 years before.

Our visit at Whitney Portal was long and enthusiastic. We met again on the trail. From that time on we have been the closest of friends. Helen and I have watched this nonagenarian mountain climber, step by step, climb into international fame.

Besides climbing mountains, Hulda also lectures and is an authority on healthful living. Helen booked her as a speaker

at a Community Forum in San Clemente. Before the lecture, as Hulda was having dinner at our home, we said: "You must not forget to take your broomstick."

That broomstick was part of her evening program; she used it dramatically to stress one of her points. Seizing it firmly at both ends, she raised it back over her head, brought it down, then up over her head again, continuing to repeat the exercise while the audience gasped.

Hulda's lecture appearances used to be confined to California; now they are apt to cover the continent. In November of 1988 a Thanksgiving greeting card came from her, postmarked Tampa, Florida. She was in the Sunshine State for a series of lectures. Her 1988 Christmas card contained a hastily written note: "Have been flown a number of places recently to give talks. My wings are getting tired! Scheduled for Georgia to take part in a February, 1989 youth rally of about 350. It is a privilege and responsibility to meet with high school age. Love, Hulda."

After each of these appearances she hands out to her listeners a tiny booklet. As an expert on buoyant living, through actual practice and also as a dietician, she has incorporated into its 14 pages some invaluable hints of her concepts regarding good health.

"When a man-made machine wears out it can be replaced with a new one," she writes. "Not so with the human body. Rich or poor, wise or foolish, the limit is one body per customer. No exchanges, trade-ins, or replacements. What's more, only one lease of life is granted. Its performance during that lease will, to a large extent, be dependent on the intelligent care given it by the lessee.

"Too many of us are concerned only with present desires. We do not ask: 'How will my current lifestyle affect my health in years to come?' "

She tells how the striking benefits of a reasonable observance of the laws of health were analyzed in an exhaustive survey made by the California State Department of Public Health. The study investigated the relationship between physical well-being and everyday life practices. The habits surveyed that might affect health included regularity of meals, snacking, hours of sleep, weight for height, exercise, and the indulgence in or avoidance of tobacco and alcohol.

"As you would expect," she says, "the people who practice good health habits in all seven categories had the best health,

but this was not all. Not only did these subjects enjoy superior health, but their state of health was equal to that of people 30 years younger who did not follow sound practices.

"Thirty extra years of good health is like an extension of youth. WHO WOULDN'T GO FOR THAT!

"Muscles, not used, atrophy; bones, not put under stress, lose minerals and become weak; and joints, not moved sufficiently as in walking, working, or other forms of exercise, become stiff from disuse. The blunt facts are that your body needs intelligent care. Learn to enjoy good food simply prepared. No type of flesh food is required for good nutrition; if used, the lean is preferable.

"Plan and put into use a regular exercise program. Set your stake as high as you wish, but work toward it gradually. Don't suddenly demand more of your system than it can give. Work toward your goal patiently and persistently and your body will respond to the utmost of its physiological ability.

"And don't underestimate the effect of your mental attitudes. Disturbed emotions, when fostered, can undo the benefits of the best-regulated program. Anger in all its forms—hostility, frustration, jealousy, hatred, wounded pride—as well as fear in its variation of anxiety, worry, depression and the like, sap your life forces."

Hulda Crooks sums up her axioms for a healthy life on a positive note. "Begin to count the happy moments of each day. Try to be grateful for whatever good comes to you, be it seemingly ever so little. Talk of the things that meet your needs and give you joy. Linger over each 'find' with thankful heart. This will grow into a most rewarding habit."

Hulda's life proves her points. At 93, between lecture engagements and hiking, she is engrossed in gathering together materials for the writing of her life story, at least up to this point. There may well have to be a sequel in years to come. Hulda Crooks is still climbing.

P.S. This chapter requires a postscript. Two examples reveal the influence that Hulda Crook's life has had on others.

The first concerns 61-year-old Helen Hayes (not the stage actress) who first met Hulda on Mt. Whitney when Helen attempted to climb it in 1975. Helen Hayes reached the top but was too exhausted even to see the beauty all about her. "Dear God," she prayed, "if you'll get me down from this mountain I'll never climb another one."

But Helen had met Hulda and they actually lived close to each other, near Loma Linda University. Instead of keeping her promise about not climbing another mountain, she realized what Hulda had done with her life and started remodeling her own. She has done so in a remarkable way. Many times she has climbed Whitney again, with Hulda, and does it with comparative ease. Loma Linda University has an enormous series of stairs and Helen climbs 1200 steps, six days a week. She ran the Hawaiian Marathon and in May of 1989 did the Long Beach Marathon. All of this in addition to two jobs, working on drug prevention and teaching at *Image Network*, a self-improvement modeling school in Corona, California. She walks and runs an average of 160 miles, and climbs 34,000 steps, each month. In a recent letter to me she described her philosophy. "I maintain that it is not a matter of getting old, but just getting older, [although 61, she looks as though she were in her 40s] and with these years accumulating more wisdom and knowledge. We are programmed to see the aging process as 'downhill all the way' and I don't like that; we've got to do something to turn this around.

"Here I am a grandmother and I don't feel old or any older. I attribute it to my lifestyle—good dietary habits, Nutrition, Exercise, Water, Sunshine, Temperance, Air, Rest, and Trust in God. That spells NEWSTART."

N-E-W-S-T-A-R-T! That just about says it all.

The second example concerns 70-year-old Evelyn Bauman. At age 66 she decided to try climbing Mt. Whitney because that was Hulda Crooks's age upon first reaching its summit.

Evvy, as we all call her, was fortunate in meeting Hulda on that first Mt. Whitney climb and they have been the closest of friends since. She has conquered the mountain twice since then, her latest climb being in the summer of 1989.

Hulda also met a 16-year-old boy, Peter Robinson, on one of her early Whitney climbs. Now Hulda at 93, Evvy at 70, and Peter at 33 often give a three-generation talk and program to groups in Southern California.

Evelyn's father, a fine example of Swiss longevity, lived to be 96, with never a sick day in his life. Evvy may be heading in that same direction.

Chapter 11

Super Seniors Share Some Secrets

Last holiday season Helen and I sent out 500 personal greetings, and received almost 500 replies. With great joy we read words of cheer or anticipation (and sometimes sadness) from friends across America and across the seas.

Many of those replies were from youths, for we try to reach out to as many young people as possible. But the majority of our "pen pals" are now Seniors, just like us. Most of them are "Super Seniors," for all have erected in their lives, through the years, building blocks of joy, service, pathos, dedication, and adventure. Joy and pathos are ingredients of every worthwhile life. And it is definitely an adventure just to live to the age of "Seniorship."

If there were sufficient space we would share bits of wisdom, or humor, or special insights from several hundred of you who wrote us this past holiday season. Lacking that space we have selected single sentences or short paragraphs from 20 or 30 letters to be included here. We don't know the ages of all these friends of ours; when we do we have stated it. A few are definitely below the arbitrary cutoff age of 75 established for the book; one or two may be far below.

We hope these capsuled gems, for such they are, warm your hearts as they did ours. Here are some:

I turned 80 a couple of weeks ago and Karl will be 80 in a few short months. If being busy makes for happiness, we should be the happiest people in the world.

Mildred and Karl Garling, Ashland, Ohio

I've started making a series of tapes on what I call "Grandma Stories." Right now I'm doing one about my father and his experiences as a rural mail carrier in Michigan. For years he covered his mail route by horse and buggy in summer and horse and sleigh in winter, until he finally graduated to the Model T Ford. It's all just to tell my grandchildren about our life in the early 1900s.

Betty Nichols Peterson (82), Wadsworth, Ohio

The family gave Marion money for a balloon ride for her 70th birthday, and she loved it. We helped our friend Herb Blashfield celebrate his 100th birthday. He gave a good talk. He is remarkable. Norman has two speaking engagements for 1990 (and that is an act of faith on someone's part). One of them is a month before he will be 75.

Marion and Norman Elliott, St. Paul, Minnesota

For 12 years Nelle and I both served on the Financial Board of our church. Each service, I took the collections to the bank. Unbeknown to us, when we retired the accountant totaled the deposits we had made and reported a total of $3,745,000. I am frequently referred to as Mr. Money Bags. . . . Nelle has been busy making goodies to be given to friends, like the beautician, barber, our ministers, the mail carrier, and paper lady. Those folks are our "children."

Karl and Nelle Pittenger (88 and 94), Leesburg, Florida

We like this poem by Robert Browning:

Grow old along with me,
The best is yet to be,
The last of life,
For which the first was made.

Billie and Tad Vincent (72 and 74), Cove, Oregon

All systems here are "go" for me; a steady, but slow, production of paintings for my exhibition scheduled for the Stary-Sheets Gallery in October, 1989. . . . You and I have one common trait to share. We are "survivors." Keep busy at it.

Phil Paradise (84), Santa Barbara, California

We spent ten weeks in N.H. last summer. Rodney is 85. His strength gradually improved after his triple bypass surgery in 1987. We climbed several small peaks, slowly but surely. We had to slide down Eagle Mountain on the seat of our pants where it was extremely steep and covered with slippery fall leaves.

Alta and Rodney Gale, Eagle Rock, California

I am grateful to be able still, at 83, to spend an afternoon a week at a day care program for newly released mental hospital patients, and another in prison teaching. The satisfactions come here and there; and one gives thanks to be used. [This

follow-up letter came shortly afterwards]: In mid-January I had a bad automobile accident; a truck ran into me. What saved my life was the seat belt and the grace of God. I believe He has something for me to do these next few years; I should like it to be in the field of nutrition. My schizophrenic patients need to be told how they can recover faster if they go on a program to reduce the copper overload many have, etc. A few are willing to try. And at the prison I hope to continue with the prisoners, of course, but get a chance to work with administration to improve the diet; the institutions that have done so have seen a large change in behavior. So, wish me luck (and of course more than luck, guidance).

Dr. Margaret R. Wendell, Gwynedd, Pennsylvania

Each day is a learning time; I'm grateful I've learned that—a loving, caring time.

Eleanor Anderson (86), Glendale, California

Next June I will retire on the ranch, to garden and protect the wildlife. I've had some wonderful experiences during the summer. Bears in the pear trees and a three-pointer buck in my yard.

Helen W. Hamby (61), Wilton, California

My, how fast the years are galloping by! This has not been one of my best. I wonder if those 87 years could have something to do with it. I've had one bout of surgery after another. Ah me, it's taking a bit of doing just to keep me glued together. In spite of it I keep active in my church, the Woman's Club, my sorority, and the Bible Class here at the Retirement Home, so I'm holding up very well. I guess that is the way to stay young as long as we can.

Amy Culp, Ontario, California

This is a very wonderful year for Clem and me—our 60th of being together. Now we ask and hope that life will continue to bless us with health and happiness.

Clem and Jess Miller (84 and 80), Fairmont, Minnesota

We seem to keep busy doing less and less.

Rev. Wilbur and Dorothy Meiser (75 and 71), Mansfield, Ohio

Here at Bethany Towers we started The Happiness Club. We meet every third Wednesday of the month. We sing, tell jokes, share embarrassing moments and interesting data, then celebrate the birthdays for all who have a birthday that month. It's a fun time with lots of laughter.

Edith L. Johnson (78), Hollywood, California

May I share a line with you, as you have shared with me: "To have joy, one must share it. Happiness was born a twin."

Pauline Herman (82), Indio, California

Life in a retirement home is reported to be restful and relaxed, but I seem to be busy every minute.

Ruth Peters (76), Dallas, Texas

Do you wonder why this year had fewer months? The calendar must be wrong. Will '89 be as challenging and enjoyable as '88? . . . How can grandsons bring so much pleasure??? Why didn't we have ten kids (now that they don't live here) when they provide so much enjoyment? . . . The word "friend" takes on greater meaning as we get older. We have shared the excitement of births and the pain of losing friends in '88. The future will bring more of the same and we hope to share those experiences with you, our friends.

The Roskamps, Capistrano Beach, California

A Merry Christmas and a Happy MCMLXXXIX (1989). How the Romans loved doing this!

Ralph E. Loretz (72), Vista, California

Our son Mike and I visited Nicaragua in October, just a week before the hurricane. I learned what life is like without a car, a phone, duplicating machines, etc. On the one hand, it's darned inconvenient. But on the other, it is personal and focused. People know each other, lend a hand. . . . Having electricity is a new development for many of them. Imagine our surprise when we saw people huddled around a TV at one hostel where we stayed; they were engrossed in the opening game of the World Series. Off and on we heard shouts—*Va Pues,* Dodgers! They nearly hit the ceiling when Kirk Gibson socked that homer that won the game.

Rae and Frank Wilken (63 and 65), Canoga Park, CA

The following letters were received at other times:

In a home for retired citizens the chief concern is health. The question "How are you?" may bring forth many depressing details, or a welcome "Fine." I believe the greatest possible service here is a smile. The woman in her 90s who sits at my right in the dining room often lets forth a sad, "Oh, dear."

What do I say? I think the best answer is a smile, which hopefully says "I'm enduring it; why don't you try?" My greatest challenge is to stay cheerful. No matter what, I try.

Celeste Graves (92), Houston, Texas

A few large snow flakes are falling this morning but they melt as fast as they hit the ground. I've always loved to watch those big white flakes come down. My grandmother used to explain them this way: "The old lady up there is shaking her feather bed." In my early childhood on our farm we did have feather beds! . . . I've read somewhere that when we die there is only one-third of our brain that is filled with any knowledge, and I've made a promise to myself that I will spend whatever time I have to live "by filling in that other two-thirds of my brain!" I don't like to think that all that gray matter is a big void space.

Elizabeth Griffith (83), Howell, Michigan

Jim has made some major career changes in retirement. He does volunteer work in our church two days a week, and works at neighboring churches one day a week. He has a third job for several hours four days a week at the Disneyland Hotel where he opens safes in the hotel rooms, safes for which the guests manage to forget their self-programmed combinations. Our granddaughters say he works for the church in the morning and cracks safes in the afternoon.

Marjorie and Jim Boltz (both 67), Anaheim, California

My Aunt Ethel (94) and Uncle Frank (98) will be celebrating their 75th anniversary on Easter Sunday. They have 17 grandchildren, 68 great-grandchildren, and 8 great-great-grandchildren. Aunt Ethel's two sisters both lived to age 95. Uncle Frank's brother lived to age 98.

Ruth Ayers Hofto, Tacoma, Washington

Howard has been invited to set up housing at the White House. He will set up four houses—all in time for the annual Easter Egg Hunt on the White House grounds. The miniature buildings that will go up are playhouses he manufactures. He got into the house business about two years ago after making a playhouse for his grandchildren and deciding other children might like the product, too.

Marie and Howard Goodhew (65 and 66), South Bend, IN

While her mother takes a course in Respiratory Therapy I have been taking care of my granddaughter Sarah, who is almost four. For the two of us it has been a continuous adventure, especially the walks we take with my little dog. Yesterday after the rain we saw maple leaves flattened against the damp sidewalk. Today it was dry and they had arched up, curled and rolled away, leaving beautiful shaded outlines of themselves imprinted in the cement. And I'd have missed it all if I hadn't been with a child who had time to look and wasn't in a hurry to get someplace. One day she spontaneously spoke this poem:

I wish I was a cloud
In the sky Up high
And I would try to spell "I love you."

Margaret Cooke (80), Rialto, California

Rose Pollard, her daughter and 13-year-old grandson, and I are preparing for a backpacking trip to Alaska in June. We're carrying packs down the cliff to the beach where we pick up rocks to add to our load for the hike back home.

Forrest Lunsway (78), Capistrano Beach, California

A letter from Vera Ikens (85) in Florida said: "I help out with Meals On Wheels doing volunteer work at the Senior Center. This reminded me of a story. Some mice went to heaven and were given roller skates by St. Peter. Then a cat went to heaven. Next day St. Peter asked the cat how things were going. "Fine," came the reply, "I really like those Meals On Wheels."

Chapter 12

Frank Laubach

His Life is an Inspiration to All

If there are those who have reached middle age—50 years old or so—and feel they have not attained the goals they hoped for, such persons should steep themselves in the story of Frank Laubach. His vision, and the literacy movement he started, have resulted in tens of millions of individuals learning to read. During one four-year period he traveled to 105 different countries around the world and helped create reading lessons in 315 different languages. In 1984, on the 100th anniversary of his birth, a 30-cent United States postage stamp bearing his likeness was issued in his honor.

Norman Cousins, himself a Super Senior whose outreach has greatly influenced the world, has called Laubach "one of the noblest human beings of our times."

But here is the fact which should inspire middle-agers: Laubach was nearly 50 before his lifetime goal was at all clear and, working in only one language, he had helped only a handful of obscure inhabitants of one country learn to read.

Frank Laubach, who died at age 85, and his wife Effa, who died at age 90, had it as their goal to work as missionaries among the Maranaos Muslims on the southern Philippine



U.S. postage stamp, honoring Dr. Frank Laubach

island of Mindanao. Conditions were so unsettled there that they had to work elsewhere in the Philippines for 15 years. When at last they were allowed to take up work in Mindanao, tragedy followed tragedy. The climate was hot; sanitary facilities were almost non-existent. One of their small sons died. Then another. And finally a third. Only their young son Robert was left. There were occasional furloughs back to the United States or to Manila for mother and remaining son, and sometimes for Frank Laubach as well. But eventually they returned to the area of their original goal, Mindanao and the Maranao Muslims.

Laubach wanted to start a school, train teachers, get a medical clinic and a church established. The Maranaos were suspicious and uncooperative. He was frustrated, discouraged; he even sensed defeat until, as though it were a miracle, he seemed to hear God giving him new directions. His son describes it in his book, *The Vision Lives On*.

"My child," God seemed to be speaking through Frank Laubach's own lips, "you have failed because you do not really love these Maranaos. You feel superior to them because you are white. If you can forget you are an American and think only how to love them, they will respond."

Laubach took God's advice. Wholeheartedly. Instead of just studying the Bible, he and the Maranaos studied the Koran and the Bible together. They studied the prophets who were common to both religions, such as Abraham and also the Prophet Jesus. Laubach was able to teach the Maranaos but he also began to discover that they had many things to teach him. "I find myself richer for the Islamic experience of God," Laubach once wrote. A verse from an Edwin Markham poem became a favorite with him:

> "He drew a circle that shut me out–
> Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
> But Love and I had the wit to win:
> We drew a circle that took him in!"

These new friends of his–and that is what they really became after God had intervened–were among the few in Mindanao who could read Arabic. There was no Maranao written language. Together, Laubach and they started creating one. A cheap printing press was imported and set up. A Maranao dictionary was written, word for word, almost out of thin air. Some simple rules of grammar were established.

Before too long a thousand pages of handset type were available as reading material. Young Robert and his mother were there now, and they pitched in. Every day Robert would speed home from school on his bike and help with the press. People lined up in front of the print shop, eager for each new page that was printed. Robert describes it in his book: "The paid teaching staff grew to 75 and hundreds of people were learning to read every week. You could walk through villages all around and see '100% Literate' on more and more doors."

A young secretary, Minnie Schultz, had written Frank Laubach from Pennsylvania, asking permission to come and join them. She became the first official "Laubach Literacy volunteer."

Almost at the same time that Minnie Schultz arrived, the Great Depression arrived as well. It hit the United States and soon affected the Laubachs and all those eager-to-learn Maranaos in that far southern island of the Philippines. The literacy budget was cut in half. Printing had to be curtailed. Worst of all, teachers had to be laid off. First, distress. Then impending disaster.

It is hard to realize that a crisis of such proportions as this could lead to the greatest forward step the Laubach Literacy movement could ever have. God works in mysterious ways, even bringing good out of Great Depressions. One of the Maranao leaders issued a virtual proclamation. "I have seen how much literacy means to my people," he said. "The women are learning how to take better care of their children. The men are learning better ways of farming. Literacy in my village will not stop. Every man or woman who has learned how to read must teach someone else—or I'll kill him!"

That was the beginning of *Each One Teach One*, the voluntary literacy movement that has reached to nearly every part of the globe. The Maranao leader did not have to kill a single person but, instead, millions of people around the world would eventually receive new life.

Frank Laubach lacked a year or so of being 50 years old when this crisis developed and was met in a way that only God could devise. He began his travels to all parts of the world, visiting more than a hundred countries, setting up the "each one teach one" plan, and devising new and simpler methods in over 300 different languages of teaching people to read. The Laubach method swept the world. The impact can only be measured by realizing the difference between a person not

able to read, as contrasted with one who can, then multiplying this by the millions.

I am greatly indebted to Robert Laubach's book, *The Vision Lives On*, for some of the details I have related.

Frank Laubach influenced Helen and me through his writings before we knew him personally, then through two work projects which were a part of his life.

The first book of Dr. Laubach's that we ever read was small: *Prayer, The Greatest Force in the World*. Small in size but great in content. One has to read, and study, and practice its precepts to realize its power. We attempted to do that.

His *Messages of a Modern Mystic* was mind-stretching, soul-stretching, and powerful in a different way. Three short excerpts give just a suggestion of the flavor:

"A good Muslim ought to utter the sacred word of God every time he begins to do anything, to sleep, to walk, or even turn around. A good Muslim would fill his life with God. I fear there are few good Muslims." (Laubach adds that Christians should do the same and that he fears there are few good Christians.)

"I am disgusted with the pettiness and futility of my unled self. . . . The sense of being led by an unseen hand which takes mine while another hand reaches ahead and prepares the way, grows on me daily."

"We have got to saturate ourselves with the rainbows and the sunset marvels in order to radiate them. It is as much our duty to live in the beauty of the presence of God on some mount of transfiguration . . . as it is for us to go down where (people) grope, and grovel, and groan, and lift them to new life."

Helen's copy of Laubach's *Channels of Spiritual Power* has nearly a third of the lines in many of the chapters underlined. She lived and lives by its precepts.

The first chapters of his *Thirty Years with the Silent Billion* is an amplified version of this brief sketch that I have given here. In the introduction, Lowell Thomas wrote of Laubach:

"By camel and canoe, jet, river boat, elephant, oxcart and shanks' mare, he has been a unique missionary with a world-wide parish. . . . He has been called the foremost teacher of our times . . . here is the thrilling story of a man who has had the courage to attempt the impossible and make it seem possible."

Helen and I were involved in two work projects in which we became associated with this man of miracles and hard work.

We first heard and met Dr. Frank Laubach some 35 years ago when he delivered an address at the First United Methodist Church in Pasadena, California. I still feel it is the most inspiring speech I have ever heard, not only for what he said but because of the absolute conviction with which he said it.

"We need volunteers," he explained in essence, "not only for teaching, but for many other tasks as well. We need people to help make simplified translations of the Bible. I have simplified some of the chapters. Volunteers have worked on others. But much of the Bible still needs translation into simplified English, so our new readers, using the Laubach method, can read and understand it."

Next day I had a long conference with Dr. Laubach in his hotel room. There are luxury hotels in Pasadena, but he was staying at an inexpensive one, in a small and simple room.

"The Book of Job is a vital chapter in the Bible," he explained, as we searched for ways I could help. "In a simplified form it would be inspirational reading for millions." I took on the task of translating Job into simplified English. Actually this did not end the way that either he or I intended, but I learned much along the way, not only about Job and his problems, but about Laubach literacy.

My first stop in working on this new project was at the World Literacy headquarters in New York City, while I was on a lecture trip in the East. Dr. Frederick Rex and Miss Madeline Beckman gave much advice and material that would be helpful in the Book of Job simplification.

"But it will be helpful, too," Dr. Rex explained, "to understand the psychology that must be used in working with, and teaching, the illiterate adults throughout the world." In his discussion of these principles I learned much about the literacy process.

"The people being worked with are adults and are given credit for being adult," he went on. "While they are illiterate, they are nonetheless intelligent. Their struggle for livelihood and existence under adverse conditions has strengthened their physical powers and sharpened their intellectual powers."

He explained to me that a common practice of teachers dealing with children in America is to teach by pointing out errors, having the children correct their errors and thus progress. "With sensitive adults in foreign lands," he cautioned,

"this can be a fatal method. As adults they are deeply sensitive to the fact that they cannot read. The least bit of criticism will often touch their sensitivity to such an extent that they will freeze up against the idea of trying to learn. A dozen extraneous excuses will be given, but the real reason is that they are ashamed or hurt."

Dr. Rex then went on to reveal one of the reasons for Frank Laubach's achievements. "He has been so highly successful with all these peoples largely because he uses the positive approach, absolutely and all the time. With the least bit of progress he will give inordinate praise. That is what the people need, and it spurs them on. When one of the pupils has read the first simple story, it is treated as a great event. For actually it is; a person truly being able to read who all his life had never done so before."

Helen and I started simplifying the Book of Job. To make sure we were progressing in the proper style I sent an extensive sample to Dr. Laubach in New York. No reply came, and we eventually put Job on the shelf. Two years later came this letter:

Jan. 21, 1956
My Dear Mr. Line:

Mrs. Laubach found a letter today which you had written to her in March 1954, with a translation of Job. I have read it all through this evening with keen pleasure. I never felt that I understood what the poetry meant before. This makes it crystal clear. It also says the whole thing with genuine beauty.

I am exceedingly sorry to have kept this translation for almost two years. I am away from home nearly all the time and get a look at only a small fraction of the things that come through the mail. Please forgive me.

God bless you and give you
courage and perseverance
(signed Frank C. Laubach)

Helen and I had gained so much in our intense study of Job that we felt rewarded just by that. Five or six years later Dr. Laubach came down to our home in Capistrano Beach to spend a couple of days planning literacy work in this area.

Helen became a literacy teacher. She and Mrs. Barnes, wife of the newly-appointed Presbyterian minister in San Clemente, went out into the agricultural fields nearby. Mrs.

LAUBACH LITERACY



THE HOPE OF THE WORLD

Barnes was fluent in Spanish.

"Would you like to learn to speak English?" she would ask the Mexican field laborers. "Come up to Helen Line's house tonight and we will start a class."

They came, eventually by the dozens. From the fields came the Mexican men. From homes where they were working as servants came Mexican women—most of them beautiful young girls. A sprinkling of other nationalities joined in as well—Japanese, Polish, Ecuadorian. There were classes once a week and parties—social gatherings—usually once a month. One Fourth of July evening, when they all gathered to watch the San Clemente fireworks display visible from our living room, some of the men brought their guitars, and the ladies brought their lovely soprano and alto voices. We all went outside, overlooking the ocean, to see the fireworks better. Songs and music filled the air, and neighbors flocked in to share in the delightful music.

More teachers were needed. Helen took a course in instructing new volunteers to fill this need. She taught a dozen or so in our home, then was asked to go into South Central Los Angeles to train teachers there. Some of the Mexican and other foreign students who gathered at our home, and some of the 200 teachers in Los Angeles who Helen enlisted and taught, are today—and have been for years—our most cherished friends.

We are indebted to Frank Laubach for the inspiration of his life, the enlightenment that has come from the reading of his books, the enduring memories of having known him, and the scores of friendships that have enriched our lives in connection with Helen's work in teaching literacy and training literacy teachers. The rewards will never end.

Nearly all of Laubach's great work in literacy took place after his 50th birthday. That fact alone is an inspiration.

Since this book is about Super Seniors, some of them in their 90s, and since Frank Laubach loved humor and relished telling a good story, I cannot refrain from closing this chapter by relating one of his favorite jokes.

Two men were walking past the gate of a cemetery. "How old are ye, Jake?" one man asked. "91," came the answer. "And ye?" "93," Sam replied. A slight pause, then Sam added, "It ain't hardly worth going home, is it?"

Chapter 13

Spiritual Adventurers

We Have Known

In our lifetime Helen and I have attended many different churches in various cities where we have lived and in each such church have absorbed wisdom and guidance from ministers. Most have been young, but some have been Seniors. We have also had longtime friendships with other ministers, of widely varied ages, not connected with churches we attended. Each one of these spiritual leaders has influenced our living. In this chapter, we introduce you to just four of these special friends, in each case singling out circumstances that have had particular meaning for us, and hopefully will be meaningful to you.

Our first example is special and unusual. In case you are ever threatened with a discomforting attack of "shingles" you will want to know about this minister friend of ours.

Paul Irwin, Cured by Clay

Five years ago the Rev. Dr. Paul Irwin—now 86—came down with a case of the shingles. He was retired, so the ailment did not interfere with his work. But how those shingles interfered with his life. He couldn't sleep; he could scarcely sit down, day or night. He paced the floor—in agony. At one time he became unconscious and, on wakening, hallucinated and tried to escape from his bedroom, falling over furniture and onto the floor. Double vision set in, and a degree of depression. Day after day, night after night, the torture went on. It was as hard on his wife as on him. Finally, she could stand it no longer.

"Paul," she exclaimed in desperation one day, "we have done everything. The doctors can't help you. Home remedies won't work. I am going to phone Betty Davenport Ford. She may just have the answer."

"Betty Ford? Don't be ridiculous," Paul groaned in reply. "Betty's no doctor. She's a sculptor. Do you want her to use her sculptor's knife to operate on me? Even an operation

wouldn't help me. Nothing seems to work."

"She'll use her knife on you, and it will work. It has *got* to. You can't go on this way any longer. I'll telephone her this instant."

That telephone call was the beginning of an almost miraculous cure. Ever since his retirement, Paul Irwin had wanted to dabble in clay—in sculpturing—but had never found the time. Betty Ford was then, and still is, one of the great creative sculptors of America. The Irwins had known her for years. Even though in pain with shingles, Paul started taking lessons from her. His wife drove him to Betty's studio for the first lesson. Dr. Irwin took that initial lesson with the use of just one eye; the other was bandaged. It developed that he had a natural talent for work in clay. He started working on a likeness of Abraham Lincoln. It was so absorbing that he gradually began to forget about his shingles.

Then he tackled "Moses." Any good sculptor can do a likeness of the man who gave us the Ten Commandments. But in this new creation that he was shaping, Paul brought to the task not only his newly-acquired sculpturing skills, but a Doctor of Theology's knowledge of spiritual nuances. He had begun his ministry in Flint, Michigan, during the days of the 1930s sit-down strikes in the labor movement. After receiving his doctorate at Columbia University he had become professor of religious education at the University of Southern California, then had accepted a similar position at the Claremont, California, School of Theology, where, after his retirement, the *Paul B. Irwin Lectureship* was established. Along the way he had found time to write a book, *The Care and Counseling of Youth in the Church*, and to serve as a teaching missionary in Singapore where he had founded the Pastoral Counseling Center.

Without really thinking about it, as he worked on his "Moses," Paul Irwin drew on his years of experience as a minister and professor of religion. As his hands worked the clay, his mind—nourished by fifty years of biblical study—unconsciously directed his hands in the creation of a new Mosaic concept, an authentic and original one. His ministerial friends admired it. His Jewish friends said he had caught just the right concepts to make of his "Moses" a historical figure.

Betty Davenport Ford—and Moses—cured Rev. Dr. Paul Irwin of the shingles. And left him with a new interest that is changing his years of retirement into years of new creation.

He has just done a *Wizard of Oz*-type lion and a stylized Siamese cat. Ideas for new creations are whirling in his mind. Except for an occasional almost unnoticeable imbalance in walking, his shingles are gone—absorbed in the clay.

A sculptor's knife really can perform miracle operations.

Thomas Kilgore Kept On Praying

For 22 years the Rev. Dr. Thomas Kilgore, Jr. was senior pastor of the Los Angeles Second Baptist Church. This is more than a church; under his leadership it sponsored a Community Center, providing activities for senior citizens, teenagers, and children. There are athletic teams, cultural and craft clubs, social clubs, tutorial programs, adult classes, a retreat center in Lake Elsinore and Griffith Gardens and Kilgore Manor Senior Citizens complex of 91 units. The Center operates a Child Development Center, involving some 100 children and a staff of 22.

Helen and I first met Dr. Kilgore through his sister, Malissa Briley. Along with Helen and me, she was on the Board of Managers of the Watts area YMCA, which had been organized following the Watts riots to help direct the lives of young blacks in a deprived neighborhood.

Dr. Kilgore's outreach was national in scope. When funds were needed for the work being carried on by a friend of his, Coretta Scott King, widow of Martin Luther King, Jr., Dr. Kilgore responded. Through his committees he gathered together the finest array of talent that could be assembled in one place—all donating their services without charge. Helen and I attended that benefit and thrilled to the singing of Leslie Uggums and Frank Sinatra. Sammy Davis, Jr. was master of ceremonies. Charlton Heston spoke, with that voice of his that could turn the reciting of a nursery rhyme into a work of art. Jessie Jackson was among the guests. At the reception afterward we had the chance to meet them all.

Young Thomas grew up as one of twelve children in a North Carolina family in which church attendance was taken for granted. He can recall, even at the age of three, standing on a pulpit "lining" hymns, and at age eight reciting papers his mother had written for him in churches and at fairs.

North Carolina was strictly segregated in the early decades

of the 20th century and when Tom was 15 years old he was arrested by the county sheriff and falsely accused of insulting a white woman whom he had actually never even seen.

"Six months on the chain gang," was the judge's sentence. Tom prayed about it and so did his family. His father hired a lawyer from a different county and the judge lowered the sentence. If the boy would leave the county he would not need to go to jail. Tom had just finished ninth grade. There was no high school for blacks in his county, and he was going to leave in any case. It worked well. "I was no longer afraid. I hated no one," he said.

There were plans for college—a Baptist school, Shaw University; a scholarship awaited him. A second severe blow struck; it was discovered the scholarship funds had been lost in a poor investment. College dreams evaporated. Tom didn't despair. He prayed, and got a job as a waiter at eight dollars a week, plus tips. In the fall of 1931, instead of going to Shaw, he entered Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia.

To help pay his way he got a job as a waiter in the Morehouse teacher's dining room. At Ebenezer Baptist Church he became a volunteer church school teacher and the pastor, Martin Luther King, Sr. became his mentor. Martin Luther King, Jr. was then two-and-a-half years old. While attending Ebenezer Church young Thomas Kilgore also preached there occasionally.

Every setback, it seemed, developed a silver lining. By not being able to go to Shaw, he had come to Morehouse instead. Martin Luther King, Jr. became a lifelong friend. Thomas Kilgore participated with King in some of the marches and non-violent movements that resulted in the historic Civil Rights Act.

Graduating from Morehouse with high honors, Thomas obtained an assistant pastorship, helped on his father's farm in the depths of the Great Depression, and became pastor of New Bethel Baptist Church in Asheville, North Carolina, just three months before he was married in 1936.

Other pastorates followed in varied Southern churches with important outreach. Then in 1947 he accepted the pastorate of Friendship Baptist Church in the heart of New York City's Harlem. For 16 years Thomas Kilgore, Jr. served in a neighborhood that presented some of the most trying problems, and which was most critically in need of a church's healing ministry, of any area in the United States.

"Eleven hundred people lived on the block where our church was situated," he once wrote, "literally stacked one upon another, all of them God's children, all of them needing His Word."

A small group called the Prayer Band met at six o'clock every Sunday morning to wrestle and pray about the problems surrounding them. The group was effective. Its leader was Mother Alice Brown, a woman who lived to be 107 years old.

Immediately next door to the church was a house of prostitution. The Prayer Band met to pray about the situation; they spoke with all of the women who would permit it. One gave up prostitution and joined the church; some left the neighborhood. Dr. Kilgore said "Through it all, I think we learned something about one another, ourselves, and what love for all people really means."

In 1963 the Rev. Dr. Kilgore became pastor of Second Baptist Church in Los Angeles.

We often attended his church. What services those were—filled with the music of an adult and also a youth choir, the enthusiasm of a sanctuary-packed congregation, and the preaching of Dr. Kilgore.

When he did anything he did it wholeheartedly, and properly. An entire busload from his church made the transcontinental trip from Los Angeles to Atlanta, Georgia, to attend a farewell ceremony for the president of Morehouse College, Dr. Benjamin E. Mays. They took with them, for presentation to the retiring president, a small token of appreciation—$10,000.

In 1969 Dr. Kilgore was elected national president of the American Baptist Convention, the first black ever to head that predominantly white church body.

In 1973 a request came to Helen and me from The Upper Room in Nashville, Tennessee, to write one of a series of small books on prayer. "There will be several such books in the series," Dr. Maxie Dunnam said to us. "Can you recommend some other person to write an effective book giving personal experiences with prayer?" We recommended Dr. Kilgore. It is from the small book titled *I Kept on Praying*, which he wrote for The Upper Room, that I have quoted in several instances.

Thomas Kilgore, Jr. formally retired from the ministry in 1985. But for a man of his qualities and stature retirement is just the opening for ever new avenues of service. Now 76, he

heads up causes, delivers speeches, preaches sermons as a fill-in pastor, and covers the United States from coast to coast, maintaining a small home in North Carolina, still carrying on his calling as a servant of God. He keeps on serving, and he keeps on praying. Those have been the centerpieces of his life.

Allan Hunter, A Man for the Ages

Allan A. Hunter was one of Helen's and my dearest and best-loved friends, but he was far more; he was our spiritual mentor. For 30 years he nourished us with his insights.

The first half of the year 1982 stands out above all other times in our relationship with this simple man whose life was a shining light. On February 20, in what would be the last wedding at which he would preside, Dr. Hunter united our grandson Jeffrey Knute in marriage with lovely Brendy Fasano. They wanted the celebration to be in our garden overlooking the Pacific, at Capistrano Beach, and they wanted Dr. Hunter to officiate, since he had helped Jeff in his "growing up" days, just as he had helped literally thousands of other teenagers and adults in their growing up problems. It was one of the most beautiful wedding ceremonies we've ever experienced.

The next month, on March 30, Allan's 89th birthday was celebrated at Mt. Hollywood Congregational Church in Los Angeles, where he had been minister for 37 years until his retirement. At the celebration, Norman Cousins, to whom Allan had meant so much, spoke glowingly of their relationship. Ninety-eight-year-old John Anson Ford, former county supervisor affectionately known as "Mr. Los Angeles," gave Allan a heartwarming tribute. Men and women whom Allan had christened as babies, men and women for whom he had read the wedding vows, men and women of every color—blacks, whites, Asians—all came to thank this man they loved. As they broke into a spontaneous a cappella song of praise, Norman Cousins sprang to the piano and added the accompaniment. Allan Hunter rose to express his thanks. The words he said were few; the depth of meaning in that smile that shone like an unspoken prayer of love from his face penetrated to the heart of every person there.

Two and one-half months later, in Pomona, Allan was

hospitalized with cancer. Toward the end of June we all felt that his mission on earth was drawing to a close. He was in a small triangular room just off the hall on the second floor. People came in throngs from all over the country. Normal hospital rules had to be suspended. We had songfests at his bedside. There were times of unbelievable joy, times of silent and audible prayer, times of sadness. More and more people came. Amazed at it all, a nurse exclaimed, "Dear God, who is that man?" The answer was simple. He was one in a million—the most "real" person that any of those visitors at his bedside had ever known, whose spirit will forever guide those whose lives he touched with his love and caring.

An hour-and-a-half before midnight on July 5, at the moment of the longest lunar eclipse in more than a century, Allan's spirit ascended and mingled with the stars.

Dan Genung, A Life of Contrasts

Dan B. Genung is 74 years old, one of the two or three persons under the arbitrary age limit of 75 set for this book. But his life has woven together such a tapestry of miracles that his story must be told. That life has been a study in contrasts.

Dan was born in Prescott, a frontier town in the then four-year-old state of Arizona. He grew up in mining camps such as Stanton, called "Bloody Stanton" by the *Tombstone Epitaph*. There were more mining camps and years of ranch life. Then he left all that behind, switching to life as a student of journalism at the University of Arizona. There he joined the church, became deeply interested in world peace and social justice and felt he could best further those goals by becoming a minister. The tapestry of miracles he was weaving became a flying carpet. He forsook the Southwest for the Midwest and enrolled in the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, where he spent five years, collected two degrees, and married a beautiful girl named Frances.

Before nightfall of their wedding day they headed back west to plunge into a frontier life of a different character than Dan had ever seen as a youth. They did not go to Arizona, but to the fringe areas of the Los Angeles slums.

"The *All Peoples Christian Church and Center*. How does that name strike you?" Dan asked the trustees of the Disciples of Christ, owners of the building in which their new

church and center was to function. The name came from Isaiah 56:7: "My house shall be a house of prayer for all peoples."

The "all peoples" proved to be apt, but the "house of prayer" had to wait. They were in the midst of an area of high delinquency and overcrowding. Thousands of white and black workers were streaming in from the South, trying to adjust to a new life. In Arizona it had been "bloody Stanton" and an untamed frontier. In Los Angeles it was "Zoot-Suit" riots which broke out just after the Genungs arrived. The idea of a formal church was crowded out by the desperate social needs all about them.

They worked with five gangs of zoot-suiters. Two clubs were formed, the "Hawks" for boys and the "Young Americans" for teenage girls. They set up a childcare center, organized athletic teams, and supervised a busy playground. After months devoted to the dire needs of the area they said to each other, "Let's try to get the church started."

A service was carefully planned. Word went out over the entire area. Their hopes were not too high, but they did have hopes. The congregation of that first church service consisted of two small Chinese children. As they walked out Dan looked up at the sign outside: *All Peoples Christian Church and Center*. "For a while longer," he mused, "I guess we'll have to softpedal the 'church' and accent the 'center.' The 'house of prayer' will be our own home."

Through four action-packed and sometimes discouraging years, Dan and Frances carried on their work at the center, living on the premises so they could always be in close touch. Then—another minor miracle. Forty-six persons—Japanese, Chinese, Koreans, Mexicans, Blacks, and Anglos—enrolled as charter members of the church. The average age was 26.

In the 14 years that Dan and Frances carried on their labor of love the church grew to a membership of 318, and the staff of the center to 14. There were many volunteer leaders and all types of group activities, clubs, and adult classes.

Then another miracle. Cathedral Films based a motion picture, *For All Peoples*, on the work Dan and Frances were carrying out against such great odds. That film took the message of their work to far places. The All Peoples Church has continued its development throughout the years.

Being both pastor of the church and administrator of the center grew to be too much for one man, even with the help of

his wife. His doctor ordered a six-month rest.

A less demanding pastorate was in order and Dan underwent another change of scene, serving two Southern California parishes before becoming minister of Mt. Hollywood Congregational Church, where his dear friend Allan Hunter had been for 37 years.

Mt. Hollywood's membership was moderate in size but enormous in influence. An example was John Anson Ford, a parishioner for 62 years and the most honored member of the Board of Supervisors that Los Angeles County ever had. The Rev. Dan Genung delivered the sermon celebrating the 100th birthday of "Mr. Los Angeles," as Ford was called. Dan said:

"I wish I could introduce all the distinguished persons and long array of friends of John Anson and Lois Ford who are here. I wish I could name all of his time-honored achievements since he and Lois arrived in Los Angeles in 1920, after crossing the nation in a Chevrolet car. He influenced the establishment of eight county parks. He established the Death Valley 49er Days. The Pilgrimage Theatre and Bowl owes its existence to him and has now been named the *John Anson Ford Cultural Arts Center*. At the Music Center a bronze tablet reads: "John Anson Ford, whose vision and leadership led to the selection of this site for the Music Center."

The Hollywood Bowl owes its existence to him. Dan related the story of how the future site of the famed bowl was tested for acoustics. Escorting the famed opera singer Madame Schumann-Heink to the proposed site, a committee then scattered about the hillside waiting for the diva to pour forth some contralto notes. In stepping from the car she missed the running board and said, "Damn." From the hillside came voices, "We hear you. Fine! . . ."

Two weeks after that hundredth birthday celebration, John Anson Ford died. Dan Genung presided at his memorial service, just as he had presided at similar services for Allan Hunter and other great leaders. In 1984, at age 70, after 14 years at Mt. Hollywood and 44 years as a minister, Dan Genung formally retired.

But he did not retire from work; he simply switched from the pulpit to the pen. In spirit he went back to those early days of his in the frontier life of Arizona. Dan began writing a historical novel based on the life of his grandfather, Charley Genung, who was a pioneer of the state's territorial days. By a series of continuous miracles Charley Genung escaped death

over a dozen times. "It's more history than novel," Dan says of the gripping story depicting that historical era. Had it not been for the miracles that saved his grandfather's life there would have been no Dan Genung to perform miracles in the field of ministry and service. The Genung saga has come full circle.

Chapter 14

Mabel Hutchinson

She Created Treasures from Scraps and Rediscovered Art at Age 86

"These pieces of wood are too beautiful to burn, Milon. We're going to have to get our firewood some other way."

Sixty-year-old Mabel Hutchinson held up two odd-shaped pieces of mahogany scraps which she had picked up from the floor by her husband's workbench. Milon was a fine cabinet maker—creator of artistically designed chairs and chests and tables. Each day found a litter of exotic woods—teak, walnut, rosewood, African laurel, mahogany—around the shop where he and Mabel worked as a team. She was the artist and did most of the designing. From her designs he fashioned those rare woods into creations which found their way into the homes of Hollywood celebrities and into museum collections.

That evening Mabel and Milon didn't take their scraps home for burning as they usually did. Mabel had an idea. During the next few days she began laying odd-shaped bits of wood on a small panel of plywood, creating an exotic design.

"Looks good," said Milon encouragingly. "Glue them down and you'll have a piece of art."

They entered her creation in a sculpture show; it found a ready buyer. More exotic creations, more sales. The daily piles of scrap wood became the ingredients of a new challenge.

"Here are three of the best ever," said Mabel one day to her husband. The three long narrow pieces of plywood were adorned with scraps that were not only beautiful in shape and color, but were arranged with the eye of a trained artist.

Milon admired them. Reaching down, he pushed the three pieces together, side by side. "They're good individually. They're even better as a unit."

Suddenly the two of them looked at what lay before them. "It's a door," Milon exclaimed. "You can decorate one large piece of plywood and make a door."

That discovery figuratively and literally opened a new door in Mabel's life—opened it wide. She was on her way to being known as the "door lady."

A craft fair was soon to open in Pasadena. Mabel created her first door from scraps and entered it. Art critics from eastern America and from Japan were at the show's opening. Mabel's door made art magazine headlines in New York and Tokyo.

Other periodicals began featuring Mabel and her doors. "Treasures from Scraps" was the theme that opened the door–again literally–to nearly every magazine that heard of her. Her work was featured in several art books.

Orders began flooding in. For those close at hand Mabel and Milon delivered the doors in person, and supervised their proper installation. One month it would be a delivery to Beverly Hills. Then Los Angeles or Long Beach or Bel Air. The inflooding door orders turned them into almost regular commuters to cities in the San Fernando Valley. Requests were coming in from other states. Their "door journeys" to Scottsdale and Prescott, in Arizona, were like vacation trips. Then a flight to Honolulu, Hawaii, with a set of Mabel's double doors stashed away in the plane's cargo section.

"This is fantastic," exclaimed Milon one day. "I never knew art had such an outreach. From sea to shining sea."

Mabel's doors and other exotic wood creations from scraps eventually graced homes and business establishments in 22 states, providing enduring beauty in the lives of discerning people from Florida to Hawaii.

Milon's cabinet work took on new dimensions of excellence; he too could not fill the flood of orders that swamped him. But he tried his hardest; Mabel needed all the scraps she could get.

Unable to have children, Milon and Mabel found their greatest joy in being together in whatever they undertook. This had been the pattern of their lives for 50 years.

Fifty years. The golden anniversary. It was celebrated at a party given by two couples who were their closest friends. Invitations went out and friends responded, from near and far. Almost more than an anniversary party, the celebration became a family reunion. Close relatives made the trip down from Idaho, where Mabel and Milon had been born and raised. Other former Idaho relatives drove or flew in from places in California and Arizona where they had moved. A panorama of their early Idaho lives on the very frontier of a frontier state unfolded during the conversations and reminiscences during that celebration marking their half century together.

Three months after that 50th anniversary celebration, Milon was dead. A heart attack. Sudden. Unexpected. At that moment Mabel almost died too. She did die—in spirit—completely.

Fifty years of togetherness can be an unbearable burden when that closeness is cut off—forever—overnight. Almost daily Mabel phoned her closest relative, a niece in Bakersfield. Almost weekly she pleaded, "Come and get me, Barbara. I need to tear away from these surroundings. These memories. They are haunting me like ghosts. Just a day or two with you would help."

Barbara came—many times. But one day she came with a suggestion. Almost an ultimatum. "Aunt Mabel, you must get hold of yourself. Your memories are beautiful—not ghosts. Don't let them haunt you. Let them help you. Those cherished memories can heal, not hurt. Write them down. Start at the beginning, back in that Idaho log cabin, right on the frontier, where you were born. Relive that frontier—with its hardships, yes, but with all its grace and beauty, too. Aunt Mabel, write the story of your life."

Reluctantly, gradually—almost painfully at first—Mabel responded to that advice. She was 75. Three vital end products resulted from her reluctant response. Through four years in which she poured out her memories and emotions on paper, the healing process literally saved Mabel's life. That was more than worth all the effort. But it resulted, also, in a vivid chronicle of pioneer frontier existence which has become a treasured part of the Idaho State Library's valued historic collection.

There was a third result. In a beautiful manner, her story revealed the way that subtle influences, in remote pioneer surroundings, can produce the seeds for a fertile flowering of creativity in writing and in music, but especially in art. It became a study of the power of psychological and environmental forces in shaping a life.

"The Log Cabin," is the title of Chapter One in Mabel's two-volume autobiography.

In a cabin with two rooms and a lean-to, surrounded by sagebrush and wildness in southern Idaho, she was born. The cabin home was 13 miles from the town of Blackfoot, four miles from Firth, where 200 people lived. In this isolated frontier setting a young country girl who would not see the outside world until she was 18 absorbed the life about her in

such a way that a career which would become national in scope was laid for her in art.

"Some of my most vivid memories were of the year I started school," Mabel recalls. "It was a one-room building, and all eight grades were in that one room."

During that first year in school an incident occurred—seemingly small—that gave much more than a small clue as to the direction her life would take. One day an eighth-grade student, instead of going out to play at recess, stayed in his seat, busily guiding a pencil back and forth on a piece of paper. Mabel wondered; was he drawing a picture? She had often tried to make pictures with a pencil on pieces of wrapping paper in their log cabin home. Mabel strolled over and peeked. The boy was drawing a pine tree, putting every needle on every branch, just like real. It was beautiful, she thought. That was the sort of thing she wanted to do almost more than anything else in the world.

Mabel made a vow to start practicing, just as that boy was doing. She followed up on that vow, and drew at every opportunity at home, in school, or at her Aunt Agnes's house, as she advanced from one grade to another.

Then came the time for high school, in Blackfoot, 13 miles away. That meant "boarding out" and working for her meals and lodging.

"What subjects do you want to take?" the teacher asked.

"Art," came Mabel's quick reply.

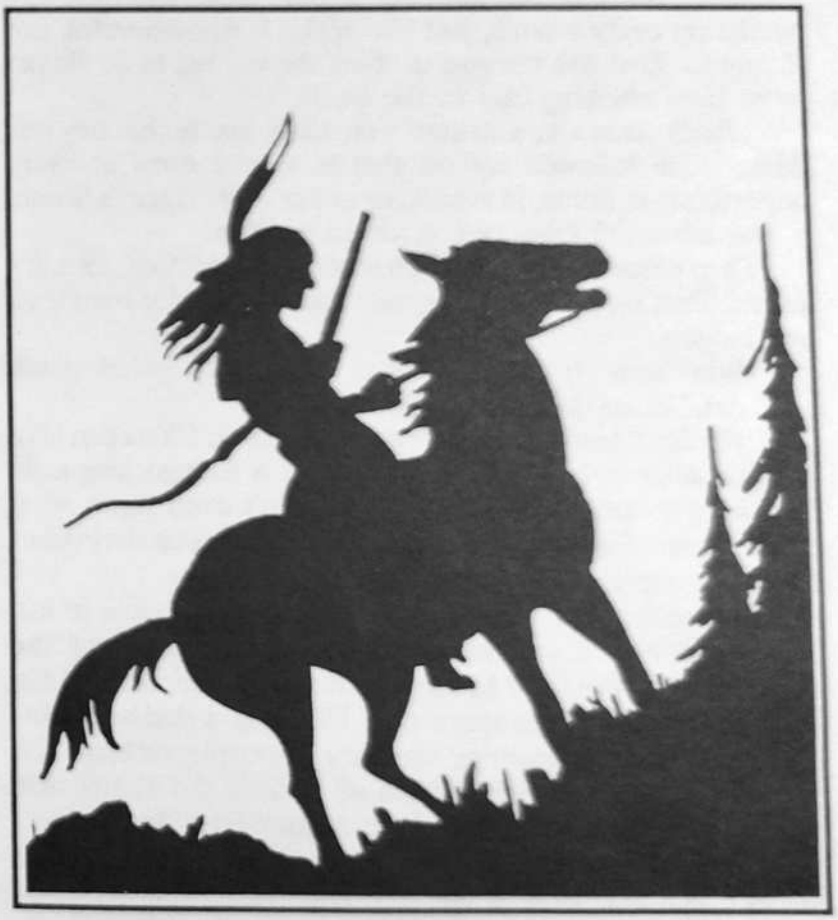
"We don't teach art here," was the answer. You can take English, ancient history, chemistry, and a foreign language. You *have* to take algebra." Mabel didn't even know what algebra was. She was not able to have an art class during her freshman, sophomore, or junior years.

The senior class in high school did have a course in art. There was also a yearbook, and Mabel did many of the drawings. What a thrill to see her own signed pictures in the annual. She spent her spare time by filling a sketch book—page after page of drawings, sketches of people, or farm life, or scenery—hundreds of them in all. Little did she realize that this sketch book would open a door to college.

Mabel had no hopes for such a thing. There wasn't the money. Her dear mother had died and Mabel, at age 15, had to be the woman of the house at their farm home, not only working in the fields but doing the cooking and caring for her two younger brothers, Jack and Bear.

Quite by chance, a teacher from Logan, Utah, visiting in Mabel's community, saw that sketch book. At once he became excited. He examined it painstakingly. Then, "Why are you not in college?" Scarcely giving Mabel a chance to reply he continued, "I am going to write a letter to the president of Utah State College in Logan. You must get some training. Utah State has an excellent art department."

This man was so final in all he said. "You send your sketchbook of drawings along with my letter," he continued. "Send them tomorrow. We'll see what happens."



Drawing by Mabel Hutchinson for her high school yearbook

Mabel sent them. More happened than she ever would have dreamed of. As autumn colors began spreading across the valley by Idaho's Blackfoot River, Mabel bid goodbye to her father and two brothers and registered as an art student at the college in Logan, Utah. She was soon taking not only the routine college classes but, most important, she was absorbing instruction by skilled teachers in a full time class in art.

College life was surely opening new worlds. It all seemed too good to be true.

As things turned out, it *was* too good to be true. On February 29, 1924, after just half a year in her new world, word came that her father was dead. College days were over for Mabel; she had to return home, not only to become a mother to her two younger brothers but to assume most of the responsibilities of managing the farm.

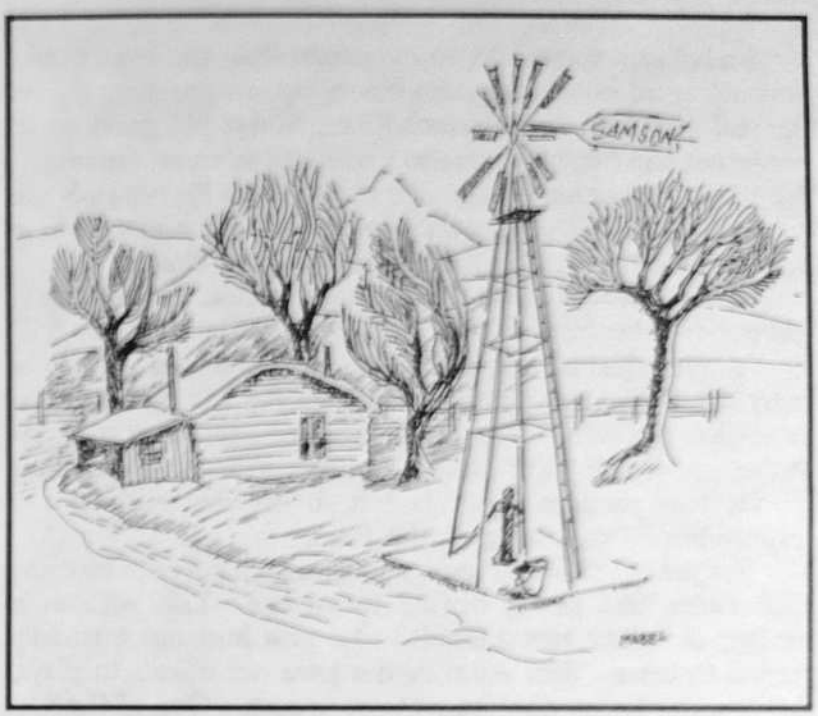
The year of 1924 was hard, and it seemed never to be over. 1925 came, and slowly drifted to an end. Life without a mother or father was difficult. But new horizons gradually started to open. Her Aunt Agnes gave her tickets to plays, there were parties, and she met young men. One of them, a local boy, had just come back from a long trip to distant California, where he worked in a city called Riverside. His tales of the outside world were exciting. They met often. This young man was different from any of the others. Handsome, yes, but also intelligent; his English was perfect. He did not smoke. As Mabel wrote: "I was falling harder every minute. He was more than I had dreamed of."

Mabel fell in love with Milon Hutchinson.

On March 19, 1927, a year after their first meeting, Milon and Mabel were married. It was not *his* idea. It was Mabel's, almost completely. He had explained his financial situation to her many times. Marriage must wait some sort of steady job, some hope for a future that would be at least reasonably secure. For Mabel, security did not mean money. It meant Milon.

Of his weekly take-home pay, Milon paid ten dollars for the license, five dollars to the minister. With the trace of a smile mixed almost equally between humor and horror, Milon pulled two dollars from his pocket. "This is what we start married life on, including our honeymoon."

On one thing Milon was insistent: there must be a honeymoon. "We'll go to Idaho Falls and stay overnight in the hotel. All honeymooners from here do that. I'll borrow the money."



Upper—Idaho log cabin, Mabel Hutchinson's birthplace
Lower—Milon Hutchinson's Idaho birthplace, by Mabel Hutchinson



He borrowed two dollars for the hotel, an equal amount for a luxury meal, and an extra dollar for contingencies. It was an initial indication of how nearly every need of their future together would in some way be met. The very next week Mabel discovered that her grandmother had left a parcel of land to her father. The discovery came when a man showed up who wanted to buy it, for $1200, an unheard-of sum. The sale was made. Mabel and her two brothers, Jack and Bear, had $400 apiece. With her share of the fortune, Mabel and Milon started on their *real* honeymoon. Loading his car with all the personal possessions it would hold, they moved to Riverside, California, the city where Milon had visited and worked on his first California trip. He knew it well and had friends there.

Milon was able to get a job with the city fire department. And Mabel, a few years later, started back to college! Riverside had a junior college. In September 1936 Mabel enrolled there. "At 33," she wrote, "I felt ancient compared to the 18-, 19-, and 20-year-old students swarming in the quad."

She signed up for two art classes that, over a two-year period, gave her the professional training she had needed so much, and had yearned for.

Millard Sheets, Phil Dike, and Rex Brandt, rising young artists, were luminaries in the painting world. The instructor showed his students samples of their works. "We all knew we had a long, long way to go," Mabel wrote. It would not be easy.

Graduation day came. "After many speeches the small documents of Associate of Arts degrees were handed out alphabetically," Mabel wrote. "Milon was there watching and waiting in the front row. As my name was called and I was handed my tiny diploma, I left the stage clutching my prize and ran into his waiting arms. I possessed this small slip of paper that would carry such weight in the days to come."

Next to Milon, art was still Mabel's major passion. Rex Brandt, one of Riverside's own sons, had just graduated as an art major from the University of California at Berkeley. He was organizing a summer class of freelance painters. Mabel joined his watercolor landscape painting class. Under expert instruction she wielded the brushes with ever increasing skills. She was even persuaded to send one of her paintings to the juried show of the California Watercolor Society in Los Angeles. It was accepted and became a part of the annual exhibit.

In 1941, America entered the war against Germany and Japan, and Milon and Mabel were affected in many ways. They were dismayed when all west coast Japanese were rounded up and sent to desolate relocation centers. Jack Horikawa, one of Mabel's fellow art students, was among those sent off, with thousands of others, to the bleak desert camp at Poston, Arizona. Milon and Mabel loaded their car with art supplies—brushes, tubes of paint, sketch books, watercolor paper—all contributed by the Artists Guild, and headed off to Poston. Getting admitted to the camp was not easy, but they made it.

Jack Horikawa and all the other artists he knew in the camp were overcome with gratitude at those supplies, which would give them an opportunity for creative expression during their cruel internment.

The small city of Riverside was flooded with soldiers from March Air Base and from nearby Camp Haan, which had been built almost overnight. Mabel donated her services to make sketches of the servicemen at the USO. How glad they were to find someone, this far from home, who took such a deep interest in them. How thrilled they were to receive, as gifts from Mabel, the sketches she had made, to send home to their families and loved ones. In return, Mabel was thrilled that she had found a new outlet for her talents. This charity endeavor helped enhance her skills as an artist.

In the autumn of 1943 Milon had an emergency message from his father in Idaho, who couldn't get farm help; all the young men were either in the army or in defense plants. Could Milon and Mabel come up and help for a while?

They could and they did. Mabel not only worked with farm tools in the fields; in the early dawns and late evenings—when the light was golden—she worked with brush and easel to paint all the scenes of her childhood. The snows came early that year and wintry landscapes added to the challenge.

"I spied an abandoned old wagon in an apple orchard . . . a perfect subject," Mabel wrote. "The dark brown wheels half buried in snow, against the dark patterns of bare trees. It was a natural! Though it was cold enough to make ice crystals on the paper as I painted, inspiration took over. Who cared about how cold it was. Painting a snow scene was easy, just leave the white paper for snow, pale blue for shadows . . . burnt umber and yellow ochre . . . that was about all it took.

In a few minutes I had my subject well in hand." By the time they were ready to return to California Mabel had captured some rare memories of rural Idaho in her watercolor paintings.

During all the years that Mabel was finding wide possibilities for creative expression in the field of art, Milon was also reaching out in his quest for a type of work that would more fully satisfy his deepest needs for creative workmanship. He built a workshop and bought tools for fashioning objects in wood. He and Mabel discovered that a chair could be an object of art as well as something to sit on, an artistically designed and skillfully crafted cabinet could not only hold dishes or knickknacks, it could be aesthetically pleasing as well.

Mabel enjoyed painting and it was an outlet for her creativity. She received recognition, but not much more. Hers was not a famous name in the art world. A few relatives bought her watercolors, usually for $50, once a hundred. As Milon's work in cabinets became more demanding, Mabel deserted her easel and became his helper in the workshop. Her artistic sense was important in designing the chairs and chests and cabinets that he made. They moved to Corona del Mar, then, after a few years, settled in Capistrano Beach, in each city building a better workshop than the one they left behind. In the closets of their home and in a large wall closet in the office of their workshop, all of Mabel's paintings were stored and forgotten. Through 30 years they gathered dust. She almost forgot that she had ever stood before an easel.

At this point Helen and I became important in her life. For 29 years she has been our neighbor—just two blocks away in Capistrano Beach. On our morning walks, three times a week, for as long as we can remember we have stopped to say hello, and sometimes have a bite of breakfast. One or two of her paintings have always hung on the walls of her small but beautifully planned home.

"I really like that one," Helen said one morning as we sipped coffee and munched toast at the table which Milon had made for their home. "Do you know what I wish you would do?" Helen continued.

Mabel knew that Helen and I had founded the Chaffey Community Art Association in Ontario, California, in memory of our eight-year-old daughter Barbara, who had died of leuk-

emia. This had been the subject of our breakfast conversations. She was one of the first persons with whom we had shared the news when we learned that the association had at last, after more than 40 years, obtained a spacious gallery for hanging its ever-changing exhibits, and where its permanent collection could be displayed annually. It was a collection valued now at a million dollars or more.

"Mabel," continued Helen, "our association is going to celebrate its 45th anniversary next month. You should be represented in it. Would you consider giving one of your paintings to CCAA?"

"Me? In a collection of noted artists like that? I don't think they'd even take one of my things. But yes, if they want one, I'll gladly give it."

Mabel gave a large watercolor. It was part of the 45th anniversary celebration exhibit. The artist, Robert George, for a long time president of the association, took one look at the painting, and told us he had to see its creator.

On his next visit to us we took him over to Mabel's home. At Robert's insistence, she began pulling her long forgotten works out of closets.

Soon we were standing in the middle of half a dozen old paintings that surrounded us on all sides.

"They've been gathering dust for years," said Mabel apologetically. "I've really been ashamed to hang them."

"Ashamed?" exclaimed Robert. "Mabel, you don't know what you have here. These paintings are treasures."

Robert George, where art is concerned, is not only an authority, but a highly regarded artist himself, whose works command high prices. He had become president of the art association Helen and I had founded when it was at a low point in its life, and had helped build it back into one of the most important such associations in the western United States. From that first visit in Mabel's home, which resulted because of the gift of a painting to the association, Robert George took charge of Mabel's career.

"Do you have any more paintings?" he wanted to know.

"Well, yes, some down at the shop. After Milon's death I've rented the workshop but I still keep the office there, to write in."

Within ten minutes, Robert George and Mabel were at the workshop office. We tagged along. Mabel began pulling old watercolors from a closet. "These are the dregs," she

explained. "I haven't even dared hang them, or show them to anyone. They're just good for collecting dust."

Robert George wiped them off, studied each one with a professional eye, then literally exploded.

"Have you ever sold any? Are there any that might be loaned to us if we put on a one-man show?"

"A one-woman show," interrupted Helen.

"I stand corrected," came Robert's reply.

Within a few months, Robert had entered some of Mabel's works in a Santa Barbara exhibit. A wealthy art collector had seen the painting Mabel had given to the Chaffey Association at the time of its 45th anniversary celebration. He came to her home to see and study all of her works. Here was an artist whose paintings, professional in quality, came largely out of a pioneer background. He came again, and ended up buying every painting she had. Robert began planning a display of all her available works at the Chaffey Art Association's gallery, from September 7 to November 5, 1989. The catalog for that show is one of the finest the association has ever produced, paid for by the art collector. An exhibit is in the planning stage for the prestigious Laguna Art Gallery. A showing of her works in Riverside—Mabel and Milon's former hometown—is scheduled. More exhibits are in the offing. This is a climax in a creative and expansive lifetime.

Mabel Hutchinson is now 86 years old. Her life in the field of art has begun anew.

[See After Words at back.]

Chapter 15

Nature Lovers

Who Plant Trees and Grow Flowers

John Cummings, A Modern Day Johnny Appleseed

Johnny Appleseed—his real name was John Chapman—was the inspired individual who filled the valleys of Ohio and neighboring states with the flowering beauty and fruitful nourishment of apple trees, which grew from the seeds he gave away or planted.

Johnny of Johnny's Tree Farm in Oak Glen, California—his real name is John Cummings—is the inspired individual who, on his 40 acres in the mountains above Redlands, has created a "God's Backyard" of varied beauty and fragrance that all who come may see and scent and share. Many of those who come to share, and learn about trees personally, are young people on weekend visits to the nearby Pilgrim Pines Camp, a Retreat Center of the United Church of Christ. They learn about the firs and pines and stately redwoods, and since the Tree Farm is a mile high, they also get to see dogwoods, redbuds, maples, and other colorful trees that cannot be grown in the lowlands where most of the youths live. Adults also come to enjoy. Easterners feel a nostalgic touch of homesickness when they walk under the shade of trees that are native to their homelands back east. Johnny's Tree Farm is a jewel which embraces the wooded grandeur of all America.

This Tree Farm, at the back, adjoins the large orchards of the Los Rios Apple Company. The owner of the apple ranch had died but his widow, Ruth, still lived there. Johnny's wife had also died. Literally, over the back fence between their two properties, Johnny and Ruth became firm friends. One day, as a friendly gesture, she gave him a copy of *The Living Bible*. He started reading it; he could not put it down. From Genesis to Revelations, he absorbed its messages.

"It changed my life," he says, and he relates a homespun incident to amplify that statement.

"My house is close to the road. Quite often a car will pull up and stop, a man will come to the door and exclaim, 'I am

lost.' " "You're not lost at all," is Johnny's quick reply. "I know where you are." The tension eases as Johnny gives the stranger directions to his desired destination.

"Something very much like that happened to me," Johnny explains. "I went through nearly 60 years of my life feeling I was lost. That Bible was like a guidebook. I realized that I wasn't lost at all. God knew where I was and He let me know He had been with me all the time. When I was ready to ask, He began giving me directions.

"This is what I found: I found I was an important person. I had never realized that before. I found I loved land and trees that grew on it. I found because of this love, God had given me two hands to do something about it. As God has no hands, I was to use mine to do the work He wanted and the work I loved. It was then I realized that because of my love for land, trees, and plants, He had put me here to be its caretaker. I found that if I shared this land and trees with others all kinds of blessings would flow back to me. I found new love for people because of this sharing. I found that every bit of love I gave to God was returned twofold."

Johnny began sharing. But first, he began more planting and nurturing and beautifying—creating a paradise of trees—so he would have real treasures to share.

Ruth and John, in 1983, were married—right there in the natural grandeur of the trees.

More and more boys and girls from the Pilgrim Pines retreats came to enjoy it all and almost unconsciously learned new lessons about nature. Adults came, and absorbed the grandeur.

Three years ago Johnny wrote: "I am still strong, can do a fair day's work and have spent a minimum of time being bedridden. Each day I try to walk through 'God's Back Yard' to see the miracle that has taken place there."

John Cummings is now 80 years old. Ruth is 79. The Tree Farm, whether as a park or as prime acreage for potential development, is worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. John has just taken the ultimate step in sharing. He has given the entire Tree Farm to Pilgrim Pines, to be administered by the United Church of Christ, which Johnny likes to refer to by its former name, the Congregational Church. The gift includes not only "God's Back Yard," but their home as well, and also the quaint red "barn" which has its own living quarters. Many developers wanted to acquire this choice

land but he adamantly refused.

A beautiful natural stream, fed by springs which bubble up on the farm, flows through the growth of stately trees. The Native Americans had an expression used in binding an agreement: "As long as the streams shall flow."

As long as the bubbling, sparkling stream flows through the grandeur of its evergreens and dogwoods and maples, and its redwoods and firs and red buds, this Johnny's Tree Farm will be nurturing the lives of boys and girls, and men and women, who come for retreat and re-creation from Pilgrim Pines.

[See After Words at back]

Theodore Payne Gives Helen A Surprise

Two methods are available for making a lasting impact on the future. The first is to influence young children, from the nursery on up. The second is to plant or distribute seeds. Theodore Payne was a seed person and here again it started in a nursery, but of a different kind. Both types of nurseries are seedbeds for growth. Theodore Payne, the nurseryman and seedman, died in 1963 at age 92, but he has left a legacy that will carry on as long as seeds grow.

Payne was born in England and had a love of flowers even as a small boy. At 12 he was sent to the Ackworth School in Yorkshire, where he studied botany, became active in conservation and horticulture, and made a collection of pressed flowers which won him a first prize.

The scene shifts. At age 21 Theodore Payne moved to California and secured a job as gardener for the famous Polish actress, Helena Modjeska, at her country estate in Santiago Canyon, Orange County. Ten years later he started his own nursery on Broadway, in what is now the heart of the Los Angeles business district. As the city grew the nursery had to be moved twice, ending up as a ten-acre plot on Los Feliz Boulevard, where it remained until Payne's retirement two years before his death. From that nursery he wrought an influence on the Los Angeles area, on Southern California, and to some degree on the entire world.

From the moment he had arrived in California Theodore Payne had fallen in love with the wildflowers that colored the fields and hillsides in those early days, but was distressed as he

saw them disappearing as development encroached on their domain. He began sowing wildflower seeds in Hollywood's vacant lots, in similar Pasadena lots, and wherever he could find open space. The Los Angeles City Council hired him to create a five-acre "wildflower garden" in Exposition Park. He and a partner, Ralph Cornell, did landscaping and seed planting at Torrey Pines Park in San Diego County and on the campus of Occidental College. He helped select the site of the famous Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden and served as an advisor there for 20 years, until it was moved to Claremont. He developed five acres in the Descanso Gardens as a wildflower haven.

In his early California days Payne had made a study of eucalyptus trees. A worldwide "eucalyptus boom" occurred and his nursery became the United States headquarters for eucalyptus seeds. Hundreds of pounds of those seeds were shipped by him, not only in this country but to South and Central America and Europe.

It is estimated that Mr. Payne introduced in California between four and five hundred species of wildflowers and native plants and made them available for general use. He wrote magazine and newspaper articles about them and gave talks in nearly every town in Southern California on preserving wildflowers. Honors and awards flooded in on him from the United States and from Europe. A 320-acre Theodore Payne Wildlife Sanctuary was created near Llano in the Mojave Desert and dedicated in 1961.

As development encroached more and more across the southland, many of Payne's efforts were erased. But symbolically he had planted the seed; in actuality he had gathered and raised the seeds, the descendents of which are still spreading color and beauty throughout the world. Three years before his death the Theodore Payne Foundation for Wild Flowers and Native Plants was incorporated as a nonprofit organization to carry on his work and make wild plants and flower seeds available for sale to the public. From the nursery maintained by the Foundation such seeds are being distributed nationwide. Theodore Payne's influence grows with every seed that is planted.

Helen knew this man of nature better than I did, at least to begin with. His Los Feliz Boulevard nursery was only a few miles from our home beside the great natural Eagle Rock

landmark, which we had purchased in 1943. At that time the 13 acres surrounding our home and the rock was a pristine area covered with wildflowers and native chaparral. Helen was determined to keep things that way. One species of flower was so beautiful she hoped that more could be propagated around the rock.

One day, down at the Theodore Payne nursery, she described it to Mr. Payne. "If I could get new seeds for that flower . . ." Even before she finished he recognized what she needed and was able to fill the order.

About to leave, Helen turned back. "I'm wondering, where on earth do you get those particular seeds?"

Theodore Payne's response was something that has brought smiles to our faces for years. "Oh, those," he replied. "There are not many places to find them. I get those I need from around the large Eagle Rock. It's not too far from here."

Helen introduced herself as owner of the rock. She admired Theodore Payne, because he loved the native plants as much as we. She knew he would treat everything lovingly, and she expressed her gratitude to him. That incident solidified our friendship. As long as we lived by the Eagle Rock that friendship continued. Almost till the day of his death, Theodore Payne was nursing and nurturing Southern California's wildflowers and native growth.

The Theodore Payne Foundation address is 10459 Tuxford Street, Sun Valley, CA 91352 and the phone number is (818) 768-1802. They have a catalog which lists hundreds of wildflower seeds and native plants. Perhaps you who read this can also help carry on Theodore Payne's work by sowing some seeds. It is one way to beautify the future.

A Tree Grows in Eagle Rock; Ernest Seton Planted It

In 1910 Ernest Thompson Seton, naturalist and nature-writer, "was instrumental in founding the Boy Scouts of America, serving as chief scout until December 1915, when he resigned in protest to Theodore Roosevelt's idea that the scouts should be 'trained to arms.' Scouting for Seton had less to do with uniforms and mottoes than with camping, woodcraft, and Indian lore." That is the entry regarding

Seton in the *Dictionary of American Biography*, published by Charles Scribner's Sons. Seton had founded the Woodcraft Indians in 1902, which greatly influenced the Boy Scout movement.

It was because of his rank as a naturalist that we first became acquainted with this man who wrote such books as *Wild Animals I Have Known*, *Biography of a Grizzly*, and *Biography of a Silver Fox*. His *Lives of Game Animals* won him the John Burroughs Memorial Medal.

In our garden beside Eagle Rock, the great natural landmark on the boundary between Los Angeles and Pasadena, Helen and I were having trees planted by significant men and women, each such tree to be named after the one who planted it. We wanted Seton to plant such a tree. After extended correspondence a date was set for midsummer, 1946. He stayed with us a couple of days.

"A tree is a memorial," I said to him in explaining our motivation, "not only to the person who may have planted it, but as a reminder of the history through which it has lived."

We were standing in our patio, looking out at the enormous Eagle Rock. "There are no old trees at all in this area," I went on. "A hundred years from now we want someone to be able to say of the tree you plant: 'It was a tiny sapling right after World War II. It has seen an entire century of history.' "

Seton thought well of the concept. "Right now," Helen explained, "the only longtime viewer of history in this area is the rock itself."

"How old is it?" Seton wanted to know, and the answer I gave rather surprised him. "Exactly 12 million and three years."

His smile indicated skepticism.

"We know it for a fact," I went on, straight-faced. "When we bought the rock and moved here three years ago I wrote to Robert Cleland, the noted geology professor at Cal Tech, asking the rock's age. His reply came back by letter: 'The Eagle Rock is 12 million years old.' That was three years ago."

One of Seton's reasons for being willing to make the trip to California to plant the tree was because of his interest in the rock itself. We continued to discuss it at length.

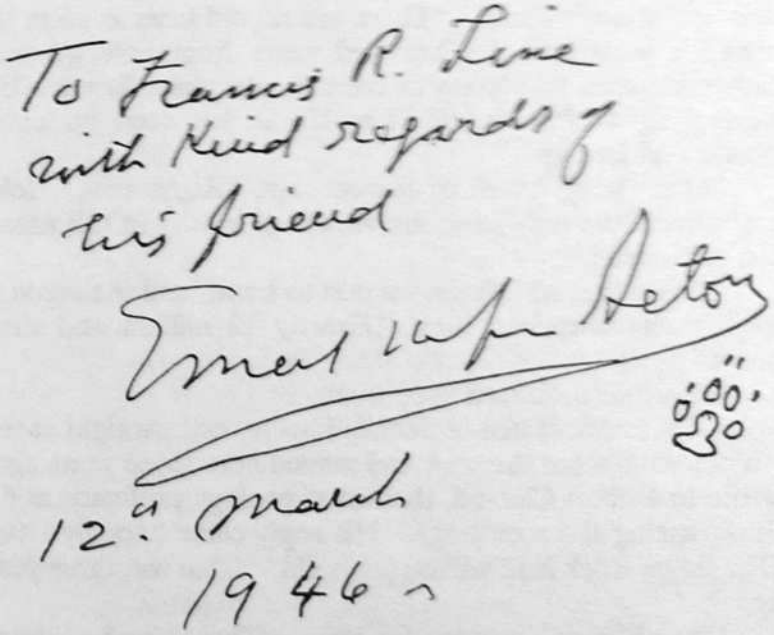
"What that rock has looked down on and seen for most of its long life only a geologist could speculate on," I continued.

"But since the first Indians came this way, it has seen a lot of human history."

We had many of Seton's books and we brought them out to discuss, especially the ones about nature and animals. This led to some animal stories we told him that perhaps matched a few he had written about. The area surrounding the Eagle Rock, we had discovered shortly after moving there, was virtually a wild animal sanctuary. Not a sanctuary, actually, so much as the natural home and habitat of animals.

"We've seen nearly every native wild animal you can mention," Helen boasted. "Foxes, wild cats, deer by the dozens, even two mountain lions. Once a deer had made its way right up to the very top of the rock. It was shortly after a rain and some water had gathered in a shallow place. The deer had gone up for a drink."

"And perhaps a view," I added. "But, Helen, you haven't mentioned our most interesting animal experiences of all."



Ernest Seton often drew an animal paw following his signature

We told our nature guest about our experiences with skunks.

"At first we were actually afraid of them," I explained. "But we soon found that, if we were calm and showed no fear, they responded accordingly. Eventually we let them wander through our house, with never a problem."

We had provided a small eucalyptus sapling for Seton to plant. Helen and I and this 86-year-old man walked up the hill to our garden area adjoining the rock directly beside and behind it. Firmly, without the help that I offered, he forced the spade into the soil, dug out spadeful after spadeful, all by himself, then planted the tree. He even helped us water it. We had more long conversations that night, then next day he departed.

There was a letter of inquiry upon his return to his home near Santa Fe, New Mexico, for his interest in the tree did not end with its planting. Just three months later, in October 1946, Ernest Thompson Seton died. We corresponded with his widow, for she too had a concern for the tree he had planted.

The minuscule eucalyptus which Seton had started on its history-observing career grew into a large tree, providing shade for those who often sat beneath it to rest or meditate, providing nesting places for birds that Seton would have loved so much. Our acquaintance with this grand old man of nature had been short, but fruitful.

How Dorothy Richards Saved a Barnful of Horses

Dorothy Richards, age 75, makes "Nature Notes by dorothy"—beautiful note cards faced with delicate pressed flowers, which she sells at her home or by mail to discerning purchasers. We had never associated her with horses so a line about saving a whole barnful of those animals leaped out at us from the 1988 Christmas letter we received from her. We read on:

> My close neighbor, Ron Brooks, owned a horse which he kept in a barn around the corner on Boone Road, where 26 other horses were stabled. Late one afternoon back in April he called me frantically. "The horses are ill. One's in real danger," he was saying. "We think it's a dried weed in the hay they ate. We've called the vet.

We've got to find out what that weed is before he arrives. Can you help?"

"Bring it over. I'll surely try," was my quick reply.

Yes, it was a plant I'd seen growing on the edge of a field near the West Branch of Rocky River—a "horse nettle," a member of the nightshade family easily identified by the flowers and the small barbs on the mid-rib on the under side of the leaf.

I didn't go into details with Ron. "It's horse nettle," I said. "Tell the vet it's an alkaloid poison."

Ron made it back to the barn just before the veterinarian arrived. An anti-alkaloid serum was administered to the horse, no more infected hay was fed and a barnful of horses was saved by a bit of plant knowledge from an aging wanderer of the fields and woods.

Dorothy Richards has been wandering the fields and woods all her life. "I was born and brought up on a farm and married a farmer," she explains. "Except for my college years, I have enjoyed country living all my life. This Ohio farmstead where I now live has been my home for nearly fifty years. I treasure the woodlot on this place. One ancient white oak is over 350 years old." She went on to explain further. "This home had belonged to my deceased husband's father. My husband was born here and he died here. He had lived here all his 74 years." Her son and his wife and three children live nearby in a 115-year-old home that had been a schoolhouse where Dorothy attended first, second, and third grades.

In this day and age when such large numbers of Americans move from one house to another, and one city to another, almost yearly, Dorothy's case is exceptional. She has put down roots as deep and strong as those of the great oak she admires so much.

Wild flowers are abundant in the woods and meadows and along the roadsides where Dorothy loves to wander. But when she goes to gather those flowers for "Nature Notes by dorothy," she does not wander. Her method is quite different, as amazing as it is interesting. She drives out in a small vehicle equipped with a box loaded with paperback novels and books. She is not about to spend a spring or summer afternoon reading murder mysteries or love stories out in the woods. Those novels are a part of her occupation. Carefully

picking a wild flower, she places it between the leaves of a paperback. Twenty or thirty pages of the book are turned, another blossom is carefully picked, which finds its place probably somewhere in chapter four or five. A 200-page novel will accommodate perhaps eight or ten blooms, and a rubber band around each book assures that no flower will fall out. On a good afternoon Dorothy may go through a small collection of books.

At home the flower-filled paperbacks are stored in a warm place and weighted down with cement blocks. In several weeks—now flat and dry yet as delicate and delightful as the day they were gathered—each flower is ready to be mounted on note paper under clear adhesive. The result—dozens of "Nature Notes by dorothy," no two notes alike, each one a special creation carrying the feel of the meadows and woods.

Dorothy has in her home a herbarium collection which she has made of some 200 wild flowers, each one card-mounted with clear adhesive, and labeled with the common and scientific names.

One of those mounted cards displays the "horse nettle." Because of Dorothy's knowledge of that flower and plant, 26 horses are alive and prancing today. This fact makes her more delighted than ever that wild flowers are such a large part of her life.

"I have a wellstone in my front yard," she says "with 'Richard's Refuge' painted on it. This home and its surroundings of woods and meadows is indeed a refuge for me and a welcome to all who would come to enjoy a small piece of God's wonders."

Book Two

The Authors Give Some Hints on Health and Happiness

Chapter 16

Life Begins at 80

(Written originally in 1985 for the Los Angeles Adventurers Club News)

"Life begins at 80." That's not an empty slogan. It is a reality for an increasing number of men and women who are discovering that age is no barrier to meaningful adventure. Reaching the four score plateau can add zest to all achievements; an 80-year-old gets four times the thrill that a 20-year-old would experience in conquering the same physical challenges. My own case is an example and I'll stick with that since I know it best.

It is one thing to hike down and out of the Grand Canyon at age 19, which I did. But far greater thrills were generated by making a similar Grand Canyon hike, accompanied by my 77-year-old wife, with 15-foot icicles festooning parts of the trail, in celebration of my 80th birthday—January 9, 1984.

In 1922, in a hiking trip to the then 48 states of the Union, my brother and I climbed South Dakota's Mt. Harney, highest peak east of the Rockies. We felt good about it. But, accompanied by my daughter and granddaughter, there was a much deeper feeling of satisfaction for me in scaling 14,495-foot Mt. Whitney, contiguous America's highest, when I was nearly 81. Learning of my age, passing climbers wanted to pose with me in snapshots, or get an autograph. Climbing a mountain at 20 means little; at 80 it is news.

Our preparation for that Mt. Whitney assault was to run as a family trio with the Olympic Torch, at the time of the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles. That adventure became far more emotional than physical. Thousands cheered us on. We were being carried forward by the magical glow of a flame that had spanned half the globe. It had lit—and was lighting—

the world. The run ended. A 20-year-old granddaughter, a 47-year-old mother, and an 80-year-old grandfather were embraced by the crowds, and embraced them in return. A sense of history—and challenge—embraced us all.

In my youth, no one that I knew of had ever heard of a marathon. I was proud of the fact that I had once completed a five-mile race. But today I jog—not far but regularly—every day of the year, including Saturdays and Sundays, rain or sun or snow, and have not missed a day in 15 years. *[See After Words at back]*

On the hike up Mt. Whitney I did my jogging in the rarified air near the summit. I've jogged through the streets of Stockholm, Athens, Oslo, Helsinki, and Rome, at the top of Mt. Sinai in the Middle East, on the sands of Waikiki, along the shores of the Sea of Galilee, and in the Paris airport. Some of my daily jogs were in Reykjavik in Iceland, within the walled city of Jerusalem, around the decks of ships at sea, and in Alaska, Canada, Mexico, and Denmark.

While I was running up New York's Fifth Avenue a policeman accosted me. "Hey there, buddy, you better take it easy at your age." But I cannot take it easy or give in to aches and pains if I have to get out every day of the year to jog.

My wife, Helen, shares my philosophy about pushing back the years in order to keep active in physical adventures. We used to brag about the mountains we scaled in the High Sierra a quarter of a century ago. But it was a far more rewarding achievement, just a few years back, to climb Mt. Sinai at night, in time to see the sunrise from the summit.

We have found that climbing has become our best antidote to aging. The Grand Canyon, since it is not too far distant, has become our perennial challenge. In a rather real sense, the waters of its Colorado River have become our fountain of youth. Grand Canyon is now, quite literally, our life enhancer, our giant eraser of aging. More than anything else it is the reason that life, for me, began at 80, and grows better every year.

In 1963 Helen and I celebrated our 35th wedding anniversary by hiking across the Canyon, rim to rim, in one day and night. In those 24 hours, the temperature went from below freezing to 110 degrees, then back down to freezing again. Ascending the South Kaibab Trail, by flashlight, was an experience we shall never forget.

On May 1, 1977 we celebrated our 49th wedding anniversary with a Grand Canyon hike to the Havasupai Indian Reservation and its three magic waterfalls. The next year was the biggie—our 50th. For this golden anniversary we hiked the ten-and-one-half miles down to Grand Canyon's Phantom Ranch in a blinding blizzard, then back out next day. On May 1, ever since, we have continued a similar tradition. On our 55th, hikers from around America and the world gave us an informal celebration down at Phantom.

"Which was harder," one Swiss hiker wanted to know, "the hike down, or the 55 years?" On our 57th there were literally "57 varieties" to the experience. Our latest book, *Grand Canyon Love Story,* chronicling our more than 60 years of adventuring there, had just come out and was on sale at Park Headquarters and all the Canyon shops. It had been officially approved by the superintendent's review committee. The rangers were telling about us in their lectures. When we headed down the trail in the early hours of May 1, 15 people were on hand to tag along and make the hike with us, or attempt it.

For our 60th, in 1988, we'll invite family and friends to accompany us. We have reserved all 40 bunks at Phantom Ranch available for hikers. There will be no lack of volunteers. We have found that our simple achievements, as "four score" adventurers, are an inspiration to people of all ages. Park employees, some of whom had worked at Grand Canyon for a year or more but had thought they could not make the strenuous hike down and out, took courage at our achievements and actually accomplished it. Letters from across America reach our mailbox almost daily, telling that the reading of our book has been the inspiration for visiting the Canyon, and in some cases hiking down.

To be sure that we can continue to accomplish our strenuous hikes in the "divine abyss" as the years flow on, we have to keep fit in every way. That means regular physical exercise, in generous quantities. It means strict attention to what we eat and drink, in frugal quantities. It means a right mental attitude. And a spiritual touch. The fountain of youth is not a gushing freshet in some remote Florida wilderness where Ponce de Leon once sought it. It can be any significant challenge, close at hand or far away, that opens up new vistas and, in reality, makes life begin at 80.

Or 50, or 70, or 90. Life is what you make it.

Chapter 17

A 60-Year Honeymoon

Some Thoughts About Our Life Together

"A 60-year honeymoon" is a brief yet honest way to describe Helen's and my life together. A life of lasting love and lustre began with us the day we were married and has grown better with each new yearly calendar we have hung on our wall. Actually now it is extending into its 62nd year.

On May 1, 1928, we were married in the tree-fringed, lake-surrounded village of Howell, in rural Michigan. Three circumstances of that wedding set the tone for our future lives, though we did not realize their import then.

The first special circumstance had to do with the wedding's timing. We set it for 7:00 a.m. so we could get an early start on our honeymoon to Kentucky's Mammoth Cave and the Lincoln Country.

Early morning was then—and has always been—very special for us. As nature photographers through much of our lives, we have found the time just at dawn to be the almost sacred hour. It is then that the wild animals are out and can be seen and filmed to best advantage. The light at dawn has a golden quality, creating rich tones in motion pictures taken at that hour.

For all of our 61 years, wherever we have lived, we have put out feed and water for the wild birds. Always at dawn they come winging in—miracles in motion. "The early bird catches the worm—or the bird feed" may be their guiding slogan. Our slogan, if we want to be inspired by their presence, is to be up at dawn to greet them.

For the last six years, here in our Capistrano Beach home, two great horned owls have come in just before dawn nearly every morning to take positions one just above the other on a century plant that rises 50 feet high in our backyard and begin speaking love messages to each other.

"HOO—OOO-OO," says he.

"HOO-O—OOO," she replies.

Sometimes they converse slowly. At other times his notes of endearment, and her responses, come in such quick

succession that they overlap. Those occasional overlapping HOO-OOs produce gems of harmony. It is the dawn's early light that ushers in these and similar treasures.

That 7 a.m. wedding service gave us time to drive slowly on our honeymoon journey—time to enjoy the beauties of southern Michigan, the springtime wonders of my native Ohio, and the redbud and flower-strewn hills of Kentucky. On the entire trip to Mammoth Cave and return we never exceeded 15 miles per hour.

Every morning we had to get an early start, which would provide us with time to linger leisurely during the day. Early mornings are special!

A second circumstance of that May 1, 1928 wedding ceremony was symbolic, although we had not thought of it in those terms then. Early on, Helen and I fell into the habit of championing feminist and minority causes. Quite unconsciously it started the day we were wed; the officiating minister was a woman. She was my cousin, only a year older than I, who had just been ordained. Ours was her first wedding. In pronouncing us husband and wife, thus making my bride's name legally "Helen E. Line" she was creating her namesake. The minister, my cousin, was also named "Helen E. Line." My parents gave my bride a wedding gift—a bowl and creamer of burnished silver—that had belonged to my grandmother, and was engraved with her name. Yes, my grandmother's name was likewise "Helen E. Line." It seems to run in the family.

For a woman to be ordained as a minister seemed natural to us 61 years ago when such a thing was rare. It seems natural to us today. The feminist movement has come a long way since 1928; perhaps we had a part—even though infinitesimal—in advancing that cause.

Finally—and most important of all in setting the pattern for our future lives—our ceremony was simple. Helen wore her favorite dress and I wore my best suit. My mother gathered flowers from somewhere to make an arrangement in the living room of our home, where the event took place.

Simplicity has been a gracious handmaiden in our lives and in our living ever since. The Great Depression was just a little over a year away. In its early stages, when we wanted to travel and see the world but had little money, the lack of finances did not deter us. We took a seven-month trip through the eastern United States, across the Atlantic, and through Europe and northern Africa, all at a cost of less than

$1000 for the two of us. Travel in third class railway coaches —fourth class in Germany—gave us a chance to meet the ordinary people of the countries through which we journeyed. Eating simple meals was the beginning of a lifetime of health-building diets.

Fortunately, nearly all of our habits were then—and have always been—of a simple nature, providing more stress-free living, with fewer financial problems. The manner in which we gather wood for our fireplace has developed into one of these habits.

We love fireplaces, the cheer and warmth and even more subtle benefits of a crackling fire. Every home we have had, except one, has had a fireplace. For the last 29 years, in our present home in Capistrano Beach, we have eaten breakfast before the fireplace nearly every day of the year. Early California mornings are cool, even in summer. In that 29 years we have not bought one cent's worth of firewood. In procuring our wood supply the way we do, we feel there has been not only an enormous saving in money through the years, but also a substantial ecological benefit. On our morning walks we have constantly come upon piles of scrap lumber in front of houses that are being built or remodeled. The wood pieces are nearly always small—just right for fireplace burning.

"Do you mind if we come back with our car and take some of these scraps?" we ask the owner or builder.

"Do we mind? I should say not. We only have to pay to have the stuff hauled off to the dump."

California is running out of space for garbage dumps. During the nearly 60 years that we have taken the *Los Angeles Times*—at least for all the years there has been a place to turn them in—we have sacked the used papers and taken them to recycling centers or to our church, which sells them for re-cycling. As we think of the kind of future our two great-grandchildren may face—with garbage and other ecological problems weighing heavily on their lives—we feel proud we are helping to make their futures more livable.

Upon moving into our present Capistrano Beach home, one of our first tasks was to have the garbage disposal removed in the upstairs kitchen of our home. Although we did not fully realize it at the time, that act has had much to do with promoting better health.

All this was Helen's idea. Had she not married me she would probably have become a farmer; she loves to dig in the

soil, plant seeds, and see them grow. She started a vegetable garden. The soil down here was not good. What better way to nourish it than to spade in the kitchen garbage?

The vegetables Helen has grown in that garden have strengthened us physically as we have eaten them, and strengthened her physically as she lovingly tended the plants. But there is more. Ours is a two-story home. The kitchen is upstairs. "How cruel," one might think, "to make Helen trek down and up stairs with that garbage."

Perish the thought. Stair climbing is a built-in exerciser; one of the best. This was proven in a six-month experiment in Finland. Half the employees in a 12-story building used the elevator, the other half climbed the stairs. After six months the stair climbers were demonstrably healthier physically. George Schultz, Secretary of State in the Reagan administration, came to grips with his overweight problem by shunning elevators in favor of stairs. It worked. The Englishman, John Evans, at 111 years the world's oldest man with a birth certificate to prove it, has a tip for all: "Don't take the lift (elevator); climb the stairs."

In our two-story house steps cannot be avoided. We make the trip up and down stairs probably 30 or 40 times a day, from our work areas and office on the first floor to our living quarters upstairs. Those stairs are our unavoidable, unexcelled health-builders.

In 1972 we were invited to show one of our motion pictures, dealing with ecology, at the First United Nations Conference on the Human Environment at Stockholm, Sweden. We had been environmentally conscious and ecologically concerned before then. But that conference changed our lives. We gained a realization that the modern day threat to the environment, caused largely by improper lifestyles, is as ominous as the nuclear threat. Our lifestyles changed overnight.

Our simplified living through the years has saved us so much financially that we have been freed from money worries, which are often the cause of marital discord, and sometimes of health problems as well.

When we exchanged our marriage vows in that simple early morning wedding ceremony back on May 1 in 1928, we were saying "I do" to a glorious and wonderful life together,

which would be made possible, at least in part, by saying "I don't" to unneeded excesses. All of these 61 years have been "simply" grand.

For our 49th wedding anniversary, May 1, 1977, I wrote this poem which was my anniversary gift to Helen. It epitomizes some of the aspects of our lives together.

Deeper Veins

The 49ers were looking for treasure
And some of them found it.
The 49ers were seeking adventure.
Most of them had it.
The 49ers were children of history
Who conquered a continent
And, with picks and shovels,
Carved California into the Union.

You and I are today's 49ers,
But we're searching for much more than a gold mine,
We're seeking more than adventure,
We're spanning vaster outlooks together
As we dig for new meanings and marvels.

We're 49ers this moment,
But only for the space of these hours.
More treasures lie out there before us,
More adventures beckon beyond us,
Other continents are in need of exploring,
New Commonwealths call for creating.
New years of life are ahead.

We'll discover and adventure together,
Digging, exploring, unearthing,
Seeking God's help as we journey.
Our shovels can strike deeper gold veins,
Our picks can unearth greater wonders,
Our gold pans can wash finer treasures
Than we've ever dreamed of before.

Our miner's lamps can be turned into beacons,
Lighting new pathways of living,
Illumining new depths of the spirit,
Revealing fresh landscapes of beauty,
Not for us only,
But for all whom we meet on our journey.

Francis R. Line

Chapter 18

Walkers

Who Deserve Awards for Bravery

Living on a busy street has advantages. Ours is such a one where dozens of upbeat "let's get going" health addicts take their daily walks or jogs. Helen and I join the parade three times a week. I do my bit of jogging every day. On our walks or jogs—or by watching them from our upstairs window when we are not out there with them—we see young people, middle-agers, and people advanced in years, all out to get their exercise. We started observing this parade of walkers 29 years ago, when we first moved to our present home, but many more people are now out for their morning constitutionals than formerly. People are becoming health conscious. Each one is an inspiration.

But the Seniors are the ones who make our hearts glow with greatest pride. And the Super Seniors of the walking brigade—they deserve awards. Some of them we do not know by name; we meet, or pass them, with a wave of the hand or a greeting, feeling we know them because of our kinship as walkers.

There are Super Seniors, then there are Ultra Supers. That man who has to tote his oxygen tank along, wheeling it beside him, is surely such a one. He may require his occasional aid to breathing along the way but nothing is going to stop him from getting the exercise he needs.

And the man in a "walker." He needs it for support, to keep himself erect and to prevent falling. He gets his regular walks by that unusual, but effective, method. How much better than languishing at home.

One six-foot-sixer carries a cane and eats up the distance in super-sized strides. He swings his cane but never uses it otherwise. The man with crutches uses those. He has to, but he gets his walk nonetheless.

Our award for the Super walker among them all goes to the blind man we used to see. With his white cane he "felt" the edge of the sidewalk and stepped briskly along. A brilliant memory must have aided him in knowing when curb step-

offs were coming up. When it was necessary to cross intersections his hearing must have told him when all was safe; holding the white cane extended before him he crossed, probably with greater safety than most of the rest of us. His complete attention, and every one of his other senses, was alert at all times. He got in his walks. He was an inspiration.

The passing parade of get-up-and-go exercisers is a sight for sore eyes, if not for sore muscles. They all deserve rewards and those rewards are actually built into the very activities they undertake; few forms of exercise are easier to carry on regularly, or are more beneficial to health and well-being, than walking on a regular basis.

Throughout this book I have made only slight reference to our grandchildren or great-grandchildren which, you must admit, shows considerable restraint for an 85-year-old granddad. May I be excused, therefore, for closing this chapter on walking with an apt story about our grandson. Helen and I were fortunate to be on hand the very day he learned to walk—and this was accomplished all in one day. I grabbed our movie camera and caught the whole process. He would take a step, fall down, smile, take a couple of steps, fall down again and smile once more, then continue this absorbing routine until he walked eight or ten steady steps into his mother's arms.

I spliced that footage onto the start of the current adventure travelogue I was about to start showing across the United States.

"Ladies and gentlemen," I began. "Experts in this field say there is nothing worse than to show pictures of your own family, especially your children. That is amateurism, they claim. But I have been confounding the experts all my life. I like to break the rules. As a matter of fact, I happen to have a picture of my grandson right here in my pocket."

Audience laughter broke forth as I pulled a photo from my pocket.

"But wait, I have a better idea. May we have the lights out, please."

As the lights were lowered I signaled for the show to begin. There, in living color on the screen, came the scenes of our grandson learning to walk.

As he took his first stumble and got up smiling, the audience roared its approval. When the second stumble came, and the second smile of wonder, the audience broke

into applause. At the third stumble and smile the applause was almost deafening. And when he took the ten successful steps to his mother's arms, I had the audience in the palm of my hands.

The season I opened with that sequence was one of the most successful of my 30-year career. Sometimes it pays to break the rules.

I don't have a photo handy of that grandson of ours, as a baby. But I do just happen to have a picture of *his* children, our great-grandson and great-granddaughter. If I may be pardoned for this, here it is:



Brian and Dana Knute, the authors' great-grandchildren

Chapter 19

Super Parents Make a Difference

My mother and father were both Super Seniors, not so much because of important achievements as because of illimitable attitudes—toward life and toward parenting. They celebrated their 61st wedding anniversary together; each lived to be 88 years old. My father died in Altadena, California, in 1960. At his memorial service, as also at my mother's service three years later, I expressed my deepest feelings.

Francis Line's Talk at C. S. Line Memorial Service

A week before his death, my father asked that I give a little talk at this service and, whether he had asked it or not, I would have wanted to do so. What I wish to say could be summed up in a dozen words: "Few boys ever had a finer father than my brother and I have had."

My mother and father were *naturally* good parents, and I use the word "naturally" advisedly. They had advanced ideas on family raising and family life which I'm sure they never got from books. I'll mention three of these.

Pop always had time for my brother and me. My memories go back to New London, Ohio, where I was born. My father would repeatedly take time from his business to go with my brother and me on walks. We first walked out to Buck Creek or the Vermillion River when I was so small we had to take along a little cart to pull me when I became tired.

At 11, when we were living in Michigan, my father suggested that the three of us take a bicycle trip. So I learned to ride a bike and we took a two-week trip that summer through Michigan, Ohio, then into Pennsylvania to Linesville, our ancestral home. He was 43 years old then, but we rode through mud and rain, and camped out every night. The next year there was another such bicycle trip through Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin.

The following year we bought a car. Touring was in its infancy, but we took family trips all over the Midwest.

He helped to get us jobs on a farm in the summer, and

during the school year we worked in his store after school and on Saturdays. He was a good boss as well as a father because he taught us discipline and how to work hard.

Once in our youth the papers announced that there would be an eclipse of the sun, something quite rare that most people do not see. The only trouble was that it was wintertime, the roads in those days were poor, and this eclipse was to take place 72 miles north of our home. But we all packed into our car, took a day off, and went up to see the eclipse. Experiences like that make a lasting impression in a person's life.

The second area was our reading. It was carefully guided, very unostensibly but thoroughly nonetheless. My father had saved some good adventure books from his youth which we enjoyed reading. Nothing was ever said about it, we never thought about it, but we never had any of the horrible blood-and-thunder type of reading or any of the so-called fairy tale types that are filled with gore. This kind of guidance, translated into the monitoring of youngsters' TV watching today, I think is important.

The greatest gift my father gave to me was continual and everlasting encouragement.

Often I would tackle a thing; I didn't think I could do it, but he knew I could. His assurance that I could finish the task carried me through. Many times I have done things I thought I couldn't just because he knew I was able to. Then, after I had done them, not only did he show his confidence but he gave me his praise.

I was back in St. Louis when Helen phoned that my father had passed away. I still had three film presentations to give, but it never occurred to me that I wouldn't give those because I knew that *he* knew I was going to give them. That was all there was to it.

This encouragement lasted right up to the time of his passing. The very last words he said to me when I went up to say goodbye to him before leaving for St. Louis were: "You are doing a great work, Francis." That encouragement was the greatest gift.

He was active, almost up to the end, and now he is free for new adventures. Right now he is probably saying to me, and to others, "Keep up the good work. You can do it."

Tribute To Our Mother

Memorial Service at our Capistrano Beach Home
December 8, 1963

In the very definition of the word, a memorial service is for the purpose of remembering. When a woman, a wonderful wife and mother, has woven a life into the fabric of America for over 88 years and now has passed the torch on to us who follow, it is important that we pause a moment to remember.

Mom's life started in Lake City, Minnesota, in 1875 but, in the same year, the family moved to Linesville, Pennsylvania.

Our mother and father were married in 1898 and, four years later, when my brother Winfield was three months old, the doctor told my father he would have to seek a new climate. He was given just six months to live. They moved to Colorado and tried ranching, unsuccessfully, in a frontier environment which tested all the mettle of a young mother with a tiny baby and a husband who was told he would die in six months. They moved back to Ohio, and later to Michigan. Our father lived the six months the doctor had predicted, then on to age 88, adding exactly 60 more years of full living to the doctor's prediction. Four years ago my parents celebrated their 61st wedding anniversary together.

That's the chronology. But Mom's real life isn't revealed in chronology. I believe that my brother and I had one of the most understanding and most unusual mothers that America has produced. She had faith in us and trusted us completely.

Upon graduating from high school Winfield and I had a feeling of restlessness. Sure, we were going on to college, but we weren't quite ready.

I'll never forget that night in our Howell home. Win and I were talking about our restlessness. A huge map of the United States was on our dining room wall.

"Why don't you take a trip?" Mom said to us. She suggested it, she encouraged it, she helped us plan it. Before that night was over, Win and I and our mother and father had outlined the hiking trip which, in the following 13 months, took my brother and me to every state in the Union.

I wonder now if it was easy for our mother to sit home while her two sons—18 and 19 years old—were out on foot in the rather frontier America of the 1920s. I do know she had complete and absolute faith in us and faith in God's protection. She prayed us safely through every day of those 13 months.

I have since learned a bit about the cloak of God's love and protection with which our mother was able to help surround us. The 91st Psalm was her great mainstay. One line of that psalm conveys its theme: "There shall no evil befall thee."

At the University of Michigan, Winfield became acquainted with a young girl who was an MD, and who was studying for another doctorate in public health. My brother fell in love with her. There was nothing unusual about this, save for one thing. The young girl was of a different race; she was Korean.

"You must do something about it," Mom's neighbors said to her. "It must be stopped before it's too late." . . . "Such a marriage could never last." . . . "It's up to you to terminate this love affair now." These were the whispered and spoken advices which flurried around our mother.

It was not easy, in the rather smug climate of a small Midwestern town of the 1920s, to hear these things whispered on every hand. But there was one thing the gossipers didn't understand. Mom had supreme faith in her son and in God's wisdom and care. Our folks blessed that marriage and welcomed a new daughter-in-law into America and into their lives.

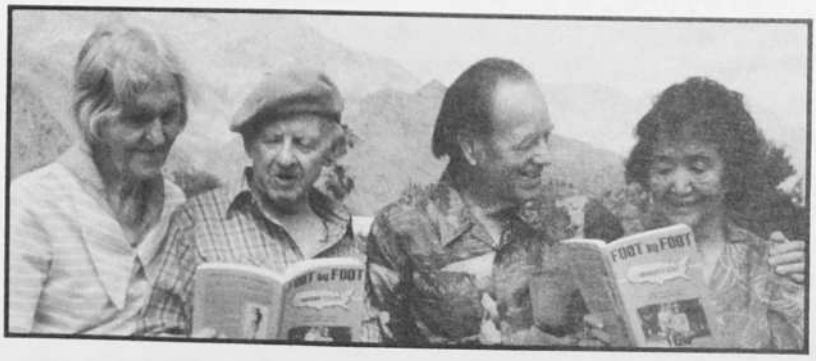
Would his people, and her people, accept them? Well, in Korea, Win and Grace have had as their personal friends most of the significant leaders, from President Syngman Rhee on down. In America, they have entrée in the nation's capital. During World War II Grace was a valuable aid to the government. She spoke Japanese as well as Korean and acted as translator, and as teacher for many army personnel. In the Korean War she was also of invaluable assistance.

In Palm Springs, where they live, they are the personal friends of such leaders of American life as the Wurlitzers, the Hormels, the Hoovers, the Peakes, and of writers, literary people, artists. They are both licensed pilots and once took Aldous Huxley up in their tiny private plane. "Why he risked his life at our hands," Win has often wondered.

And to that little Midwestern town of Howell, Grace brought her sister and Korean husband, who had five children. Those children became prize pupils in the Howell schools, among the most-loved citizens of the community. Now those five Korean youths—nephews and nieces of Grace and Win—are starting, or are about to start, college. One is studying in France, another is an honor student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; all are leaders for a better future.



Upper—Francis's parents on their 60th wedding anniversary
Lower—Helen and Francis Line; Winfield and Grace Line.



During and after the Korean War, Win and Grace carried on a movement of relief and rehabilitation for Korea such as probably no single couple have ever duplicated for that nation in need. They formed a charitable foundation and invited their wealthy Palm Springs friends to aid them in helping dozens of Korean students to study in this land.

How different—how tragically poorer—the whole world would have been if our mother had listened to the whisperings and advice of her time and tried to stop that love affair.

Mom, with very little formal education, was at least half a century ahead of her time in aspects of true child psychology and enlightened motherhood. And equally so in respect to healthful diet and nutrition.

In the spiritual realm she was a century ahead of her time or, as one thinks more deeply on it, she may have been behind her time, approximately 2000 years behind. For 2000 years ago Christ said things like these: Ask and it shall be given you. Do not fear; only believe. Go and heal the sick. Our mother believed and acted on these precepts.

My mother told me recently that when I was a few months old she and a friend of hers tried an experiment. She would make up a song in which she poured out her deepest desire that her son would become a creative person. Night after night she would sing that song over my cradle.

Last Mother's Day I didn't give her a present; there was nothing she needed. I just wrote a five-page letter in which I related some of the things I am saying today. And I thanked her for making up and singing that song over my crib.

As we look out the window toward the ocean we may see some birds flying south, for this is the season of migration. The miracle of migration was one of Mom's greatest interests. *The Great Migration*, the last book I bought her, at her request, concerned the mysterious travel of birds.

The three great adventures of life are birth, marriage, and this great final migration when one passes on to new mansions. Mom has come to this last great adventure. The time of the final adventure is always a good time to pause a few moments, to think about the miracle of life and of our responsibilities and relationships to it.

I want to close by reading one verse from First Timothy, because it applies to her: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

Chapter 20

A Three-part Health Package

1. "A Second Coming of Age" at 83

That was the heading of a news story taking up the entire top of a page in the June 7, 1977 issue of the L.A. *Times*.

It is the story of a Jewish man who had had his bar mitzvah —the traditional Jewish coming-of-age ceremony—when he was a boy of 13. But, so the man explained in the article, "Under a little-known provision of Jewish law, a man who lives past the age of 70 can be bar mitzvahed again when he reaches 83."

"A new life," he called it. "A new life with the blessing of the Almighty."

This provision must indeed be little-known. Among my Jewish friends I have found none who knew about it. The rabbis whom I have consulted do not know if such a law exists.

The man referred to in the *Times* article actually had his second bar mitzvah, at age 83. In the speech that he gave at the occasion he said this: "A rabbi taught me that a man's life span is 70 years ('The days of our years are threescore years and ten.' Psalm 90:10), and each year after that is an extra gift of God. Thus a man of 70 starts a new life with the blessing of the Almighty. And when this new life reaches 13 years, he should have a bar mitzvah."

What a concept! This Jewish man has stirred the waters that are cascading from a new Fountain of Youth. Helen and I have always felt it important to renew our marriage vows periodically. We did so on our seventh anniversary, on our 50th, and again on our 60th. We shall continue the practice.

This Jewish man was not only renewing vows; psychologically, he was renewing his youth.

Other religions do not celebrate bar mitzvahs. How inspiring it would be, both for the individuals and for the entire congregations, if all persons who had turned 80 during the month would come to the front of the house of worship on some Sunday of that month, for a special blessing. All who did so could gain their "second wind" in the thrilling business

of living. A starting of a new life "with the blessing of the Almighty."

You who are reading this book, if you are Jewish, may want to consider taking such a second bar mitzvah, at least mentally, when you reach age 83. You who are Christian or of some other faith, might consider, at age 80, taking new vows for active living.

2. Daily Dozen for Extended Living
Twelve Ways to Help Assure a Longer Life

1. Eat hearty, healthy breakfasts.
2. Develop real interests or creative hobbies; reach out to others.
3. Shun tobacco completely; if you drink, do so extremely sparingly.
4. Use odd moments to exercise even if it's just a little. Take a long walk several times a week.
5. Get rid of some of the motorized equipment you have: power lawn mowers, golf carts, and similar aids to softness.
6. Fasten your seat belts.
7. Use care crossing streets. Concentrate on it; do not let your attention wander to anything else.
8. While driving, don't talk or listen to the radio when changing lanes or changing freeways. Pay attention only to your driving.
9. Instead of searching for a parking spot, park at the first place you find and walk the rest of the way to your destination.
10. Remember: red meat doesn't necessarily mean red blood.
11. Reach for an apple instead of a sweet; a whole wheat wafer instead of cake.
12. Practice your will (or won't) power before going out to eat or on any other occasion where temptation lurks.

3. A Memory Course in Three Pages

"I can't remember anything anymore. I must be getting old."

"My memory is surely slipping—a sign of old age, I guess."

Phrases such as those are commonplace; I've heard them a hundred times in recent years. The strange thing is, I have heard phrases about memory lapses not only just recently but also when I was middle-aged, and even in youth. When a younger person has such lapses it is just forgetfulness; with a Senior it is considered a sign of aging.

There are cures for memory slippage that are reasonably effective with a minimum of effort. Here is a memory course in three pages.

When I need to make a phone call in the morning I nearly always remember it. Before retiring, I write out the name and phone number on a slip of paper and put in on the floor where it is impossible not to stumble over it first thing after getting out of bed. Similar scrawled-at-night notes remind me of other things to do. The clutter on the floor, while not too appealing to Helen, is an excellent memory jogger.

Making lists or jotting things down helps the memory process enormously. At our phone we used to jot important items on slips of paper that were soon lost; now we use a permanent pad so that, days or weeks after we have written down some important fact or piece of information we have received over the phone, we thumb through the pages and can find it.

I have such pads in our car, beside me on the sofa when we watch TV, and a smaller pad in my pocket. Jot it down in a permanent pad and it won't get lost or slip from memory. Now we keep a list of persons to whom we loan books, rather than bemoaning the fact that we have misplaced or lost this or that favorite volume. We still are lax in many ways. If we would use a similar system of "jotting down" and making permanent lists in every area of our living, we would soon be considered memory experts.

The second half of this three-page course is even more productive. It works; I have put it to the test.

Our brains are like computers. Helen and I have each learned to use word-processing programs on computers in the last few years and we stand in awe of their almost superhuman intelligence. But they are as nothing compared to the human brain. My brain—your brain—is an intricate and elaborate

computer that is programmed, much as a mechanical computer, by the input of data that it receives. In the case of the brain, this input is in the form of thoughts, suggestions, and commands. Responding to the data fed into it, this marvelous computer of ours issues marching orders to the appropriate parts of the body. Muscles flex, juices flow, nerves respond, and actions follow.

Let's assume that while you are eating your evening meal you realize you want to set the alarm clock for an early rising hour next morning. You think to yourself, or you may even say aloud to your dinner companion, "I'll remember to set that alarm just as soon as I leave the table." The chances are strong that you will do as you say. You have programmed your computer brain in the proper manner.

Millions of people, however, go about this brain programming a diametrically opposite manner. When the thought of setting the alarm clock occurs to them, they comment almost unthinkingly, "I need to set that clock, but I'm always forgetting to do it. I can't seem to remember such things any more." Result? The alarm does not get set. Such a person, programming the brain in this fashion, acts not according to what is desired, but according to the message the brain received—the input data and suggestion that "I'm always forgetting. I can't seem to remember."

Next day, the same individual, on the way home from town, wants to get some dry cleaning that had not been picked up on the last trip past the cleaners. "I can't seem to remember that," the person muses. "I'm just afraid I'll forget it again." The person forgets. The brain has been programmed that way.

"I'll stop at the dry cleaners" or "I'll remember to set the clock" usually results in getting the job done. If one has programmed the brain negatively for years it will sometimes take days or weeks or even months of proper affirmative programming before new and correct patterns are etched in the gray matter. But each programming brings the desired result closer to realization; each improper programming reinforces the negative or forgetting pattern.

The fact that one forgets, even after affirmative programming, is unimportant, provided the person does not take it as a defeat but recognizes it as a step or part of a continuing drill that will lead to eventual success—better remembering.

Research is proving that this method of correct input data to our computer-brain is so important that—to stick with the

alarm clock illustration as a further example—positive programming is even more important than the clock itself. If we say, "I'll remember to set the clock," we usually do. And if, after proper training and practice, we disregard the alarm clock altogether and in the moment of quiet concentration just before retiring, simply say, with conviction and belief, "I will automatically wake up at six o'clock in the morning," we will in time probably be able to do just that.

This method of waking on demand is being taught in classes having to do with mental processes and control. But thousands of individuals who have never had any formal training except a natural ability at positive programming can attest to its accuracy. If you say a thing with enough conviction, it will usually come to pass.

Carl Sandburg has written a masterly two-verse poem about this. His example refers to children; the suggestions pounded into their brain-computer determines their actions. But the same principle applies to adults.

> Why do the children put beans in their ears
> When the one thing we told the children
> They must *not* do
> Was to put beans in their ears?
>
> Why did the children pour molasses on the cat
> When the one thing we told the children
> They must *not* do
> Was pour molasses on the cat?

The brain is a computer; it reacts without editorial comment to input of data that it receives.

Make lists to aid your memory. Feed the proper affirmative commands and suggestions into your brain-computer, and the results will eventually be amazing.

Chapter 21

65th High School Reunion

A Time for Reminiscing

A Talk Given by Francis R. Line

In September of 1987 my brother Winfield and I, both octogenarians, attended our 65th high school reunion of the Class of 1922 in the small town of Howell, Michigan. Of our original class of 56, 16 attended that gathering. We had invited members of the classes of 1923, '24, and '25 to join us. They had all been featured in the 1922 issue of our high school "Torch." *Of the original 241 members of the four classes, 75 were present. Dove Cook introduced me. To the group I gave this opening talk:*

Thank you, Dove, for that flattering introduction. I want to start by asking a question. How many here today are octogenarians? Eighty years old! It does creep up. As Marshall McLuhan said: "The past went that-a-way." Someone said, "Age is a matter of mind." I think that means: "If you don't mind, it doesn't matter."

People begin to show their age at about the same time they begin to show pictures of their grandchildren. Incidentally, I have a picture here of my great-grandson.

Seriously, when I turned 80, not quite four years ago, I wrote an article for an adventure magazine entitled, "Life Begins at 80." There is much truth in that.

Grandma Moses started painting at 80 and kept going till 101.

Oliver Wendell Holmes was going strong as a justice of the Supreme Court at 90.

His father, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., the poet, lived to 85. He wrote the "Wonderful One-Hoss Shay," that lasted 100 years.

Michaelangelo, the great artist and sculptor, took up architecture at age 89.

At 93, George Bernard Shaw wrote an important play. At 89, Rubinstein gave one of his greatest recitals in New York's

Carnegie Hall. At 88, Pablo Casals was giving cello concerts. Pablo Picasso was producing drawings and engravings when he was 90. Albert Schweitzer headed a hospital in Africa at 89 years of age.

Hulda Crooks just made world news two months ago by becoming the oldest woman ever to climb Mt. Fuji in Japan. She's 91.

I think we should not ask "How old are you?" but rather, "How young are you?"

I admire Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black. His doctor told him he shouldn't play tennis when he reached 40. He could hardly wait till he reached 50, so he could start playing again.

Consider this: You and I have spanned the years from "There's a man in the moon" fantasy, to "Man on the moon" reality. From *Around the World in 80 Days* Jules Verne fiction, to "around the world in 80 seconds" communication.

We've spanned the years from carbon paper to copying machines, from scrub boards to electric washers, from roller skates to skateboards, from mud roads to freeways, from nickelodeons to television, from stereoptican slides to VCRs, from cap pistols to Star Wars.

We've experienced four great American mileposts: the hitching post, Emily Post, the *Saturday Evening Post*, and parcel post.

When we were young, for a nickel we could buy a newspaper and get three cents change. A phone call was five cents. For a dime we could buy a hamburger with all the trimmings. Fifty cents paid for a luscious meal including the tip. A five-and-ten-cent store was just that, with five thousand items to choose from. First-class postage was two cents.

We were before singing commercials and air mail, before social security and the income tax.

Those of us in this room have grown up with changes. According to Bible records, Methuselah lived to be 969 years old. You and I have seen ten times as many changes in our 80 years as Methuselah did in his entire 969.

I was born just 17 days after the Wright Brothers made the world's first heavier-than-air flight. Neither my birth, nor the Wright Brothers' flight, was any big deal. The flight lasted a few seconds; the distance covered was less than the length of a present-day airplane.

But that flight changed history; revolutionized the world.

All of those changes have occurred in the lifetimes of most of us in this room.

Now for a thought that is a bit more profound.

Most of us in this room today are part of the 241-member student body that made up our four classes. We share the common bond of having attended and graduated from Howell High School.

We are that—but much more. For over half a century we have been part of the real fabric of our community and country.

Along with the rest of our 241 classmates, we have deeply touched the lives of millions of people. We have directly or indirectly influenced the lives of three generations of men and women all over America.

That's not an exaggeration. You know the old jingle: Doctor, Lawyer, Merchant, Chief. Our four classes have had them all.

Medical Doctor Charles Platt. He was one of my closest friends in school.

Harold Strobel and Gerald Pelkey, Doctors of Dental Surgery.

Lawyer and Superior Court Judge Marvin Salmon. The scope of his influence has been enormous.

Merchant Winfield Line. He founded a chain of stores and was so successful that he's now become a philanthropist.

Bankers, engineers, farmers, homemakers, administrators—all of those professions are represented by those of us in this room.

And then there are teachers. In my opinion, teaching is the most vital profession of all. Teachers influence young people often even more than parents do. That influence goes on and on.

Many of you here today have been teachers. I salute you all. Dove Cook had a rewarding career of 45 years in teaching. Vera Ikens taught 25 years. They influenced hundreds. During Margarette Bird's 23 years of high school teaching she had Gerald Hulce and Howard Gaylor as pupils while in Roscommon, Michigan. Gerald became a high executive in the Johns Mansville Company and Howard in the National Association of Independent Insurance Agents. They frequently write or phone to thank Margarette for the influence she had on him.

THE TORCH



The Torch

Published by the

Howell High School

Under the Management of the Senior Class

This book was printed and bound by The Hastings Printing Company, of Hastings, Michigan, the engravings being made by the Stafford Engraving Company, of Indianapolis, Indiana, and the photographs by Ludwig's Studio, Howell. The editor acknowledges the courteous co-operation of these concerns, in the preparation of "The Torch."

FRANCIS R. LINE,
Editor-in-Chief.

Title page of the Howell High School 1922 Torch

All of you who are teachers have had more life-shaping influences than you will ever know, just as the teachers who taught all of us here in Howell High School had similar influences on us. Gladys McCallum is representative of all you who have carried on the teaching profession. Her assessment of this profession was given in a talk she once heard about teachers, and she adopted it as her own. "If you want to do something for a year, plant a seed; if you want it for 10 years, plant a tree. If you want to plant for an eternity, sow seeds in the heart of a child."

Gladys taught in rural schools here in Livingston County, she taught other teachers in what was known as a "normal" school, and she eventually became School Commissioner for the entire county. She was a teacher for 40 years and School Commissioner for 17. "The seeds that were sown seem to have been good seeds," Gladys says. "They are growing and bearing fruit."

We are doctors, lawyers, nurses, business men and women. We are teachers. We are homemakers, mothers, and fathers. Grandmothers and grandfathers. Great-grandmothers and great-grandfathers.

This is one of the most significant gatherings of Howell High School alumni that has ever taken place. But it is typical. There will be such gatherings in the future.

This is not just a reunion of Howell High School students. This is a unique gathering of citizens of America, servants of America. More than that—servants of the world community.

The thing that makes it unique—makes it great—is that this is symbolic of what life is all about. We here are in a favored position. We have run the course. We have served well. We graduated from high school. Before many years, all of us will graduate to something higher. We have lived useful lives, every one of us.

I hope to be here for our 70th reunion. I hope you will be too. The fact is, some of us may not be. But we know that those who are here will remember with real affection those who are not.

I can truthfully say this: Every individual here has made a positive contribution to our society. Consider your own contribution—how much it has meant to your community, your church, your family, your fellow citizens, the world. Then multiply that by 241—the combined size of our four classes. The sum is enormous. We are quite a group.

Chapter 22

On Turning 85

Age 85 is a time for savoring. Friendships become more precious; decimated by death, they become fewer. As the obituary columns steal away our cronies there comes the need not only to seek new friends but to appreciate, even more fully, the gifts of friendships that are still ours. It is a time for taking a minute each day to "reach out and touch someone," whether by letter, long distance or—happily—by a walk to that friend up the street.

Birdsong becomes enchanting.

The ballet of blowing grasses, the patterns of clouds against blue sky, the reaching skyward of tree limbs and the mystery of their penetrating roots which pull life from brown soil—these become powerful adventures in perception, rather than peripheral decorations. Life expands in the mid-80s, because it is more fully experienced. All nature explodes with wonder.

A lively young girl, riding her bike to school, or jogging—fresh cheeked and graceful—past the house, is an expression of the glory of God.

Emerson once said that, if the stars were to shine but one night in a lifetime, they would be objects of greatest awe rather than just scattered points of light to be casually observed.

For 85-year-olds the stars will not shine forever. Octogenarians begin to sense, even if subconsciously, the limited number of springtimes that are still theirs to enjoy. Each harvest moon, every graceful flight of a bird, each bursting of new buds, takes on deeper, more mysterious aspects. These will not be forever. The days are not endless. The well is not bottomless. The limitations of time augment the glory of the present hours.

Certain species of wildlife have powers and ranges of sight and hearing and touch far exceeding those of humans. A honeybee can scent the flower's nectar before the blossom is ever seen. Advancing years, rather than dulling the human senses, can serve to sharpen them into laser beams that pierce the heavens and penetrate the depths.

Age 85 is a time to make bright the golden wonders of creation.

A Confession

Dozens of our Super Senior friends and acquaintances are not included in this book and for this I apologize. In a few cases I had no idea whether a particular friend was above the 75-year-old cut-off requirement. Some 80-year-olds are so youthful in appearance they could pass for 50, and it has been embarrassing to go up to every one of our friends with the query, "How old are you?" One symbolic slap in the face cured me of that. Dr. Floyd Faust told me a bit of humor that emphasizes this point. Some writer wanted to know Cary Grant's age so sent him a telegram:

"HOW OLD CARY GRANT?"

The reply came back:

"OLD CARY GRANT FINE. HOW YOU?"

Each autumn for the next couple of years I shall get out a letter relating further adventures of some of the Seniors chronicled here. If you wish to receive such a letter send a self-addressed stamped envelope. Incidentally, I would like to know more about you.

May I say in closing:

FRANCIS AND HELEN LINE FINE. HOW YOU?

Francis Raymond Line
P. O. Box 2328
Capistrano Beach, CA 92624

After Words

Opening poem, "Let Them Know It." According to Floyd Faust, who sent this poem to us, its original longer version, titled *Sermons We See*, was written by Edgar Guest (1881-1959). Through the years it has been altered and added to by unknown devotees until now only the two opening lines are by Guest.

CHAPTER 6. On the afternoon of May 13, 1989 Helen and I were among those in the packed sanctuary of the First Unitarian Church in San Diego to honor Millard Sheets's memory. His daughter, co-pastor of the church, sketched his all-embracing life, then spoke intimate thoughts about her father. She read endearing words from Mary, his wife, who described her life with Millard this way: "It has been, and continues to be, a truly great adventure."

Each of the three sons spoke. One son, Tony, read a letter that his 13-year-old-daughter had written the night of her grandfather's death. The straight-from-the-heart expressions of this child just entering her teens was, for me, the highlight of the service.

Among those we met at the memorial was Janice Lovoos who did a comprehensive biography of Millard's life which was most helpful to me in writing about him.

Many long-time associates praised the genius of this man whose outreach in every field of art had no bounds. One of these, Jack Whitehead, said he had it on good authority that "Millard now has plans for redesigning the Pearly Gates."

CHAPTER 8. In April 1989 Aram and Margaret Pashgian flew to Hawaii and contacted more persons to whom Aram had been reaching out by radio. On the trip, Margaret became seriously ill. On May 2, back at their Santa Barbara home, her outreach became eternal.

CHAPTER 14. In her 80s Mabel Hutchinson developed a new interest in addition to art. For her 80th birthday she gave herself a very special gift—four albums of recorded opera arias by Luciano Pavarotti. "This was the beginning of an entirely new adventure," she told us. "I immediately joined the San Diego and the New York Met support groups. In 1984 I went with friends to see my first-ever live opera. The beauty of the stage and music gave me the impetus to adventure deeper and deeper into this newfound art."

Mabel made it a new learning experience. Buying more recorded operas she played them by the hour while holding the librettos in her lap and following the translations from Italian, French, or German into English. She flew to Honolulu to hear Pavarotti in person. Mabel had found a new interest.

CHAPTER 15. On Mother's Day, May 14, 1989, Helen and I went to a retreat at Pilgrim Pines and were met by the director, Gene Kuehl. "Ruth Cummings is at the point of death," he told us. "Johnny wants you to come right away."

We went at once and Johnny was at the door to meet us. What a visit we had with him, reliving the past and peering into the future. "Ruth is asleep," he told us, but I asked if we might see her.

As we stood by the bedside Ruth's head turned slightly and her eyes opened just for a moment, then closed again. Johnny told us that a while before our arrival Ruth had several moments of consciousness and spoke to him. "I hear someone calling," she had said. "I hear someone calling." She died that night.

It was Ruth's influence on Johnny that changed his life, which led eventually to his giving the Tree Farm to Pilgrim Pines. Her spirit will pervade the pines, will sing in the laughter of the bubbling spring, and will gently caress the golden splendor of God's Backyard, mingling with the joy and life of all who come there for re-creation, forever.

CHAPTER 16. November 20, 1989 marks 19 years that Francis has not missed a day of jogging.

About the Authors

Francis and Helen Line, at 85 and 82, look back and look ahead on a life of physical, literary, and spiritual adventures.

From their 49th wedding anniversary through their 60th, on May 1 of each year, they have hiked down to the Grand Canyon's Colorado River and back, as related in their *Grand Canyon Love Story*. The "Divine Abyss" has been a large part of their lives for 60 years. Francis starting hiking it in 1923.

Between high school and college, when Francis was 18, he and his brother hiked to every state in the Union, as related in their book, *Foot by Foot Through the USA*.

For much of their professional lives Francis and Helen made documentary and adventure color motion pictures throughout the world, which he narrated in person in auditoriums before more than a million persons across the United States and Canada. His book, *Adventure Unlimited*, portrays these exciting years.

Together or separately they are the authors of six books as well as articles in *National Geographic Magazine, Wide World of England, Arizona Highways, New Life News, Boy's Life, Guidance*, and many other periodicals.

Helen has been particularly active in church and in Laubach Literacy and has been president of the Western Region and national board member of the interdenominational Disciplined Order of Christ.

In 1975 they received the first Martin Luther King, Jr. Human Dignity Award from the Los Angeles Metropolitan YMCA in recognition of their services to the youth of Watts and to the Native Americans on the Navajo Indian Reservation.

Francis, born in New London, Ohio, grew up in the rural town of Howell, Michigan. Helen, born in Arizona, was one of eight daughters, the "Gibson Girls of Globe." She grew up on a 400-square-mile Arizona cattle ranch. Later her father bought a small 250-acre ranch which is now part of Scottsdale. The old ranch house, surrounded by modern day development, still stands as a historic landmark.

They have one daughter, Adrienne Knute, who has climbed more than 500 peaks in the Southwest and in Mexico. They have three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Francis and Helen plan to continue their anniversary treks to Grand Canyon, their other adventures elsewhere, and their writing activities as long as ideas flow.

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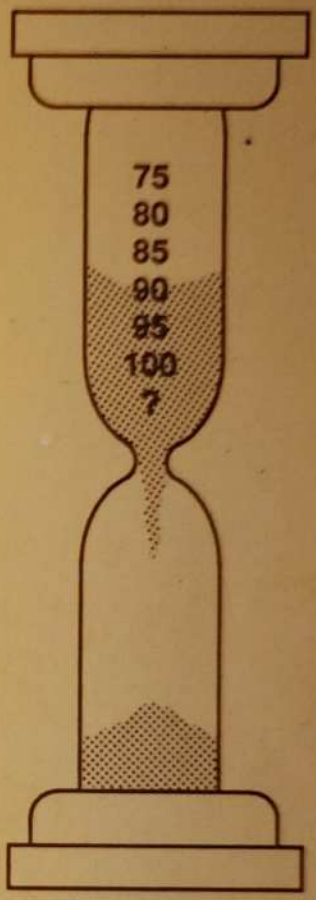

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