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# LIFE CARE LEADER

2014 Edition

## Ink in His Veins

*Allen Webster Hawkins*

## The Moral of the Story

*Martha Bell Miller*

## Beauty More Than Skin Deep

*Helen Hunter*



# DESCENDANTS OF THE SAMARITAN

The biblical parable of the Good Samaritan is known by virtually everyone – how a man traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho is robbed, beaten and left for dead until a Samaritan comes by and, with compassion, binds up the man’s wounds and takes him to an inn for recovery.

The Samaritan draws our admiration because (1) he took note of the man’s needs while others ignored them, and (2) he unhesitatingly acted to help.

Earlier this year, a modern-day version of this story occurred within Life Care.

In March, Tracie Hatfield, a licensed practical nurse and unit manager at Life Care Center of Valparaiso, Indiana, and her husband, Brian, faced a life-and-death situation involving a stranger.

Tracie and her husband were at a railroad crossing early one morning when Tracie saw what she at first believed was a black trash bag lying near the tracks. She started to alert Brian to steer away from the object when suddenly it moved – and a man’s face stared up at her. Apparently, he had fallen, and while he was not lying on the tracks, he was dangerously close.

Tracie quickly told Brian to stop the car and call 911. As he was speaking to the



operator, he left the car and approached the man. Just at that moment, the lights on the gate activated, bells were ringing, and the gates began to lower as a train approached the crossing.

Brian tossed Tracie the phone as he ran to the man and gently pulled him out of harm’s way.

Unlike drivers of numbers of cars that passed by, Tracie and Brian came to the aid of an individual who – they later discovered – was handicapped and homeless. He was attempting to walk into town when his cane slid out from



under him and he fell, unable to get up.

Although he was cold and sore, he looked up to Tracie and Brian and said, “Thank you,” as the EMTs were assessing his condition.

Linda Filan, the director of nursing at Life Care Center of Valparaiso, said Tracie has worked there for 11 years, and she was not surprised at her actions on this occasion. “Tracie has a wonderful heart, and she’s always thinking of others,” Filan said.

Asked why she and Brian thrust themselves into a dangerous situation, Tracie replied, “It’s just something you do; it’s the moral thing to do.”

She said she “always wanted to be a nurse. I have three older sisters, and two of them are nurses. So I guess it’s a family thing.”

Her decision that day is representative of the thousands of other dedicated men and women throughout Life Care who (1) notice the needs of others, and (2) unhesitatingly act to help.

In that sense, they are the spiritual descendants of the Good Samaritan. 🙏

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Life Care Leader is published annually by Life Care Centers of America for our residents, the corporate family and friends of Life Care.

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Photo by Karlin Kyle

# The Tales he lived to tell

By Dana Williams

• KENNETH "KENNY" STEWART •

Today, less than four out of 1,000 live births are affected by hydrocephalus – or water on the brain – and prenatal care often leads to early detection and treatment options. However, even with treatment, results range from slight learning difficulties to severe threats, even death.

Kenny Stewart was born in 1941 with this abnormality, and since shunting, a method to drain excess fluid, wasn't a well-established treatment until the '70s, his prognosis was that he would not live to be 18 years old.

His mother determined that she would treat him like her other two children as much as she could. Since Stewart's condition left him with great mobility deficits from the waist down, he spent his early childhood unable to reach some of the same milestones as his peers, like walking. Still, his mother cheered him on when he was discouraged and supported his adventurous spirit. Time

proved encouragement from his mother, key mentors and friends to be a powerful force in Stewart's life. He developed a positive outlook and achieved far beyond the expectations of the medical community.

The tales he tells lift spirits and pass along the encouragement he received throughout his life.

At the age of 73, Stewart now lives at University Park Care Center in Pueblo, Colorado. He spends his time talking to facility associates, other residents and visitors. The tales he tells lift spirits and pass along the encouragement he received throughout his life.

## The tale of the cardboard box adventure

Around age 7 and before Stewart had started walking, his mom sat him in a cardboard box in his front yard and said, "Don't run off. I'll be right back."

Stewart had other plans. "I put my hands on the outside of the box and pushed myself to see a neighbor's new baby," Stewart explains. "Mom was always telling me she'd take me down there some day. I wasn't going to wait that long. I took off across the lawn!"

Maybe the taste of mobility fueled Stewart's momentum for the work that soon came next. He began physical therapy and gained enough strength in his legs to take his first steps with the aid of crutches around the age of 8.

"The first time I ever stood up on my crutches, I thought: 'Oh, it feels so good!'" says Stewart. "Walking with crutches is just another way of getting around."



### The tale of a small-town restaurant

Don's Café was the Stewart family's restaurant and where Stewart worked for 20 years after convincing his parents to let him have a job. Having proven his math skills from a distance (correcting tickets of other employees), he became the cashier and eventually a face the entire town would know and love as "Kenny from Don's Café."



One day at the restaurant, Stewart's mom talked to the local barbershop chorus about Stewart's interest in singing. He had started off on a rough note, forgetting the lyrics to "Jesus Loves Me" during an impromptu, on-stage performance as a child. But, he had a talent most likely inherited from his father and had sung in quartets throughout high school and learned to play the accordion, inspired by Myron Floren from "The Lawrence Welk Show."

Stewart started attending chorus practices and local

performances, singing bass. The chorus also connected him with other quartets on several occasions. He followed this passion for 30 years.

"The first public performance, I got up in front of the audience, and we got a standing ovation from the entire auditorium," Stewart remembers. "It was like a balloon inflated inside me and just broke. It made me feel so good to be able to do something like that."



### The tale of love in the fourth grade


"She was in the fourth grade, and we met each other over at Thatcher Elementary where I first started going to school," Stewart reminisces.

She gave him a picture of her in a hula skirt and told him, "You keep this picture in your wallet, and every time you get to thinking about me, get the picture out."

He could not stop thinking about her. Eventually, their teacher and Stewart's mother talked to them about not spending so much time together. Years later, they ran into each other again at the Colorado state fairground. Stewart was there singing in the barbershop chorus.

"She said, 'Kenny, Kenny, do you remember me?'" Kenny recounts. "And you know what? I could not forget her. She said,

"Do you still have that picture of me?" I said, 'I wish I still had it. I carried that thing around until it cracked in my wallet. I couldn't take it out of the wallet to show people. I had to leave it in there because it had fallen to pieces.'"



### The tale of a boy and his first car

Even though Stewart was in his 30s, he was a boy at heart, and every boy dreams of driving his first car. Stewart's mother came across a newspaper ad for a man who taught people with disabilities how to drive. After six lessons with the instructor, Stewart had learned to use both feet – one for each pedal – to control the speed of the car. (Although Stewart's mobility was limited from the waist down, he was still able to move his feet while seated.)

After six lessons, his instructor said, "Now you can drive your car, but I don't want you to drive on the highway." When Stewart asked why, he said, "Because you don't have any experience."

Naturally, Stewart thought, *How in the world are you going to get any experience unless you get out and drive on the highway?* So he decided one beautiful day to take off up 29<sup>th</sup> Street, to turn left on Highway 50 and head to Cañon City.

"I was going up the Cañon City Highway," Stewart



remembers, "and my tire blew out on me." Fortunately, many people knew Stewart from the family restaurant and stopped to help.

"Driving my car was the most exciting experience of my life," says Stewart. "I never thought I would be able to drive a car. The first car I ever bought was a '76 AMC Pacer. I got it here in Pueblo, and I paid for it myself. It was fire engine red with a black vinyl top. When I got behind the wheel the first time, I had my picture taken in my car. I was never so proud in my whole life."



### The tale of a can-do attitude


Stewart has a knack for focusing on the positive, and he shares that outlook with anyone who needs to hear it.

"If you need help here, you've got it 24 hours a day," Stewart often tells new residents at University Park Care Center. "You've got everything you need. Why feel sorry for yourself?"

He says they often come up to him afterward and say, "Kenny, you're right about this place. There's always something to do."

Stewart spends some of his time completing one crossword puzzle after another – a hobby his mother turned him on to

during the restaurant days. He also enjoys painting felt pictures.

The advice he gives to anyone up against a disability or difficult circumstance is something his high school teacher and mentor Ed Posa – also a well-known artist – taught him: "The worst thing you can do is feel sorry for yourself. Just do what you can do, and you've done a good job." 

# A Mission is MORE THAN A DREAM

By Heidi Tompkins

• ETHEL "MAMA" TWING •

Many children who grow up in church dream of being missionaries. Mission service is more than a dream, though, as any missionary can attest. It is a path full of obstacles that can only be traveled with determination, courage and love.

But it is a calling with rewards like no other, as Ethel Twing knew well.

Born Ethel Louise Hall, Twing grew up in Lake Luzerne, New York. Raised in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Twing had a passion for helping people, and when her sister talked to her about a course she was taking in nursing, Twing knew what she wanted to do in life. She went on to become a licensed practical nurse.

In college, she met James Arthur Twing, who was studying to become a physical therapist. It didn't take long before they knew they were meant for each other. They were married only three months after meeting.

The couple welcomed several children over the next few years – first a son they named Alan, then another son, named Bruce, and then a daughter, Sylvia. While they raised a family and James developed his physical therapy

career, their mutual dream of being missionaries continued to grow.

However, when James inquired into what it would take to be a missionary, he was told that the church was not looking for physical therapists overseas – it wanted doctors.

James decided to go to medical school, but there was a catch: at the time, medical schools in the United States would only take students under age 30. He was over the age limit.

To get around that, James enrolled in medical school at la Universidad Autonoma in Guadalajara, Mexico. The family packed up and moved south of the border for seven years of schooling and residency. James not only learned medicine, but he learned Spanish at the same time. Thankfully, he excelled at both.

"He passed his boards with flying colors the first time," Twing remembered. "I was very proud of him."

The Twings returned to the

United States, and James joined two other Adventist physicians at a practice in Michigan. Not only was he serving patients, but the other two doctors shared his interest in mission work. They arranged for two doctors to work in the United States while one was serving the church overseas for six months. Then they would rotate missionaries.

In 1969, it was James' turn. One of the other physicians had started an Adventist clinic in Tanzania and asked the Twings to go finish the hospital.

Twing remembers landing in Africa for the first time and marveling at how strange the Swahili language sounded to her, especially after the Spanish she had been surrounded with in Mexico. Translators were a big help to Twing, who found learning new languages difficult.

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*Mission service is more than a dream, though, as any missionary can attest. It is a path full of obstacles that can only be traveled with determination, courage and love.*

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Photo by Ann Thompson Photography



Together, the couple served patients at Heri Mission Hospital on the western side of Tanzania. Both of them felt that they were finally where they were meant to be. When the six months were over, they wanted to return to Africa permanently.

There were challenges to be addressed if that was to happen. The hospital was in a remote location (40 miles from the nearest town, Kigoma), and the roads were difficult to drive on. The locals needed faster access to medical care, and the Adventist Church wanted the missionaries stationed there to cover a larger territory.

“My husband said, ‘If I’m going to go back to Africa, I’m going to have to have an airplane,’” said Twing.

First, though, the Twings had to pay off the medical school debt. God answered their prayers with a miracle. At the request of a family friend, the people who had loaned the Twings the money for school canceled the debt.

The Twings sold as much as they could and purchased a custom-made airplane,

with room for a patient and an attendant in addition to the pilot. In 1970, the couple returned to Tanzania.

James flew from place to place caring for patients throughout the country, while Ethel taught at the Heri Mission Hospital School of Health. They were finally living out their dream.

Sadly, things didn’t turn out the way they imagined.

James was scheduled to attend denominational committee meetings in Morogoro, on the east side of Tanzania. He set out in his plane, planning to stop for the night in Dodoma, about 200 miles from his destination.

Several days after James’ departure, however, the director of the school of health received a report from one of the meeting’s attendees that James had never arrived. The director was worried and told Twing what he had heard.

The two of them made the two-hour trip to Kigoma to use the telephone and find out what had happened. A call confirmed that James had refueled in Tabora (in central Tanzania), but the trail ended there. Twing and the director contacted the police and waited for news.

The news was not good. James’ plane had crashed, and he had not survived.

Twing’s life turned upside-down. Her beloved husband and partner in ministry was dead, and she had to return to the States.

Through it all, Twing’s faith never wavered, and after a time of grieving, she yearned to return to the mission field. She knew that God could still use her, even if she had to go back to Africa alone.

The church preferred to have registered nurses in service, so Twing went back to school and earned her RN degree before returning to the Heri Mission Hospital in 1972.

“She went back in honor of her husband and to not let her problems dictate her life,” said her daughter, Sylvia Hauner. “She was a very determined lady.”

After a time working as an RN at the hospital, she became the maternal and child health programs director, traveling from village to village throughout Tanzania, providing medical care, food and education to mothers and vaccinations to children.

“The best thing we could do was pay attention to the children and the mothers’ health,” Twing explained. “It was very fulfilling working with them to make sure they got the proper nutrition. I loved all the moms and the babies I took care of.”

“She always taught me the importance of education.”

– Musa Mitekaro

Twing loved the children so much that she reached out to them beyond her nursing duties. Among the Tanzanians, she quickly became known as Mama Twing.

“She would take kids into her home and see what kind of workers they were, and if they were really good workers, she’d sponsor them through school and pay their tuition,” Hauner shared. “She’d come home [to the States from time to time] and raise money to help put more students through school.”

Twing took in 10-15 children at a time, and they stayed for a year or two.

One of those children was Musa Mitekaro.

“She taught me to work hard at home, and she gave me homework from English books in Bible, science and mathematics,” Mitekaro shared. “She always taught me the importance of education.”

Twing saw Mitekaro’s eagerness to learn, and she took him with her on her travels to the villages. She even showed him how the fundraising for local projects

worked – from the donations received to how the funds were allocated and finally to their implementation.

“I was the youngest son in her family,” Mitekaro said. “She loved me so very much. Every morning or night she used to call me and pray with me before she went to sleep. She taught me to depend on God.”

Mitekaro put himself through college, earning his bachelor’s degree in theology in Jamaica and a master’s degree in theology in Germany. After meeting with Twing when he returned to Tanzania, they decided it was time to bring an English-speaking Adventist school to Kigoma.

Together, they prayed and worked to bring the dream about. Despite the lack of funds at the outset, they were amazed to watch God provide funding and materials.

Unfortunately, Twing never got to see the finished school. A stroke in 2002 sent her home to the United States at age 80.

“I spent almost all my life in Africa,” Twing said

affectionately. “I wanted to spend the rest of my life with my African children.”

Her service to the people of Tanzania was by no means over, however.

In honor of the Twings’ dedication, especially Ethel’s, the new building was named Twing Memorial School. It currently serves 650 students and continues to grow, thanks to faithful supporters who carry on the Twings’ mission.

A resident at Life Care Center of Kennewick, Washington, for several years, Twing didn’t complain about the winding road it took to fulfill her dream of being a missionary. Instead, she remembered the children and the impact God was able to make through her.

It’s an impact that continues to pay dividends. Mitekaro is living proof that the mission field is much more than a dream.

“Mama Twing is my hero,” he said. “What she taught me changed my life. I render service to people wholeheartedly because I learned from her.”

*Editor’s note: Ethel Twing passed away as this publication was being finalized for print. This article is printed in her memory, with the permission of her family.*





Photo by Denise Tarutis



Photo by Denise Tarutis



Photo by Denise Tarutis

Seeing the success of his hard work was – and still is – one of Groff’s most enjoyed activities:  
*“You put the seeds in the ground, and all of a sudden, they come to life.”*



# The Landscape of a Life

By Leigh Alberton

• LANDIS GROFF •

The ability to work with the earth is more than a learned skill – it’s a talent. It takes a special person to take simple dirt and seedlings and turn them into beautiful works of art. That person takes great pleasure in seeing the earth produce lush plants, beautiful flowers and healthy vegetables. Landis Groff, one of those artists, dedicated his life to working with the earth, and to this day, he still flexes that strong green thumb.

Born in 1941, Groff grew up on a farm in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The love of working with the land began early for the oldest of four children. By the time he was 7, he was operating a tractor and working alongside his father. The farm specialized in raising cows, pigs and chickens; they also grew many vegetables, including Groff’s personal favorite – the soybean.

Seeing the success of his hard work was – and still is – one of Groff’s most enjoyed activities: “You

put the seeds in the ground, and all of a sudden, they come to life.”

It wasn’t all work and no play, however; Groff has fond memories of playing in the hayloft with his siblings and going into town for special ice cream treats with his father.

Groff attended high school at Warrior Run High School in Turbotville, Pennsylvania, where he was active in Future Farmers of America. After high school, Groff moved to Allentown, Pennsylvania, and began working for Jaindl Farms. His primary responsibilities were feeding and transporting turkeys. While there, he also had the opportunity to work on another farm and see different techniques and ideas.

Always striving to learn and grow, Groff was known for his strong work ethic. He soon received an opportunity to work for Agway, Inc., a large retailer of John Deere equipment. Groff loved John Deere equipment and jumped at the chance to work with it more. It was at this job

that Groff noticed a common need of Agway’s customer base: lawn maintenance. With the encouragement of Agway, Groff began to dream about a way to fill that void and offer lawn maintenance to the customers he knew, as well as other community members.

Around this time, he met a lady named Nancy on a casual date with friends.

“Most women get flowers on the first date – I got corn and tomatoes!” shared Nancy.

The two were married in March 1973, in a quaint country church. The only people in attendance were the matron of honor, best man and minister.

“Nancy, my wife, is a very good, religious woman,” said Groff.

With a partner by his side, Groff continued to pursue his lawn maintenance company. The Groffs had very little money to work with, so they sold Nancy’s Ford Mustang, which was paid for, to buy Groff his first truck.



Nancy's grandparents also loaned them \$2,000 for supplies.

The truck and money gave Nancy and Groff just enough



enough so we could go out to a nice restaurant for our first anniversary," said Nancy.

In the beginning, Nancy did the books from home while Landis worked on jobs. Gardenique grew from just Groff and Nancy to 28 employees, 18 trucks, numerous tractors and a

"Because he came from a poor farming family and couldn't just go to college – he knew the only way to have a better life was to work very hard, be kind, be grateful and keep God in his life," explained Nancy.

As the business grew, so did Groff's family. He had two children from a previous marriage, Kim and Mike, and Groff and Nancy decided to expand the family even more.

They had two children: Kylie in 1974 and Keyl in 1977.

One of Groff's favorite memories occurred when Nancy was pregnant. He was competing in a local tractor-pulling contest,



to get started, and their company – Gardenique Landscaping, Inc. – was born.

Groff shared one of his favorite memories of owning his own business: "Coming home on a Friday night and collecting the money was kind of nice."

It didn't take long for word to get around the Lehigh Valley that Landis Groff had started a lawn maintenance business. Gardenique slowly grew, and they were able to pay Nancy's grandparents back in three months. They even managed to celebrate a special occasion that happened in the middle of the business launch: "After lots of veggies out of Landis' garden and many hot dogs, we saved

state-of-the-art Hydroseeder. The business worked for individuals as well as Lehigh Valley Hospital, area doctors' offices and other local businesses. Groff shared that one of the hardest parts of owning his own business was having to fire people.



and Nancy went to watch him. "She was pregnant, and I thought she'd have a baby on the way to the fair in the truck on the bumpy roads."



It ended up being a fun night with Nancy and friends. Groff won third place, and Nancy didn't have the baby in the truck!

Groff conducted his business carefully and wanted to set an example for his children.

"Do well, and be a good person; it will come back to you," shared Groff.

As the years passed, Groff noticed more and more customers requesting chemical-free lawn treatments. In the search for the right organic solution, Groff discovered the Filtrexx Garden Soxx. The "sock" looks like a black cylinder and is made out of a special black material that helps control erosion and protect the plant from chemicals such as diesel fuel and E. coli that may be found in the soil.

Filtrexx was the perfect solution for Groff's customers, and he soon became a certified Filtrexx installer and started his second business in 1996. It was named Environmental Erosion Control.

"The environmental erosion device was good because you had the weeds controlled," explained Groff. "The weeds could not take over the grass or plants when using it."



Groff shared that this solution and business were some of his proudest professional accomplishments.

Two years later, Groff was diagnosed with a

malignant brain tumor. His doctors insisted that he retire immediately. Gardenique and Environmental Erosion Control were sold to the same company, and knowing the respect

Groff's businesses had, the new owner requested to keep the names. Gardenique is still in business.

Groff and Nancy retired to Lakewood Ranch, Florida, and he eventually moved to Life Care Center of Sarasota for extra medical care. Even in retirement, Groff finds comfort in working outside, watching his plants grow. Groff and Nancy arranged for a Filtrexx GardenSoxx to be installed in one of the outdoor areas at the facility. The "sock" is housed in a special chair-height box so Groff can easily access it.

Now Groff grows string beans, zucchini, cucumbers and cherry tomatoes to share with the facility family.

"Life is good again," said Nancy. "Landis is back in his element." 🍷



# Beauty

## MORE THAN SKIN DEEP

*“Don’t limit yourself. Many people limit themselves to what they think they can do. You can go as far as your mind lets you. What you believe, remember, you can achieve.”*

*Mary Kay Ash, founder of Mary Kay Cosmetics, Inc.*

• HELEN HUNTER •

*By Christina Fullerton*

*Anytown, America, 1964. The Civil Rights Act has just been passed, and a new world is opening for minorities and women. Segregation and discrimination are outlawed, and corporate America will soon see women enter the workforce in droves. Yet Helen Hunter, a black American and single mother of three, has already overcome other obstacles in her life and is just a short time away from finding something better than corporate America: Mary Kay. Nothing will stand in her way.*

Hunter was born in Campbell, Ohio, shortly before the crash of the stock market in 1929. As a young child, Hunter’s family moved to Buffalo, New York, but an absent father left Hunter, along with her half-brother and mother, struggling to survive. This struggle was quickly compounded when she contracted polio at 9 years old, a disease that often left children paralyzed or crippled, if they survived at all. It was the determination in her heart and the support of her brother, especially, that gave her the

strength to fully recover from polio, eventually regaining full mobility.

As Hunter regained her strength, she finished grade school. Hunter continued her education until 1946, when she put a hold on high school to get married and start a family.

In 1954, the young family was relocated by Hunter’s husband, who wanted to be closer to his family in Detroit. Hunter, who needed to make extra money, began a career as a runway model for a designer based in Detroit.

Over the next eight years, Hunter’s modeling career kept her busy, but the desire to finish high school never left her mind. In 1961, she began classes while still modeling, and enlisted her three children to help her graduate. They stayed up late after school and quizzed her so Hunter could pass her exams. The family’s efforts and hard work paid off, and one year later, she graduated.

After graduating, Hunter’s life was thrown into disarray when she went through a divorce, something she admits was the most difficult experience of her life.

“The hardest thing was to find a way to rear my children the way I wanted to,” shared Hunter. “I had to work two jobs to pay for church

school and to take care of everything that you have to take care of to live in this world.”

The hardship couldn’t stop Hunter’s drive to create a better life for her and her family. She earned her licensed practical nurse certification while continuing to model, again with the help of her children.

“We all sacrificed to make it work together because we were all we had,” said Seabrun Hunter, her son.

After becoming a nurse at 39 years old, Hunter followed her daughter, Gloria Walker, to Houston, where Walker worked. Little did she know, a drastic change in her life was just around the corner.

Not long after Hunter moved to Texas, a neighbor told her she would be great for a direct sales

Photo by  
Matilda McIntyre



cosmetic company called Mary Kay. Drawn to the idea of making more money than ever possible as an LPN, she joined in 1971, using it as a second job. No stranger to adversity, Hunter knew the fact she was black could present challenges, such as clients thinking Mary Kay only had products for black women. But she pressed forward with an ever-present determination.

"I came into a white world, and it was a little bit difficult there," said Hunter. "I had a lot of obstacles to overcome."

To help her succeed, Mary Kay Ash worked with her personally to encourage and develop her business. Ash told Hunter that there were a lot of rungs on the ladder to climb, but if she pursued it, nothing would stand in her way.

"I knew I would be [successful] because Mary Kay told me I would!" Hunter recalled. "That there's nowhere I can't go, and being black had nothing to do with it. And she was right."

As Hunter developed her business, she never let her skin color, or the skin color of her clients, determine the success she had in her business. "As long as [cities] had people and people had skin, I was in business," she quipped.

As Hunter gained Mary Kay consultants to work on her team, those consultants then gained more team members.

***"Don't accept 'no' if you don't want it to be your answer."***

Her team, called a unit, grew and branched out into offspring units consisting of Caucasian, black and Hispanic women. Within a year of joining, Hunter became the second black director in the company. She eventually became the first black senior director in the company. Hunter's success earned her recognition and respect as a successful black businesswoman.

Hunter eventually quit her job as an LPN to focus exclusively on Mary Kay. For her, success was inevitable. The support of Hunter's family helped her achieve success, with her children even joining Mary Kay to help their mother.

"Once she had a goal in her mind that she set, there was nothing to stop her from doing it," said Seabrun. "With all of our help and the help of our family ties, there was no way she could miss being successful."

Hunter's success grew in the midst of the corporate world adjusting to new Civil Rights Act laws. To Hunter, Mary Kay was an alternative to traditional business environments, encouraging anyone to be successful. It was an opportunity to show women that they were capable of creating a better life for themselves, regardless of skin color.

"[My skin] was a selling point for me even when I was young," Hunter said. "[Clients] always came to me, wanting to be what I was, wanting to look how I looked."

Hunter liked most how much she was able to help other people overcome circumstances in their own lives through Mary Kay, and she used herself as an example of a successful businesswoman.

"[In Mary Kay] I could be more than I thought I could be," Hunter confided. "I didn't know that I could do things like this. I feel great about it because I'm more now than I was when I started my Mary Kay."

Her daughter echoed her experience: "Mother was a little shy as a person – even though she was a model – and less confident because her education wasn't as up to par with some of her peers," said Walker. "She felt a little insecure, but she dropped that along the way as she discovered she could do more things. Like a butterfly coming out of that cocoon, she blossomed."

Mary Kay is famous for awarding each of its top consultants the car that is now synonymous with the company: a pink Cadillac. Hunter's proudest moment in her career occurred when Mary Kay Ash handed her the keys to her first pink Cadillac at the 1972 annual conference for consultants, called Seminar.

Throughout her career, Hunter earned five cars, including a second pink Cadillac, and kept close to her mentor, Mary Kay Ash.

"She was just like the girl next door as far as I was concerned," Hunter said. "She was like a mom to me. That's the way she conducted herself, giving me words of wisdom and encouraging me... giving me a pink Cadillac, mink coat and lots of diamonds along the way."

Hunter's drive and ability to overcome her circumstances have been an inspiration

to many, and her children are no exception. Hunter passed on her determination to her children, encouraging them to rise above their circumstances when times were trying.

Walker recounts having difficulties being one of the first black flight attendants in her company, but she used her mother's mindset to overcome it.

"Take a chance and believe in yourself," Walker stated. "Don't accept 'no' if you don't want it to be your answer. If you try hard enough and you believe hard enough and you pray hard enough, you can overcome. You can succeed. And don't let yourself hold yourself back."

Hunter's outlook inspired Walker to go back to school and become a nurse despite severe test anxiety.

"Because I see her accomplish these things, I know I can do it," said Walker.

When Hunter became sick in 1994, she gave up her directorship and units, but she

did not stop her business entirely. She still helps women with their skin care and urges others to have a career like her.

"Once you get Mary Kay in your bones, you've got it," Hunter said.

Hunter serves women at her current residence in Life Care Center of Grandview, Missouri, including associates and other residents. declared proudly. "I don't put anything on me except Mary Kay cosmetics, body wash or facial wash."

Hunter, who recently won runner-up in the Missouri region's Ms. Nursing Home Pageant, representing Life Care Center of Grandview, hopes she can continue sharing Mary Kay with others.

"I hope I'm an inspiration to [consultants] to go as far as you can go, and there's no top in Mary Kay," said Hunter. "There's always room for you growing. So by all means take hold and keep on going. Don't take 'no' for an answer." 🙌





Photo by Dael Kurkowski Studio

# Ink in His Veins

By Jared Powers



“I can remember sometimes setting type at night as late as 11 o’clock to get the paper out,” Hawkins recalled.

• ALLEN WEBSTER HAWKINS •

**B**eep! Beep! Beep!  
5:00 a.m.

*It's time for 16-year-old Allen Webster "Web" Hawkins to get up for work. The St. Francois County Journal won't go out if he doesn't go to work.*

*It is, after all, the job of a printer's devil, or apprentice, to get the furnace running, which means starting at 6:30 a.m.*

*Today would not be any ordinary day, though. Yesterday, the publisher promised to teach Hawkins how to run the Linotype machine – an exciting opportunity for any printer's devil, as that meant a promotion, and more work.*

*After fulfilling his early morning commitments at the Journal, Hawkins headed to Flat River High School for class. That afternoon, after only three months on the job, he would learn to run the Linotype, setting his career in motion.*

Hawkins was born in the small Missouri town of Advance on Dec. 15, 1925, to Arthur and Winness Hawkins – the oldest of nine children. The family moved to Flat River, Missouri, shortly thereafter.

Hawkins' job at the St. Francois County Journal began his sophomore year of high school, and he earned \$1.50 per week, working every day before and after school and all day Saturday.

“I can remember sometimes setting type at night as late as 11 o'clock to get the paper out,” Hawkins recalled. “That was the key to my whole newspaper experience in the early days. If you could run a Linotype, you could get a job anywhere, and publishers who couldn't run a Linotype, they were always at the mercy of the printers – the back shop.”

A Linotype machine required a furnace to heat metal to cast the type. The Linotype operator would use a 90-character keyboard to cast an entire line of type.

Linotype operators had to be extremely careful. If one mistake was made, the entire row of text had to be retyped and recast.

Hawkins worked at the Journal until he graduated from Flat River Junior College in 1944. He then immediately went to Jefferson Barracks in Lemay, Missouri, to apply for the Army and serve his

country during World War II. After being turned down due to a bad back, Hawkins accepted a teaching job in De Soto, Missouri, where he taught eighth grade mathematics for two years.

Yearning to get back in the newspaper business, Hawkins began taking summer classes at the University of Missouri School of Journalism. To complete his degree, he moved to Columbia, Missouri, to attend school full time.

Hawkins' experience with a Linotype machine put him through college. He attended classes during the day and set type for the Columbia Daily Tribune at night.

Graduating with a bachelor's degree in 1947, Hawkins accepted his first position as the news editor for the Russell County News in Russell, Kansas.

“I arrived in Russell on Labor Day in 1947, and the first day I was on the job we converted a weekly to a daily newspaper. And I'm the news editor,” Hawkins laughed, pondering his inexperience at the time.

To signify the transition, the Russell County News became the Russell Daily News.

# Osawatomie

"The first day I was on the job, I went in to the Dawson Drug Store, which was across the alley from the paper, to get a cup of coffee," Hawkins continued. "And I heard the name Bob Dole. Of course, that didn't mean anything to me, you know. I had no idea who that was. We later became good friends and have been friends all these years."

Hawkins was the news editor at the Russell Daily News for almost three years before he was drafted at the beginning of the Korean War.

"When the Korean War broke out, I got a notice that I was No. 1 on the draft list," Hawkins explained. "I had another physical, and the Army said my back had cured. So I spent two years in the Army."

Hawkins spent a lot of time in Washington, D.C., during his service and had a good time, overall.

"My Army life was a great one," Hawkins continued. "I had a car. I was single. I played golf all winter the first year I was in the Army at [Fort Sam Houston in] San Antonio. And the second year, I was in Camp Pickett [in Blackstone, Virginia], and I went to all the Civil and Revolutionary War battlefields along the East Coast."

Having reached the rank of corporal, Hawkins' service ended in 1952, and he returned to the Russell Daily News. It was in Russell that he met the love of his life, Gladys Ann Schmidt.

"I was a Shriner," Hawkins explained. "The Shrine [Temple] was a very prosperous club in those days, and they were going to have a dance. They hired Benny

Goodman to play for it. I'm the only single Shriner in town. I guess there was quite a bit of wondering of who I was going to take. We dated a couple of times, so I took [Gladys Ann].

"It seems like in about a year they had another dance," Hawkins continued. "That time, they had Duke Ellington. And I took her again. I guess after that, we just decided to get married."

Hawkins and Schmitt, as Gladys Ann preferred, drove down to Sulfur Springs, Texas, without telling anyone in Russell. Gladys Ann's niece and nephew-in-law joined them for the trip and to sign as witnesses. They were married on Nov. 25, 1956.

The same year Hawkins was married, Bob Dole was appointed attorney for Russell County.

"I met Web Hawkins when I was county attorney in Russell in the 1950s," wrote former Senator Dole. "He was a good reporter, asked tough questions and ran a good paper as editor of the Russell Daily News."

Both serving in highly public positions, Dole and Hawkins were selected as co-chairmen of the local Kiwanis Club Program Committee. A lifelong friendship was kindled.

"I would watch the papers around to see what other civic clubs were having for programs, and I would call [Dole's] secretary at the county attorney's office," Hawkins elaborated. "They would make arrangements for programs that sounded interesting. Bob would introduce the program, and as time went on, this guy's

comments before or after the program were better than the program. You could just see this wit develop."

Not long after Hawkins was married, the publisher of the Russell Daily News took Hawkins along to prospect purchasing a paper in Chadron, Nebraska.

"I guess the deal was, if they bought the paper, that I would run it," Hawkins remembered. "Well, they didn't buy the paper. We came back home, and I got docked a day's pay. We had gone up there on a Saturday. And I can remember going home at noon and telling my wife I thought it was time for us to move."



Some time later, Hawkins heard about a paper for sale in Osawatomie, Kansas. The Osawatomie Graphic-News was owned by Nelson S. Reppert at the time.

"Looking back, the guy that owned the paper was pretty desperate – he must have been," Hawkins shared. "We came up with this deal. I think we shook hands. I don't think there was ever any paperwork. I remember we could run the paper two years and buy

half of it. Then after that we could buy the other half."

Hawkins and his wife moved to Osawatomie to run the Osawatomie Graphic-News in 1959.

"The first day I was on the job, I went back to the shop and sat down and set some type on the Linotype to let everybody know that I could run it," Hawkins chuckled. "That was the first thing."

The Osawatomie Graphic-News had not made money in a few years. The first year Hawkins took over, it made a bit of money, he recalls. Hawkins was the publisher and manager, and Schmitt was the bookkeeper. They purchased a half interest in the paper in 1961, and the other half in 1977.

"When we took it over, they were printing 1,000 copies, but they didn't know how many of those were paid for," Hawkins recounted. "When we retired, we were printing over 5,000 copies."

Hawkins and Schmitt made many changes to the Osawatomie Graphic-News, including dropping 'News' from the name in 1979. They also converted from letterpress to offset printing to consolidate printing with the local papers in Garnett and Paola, instead of each paper using its own letterpress.

The central printing plant for all three papers was on-site at the Graphic until the 1980s, when Hawkins sold the printing press. The paper would now be printed in St. Joseph, Missouri.

Serving as owner and publisher of the Graphic afforded Hawkins opportunities to be more involved with his community and industry. He was a member of the Kansas

Press Association for many years and its president in 1970.

An active member of the National Newspaper Association, which included more than 5,000 member papers, he served as president in 1988. His membership with the NNA included many trips to Washington, D.C., where he would often run into, or be re-introduced to, longtime friend Dole.

"Web has been a good friend of mine over the years," wrote Dole.

In 1987, Hawkins' alma mater honored him with the Missouri Honor Medal for Distinguished Service in Journalism. Medalists are selected by school faculty for superior achievement in journalistic endeavors. The Kansas Press Association presented Hawkins with the Clyde M. Reed Jr. Master Editor Award in 1996 for his lifetime of achievement as a newspaper editor and his commitment to community, industry and state.

The Graphic was sold in 1998, and Hawkins got out of the paper business for health reasons.

"I think the key to the success of the Graphic is we printed a lot of news stories about people," Hawkins shared. "The guy that we sold the paper to, in the neighboring town of Paola, told me that each week he counted the number of news stories in his paper and the Graphic. And we always



beat him, and he couldn't figure it out. He never could figure out why."

Hawkins credits some of his success at the Graphic to William Allen White's autobiography, which he read in college. White tells of the importance of names in small town newspapers, and Hawkins followed that formula.

The rest of the success is credited to Hawkins' staff: "We had a little turnover in the press room through the years, but as far as the newspaper is concerned, we had an excellent staff that stayed with us a long time and are still around and are good friends to this day. I think that was the key to it."

At the age of 78, Schmitt passed away on Feb. 15, 2009, at Life Care Center of Osawatomie, where Hawkins is a current resident.

"I've had a good life," Hawkins trailed off. "It's been an enjoyable life. I guess in the final analysis, that's about the best thing you can say."

Hawkins doesn't rise at 5 a.m. anymore, but he continues to report the news to the administrator at Life Care Center of Osawatomie.

Once a newsman, always a newsman. 📰

EVEN SAD SONGS CAN HAVE

# Beautiful Melodies

Photo by Amy Martell with A&M Photography



JANINA MALICKI

By Dara Carroll

Janina Malicki and her adopted home state have an unusual connection. On Feb. 14, 1912, Arizona achieved statehood. Seventeen days later, Malicki was born halfway around the world – in Warsaw, Poland. At the time, no one could have imagined that 100 years later, Malicki would be an American citizen, living in Arizona and celebrating her centennial, along with the state.

The events that led Malicki to America would have been even more difficult for anyone to fathom on that brisk March day. In the next 30 years, two world wars would devastate Europe, and the second one would directly ensnare Malicki.

The “phoenix city” is an oft-used label for Warsaw because it has flourished despite the many wars and conflicts that have ravaged it. A true Varsovian (native of Warsaw), Malicki is a phoenix in her own right, having emerged from the rubble and ruin of war to carve out a life of happy independence.

Malicki’s story is mirrored in the lives of thousands of World War II

survivors, but her tale is unique in that she is still here to tell it – at the age of 102.

Malicki’s early life was difficult. She was the youngest of 17 children born to a family of farmers – two boys and 15 girls. Poland was a reluctant part of the Russian empire at the time, but the oppression she felt from farm life is what young Malicki found most debilitating.

“She hated farming,” said Malicki’s youngest daughter, Mary O’Rourke. “To protect her, an aunt picked her up every morning, before her father woke up.”

The relative’s home was a place of refuge for Malicki from a too stern father and an overworked mother who didn’t have time for her. Eventually, she moved in with the aunt full time and attended finishing school, where she studied acting, singing, handwriting, cooking and socialization.

Malicki soon discovered a passion for music and emerged as a

soprano with the Polish opera. She was just finding her feet as a young adult in the thriving capital city, when she met William Malicki, three years her junior. A Michigan-native born to Polish immigrant parents, William was Malicki’s first cousin. He was sent to Poland to continue his education and learn about his family’s businesses, which included ownership of several properties.

William and Malicki fell in love, but because of their close relation, they had to get permission from the pope before their 1934 marriage. Permission from Malicki’s family was harder to secure.

“They weren’t supportive of her marrying a Polish-American,” said O’Rourke, “nor her first cousin. But, they just wanted her taken care of.”

Tragically, the next few years brought trials for Malicki and her homeland that no one could protect her from.

On Sept. 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland and ignited World War II. For the next five and half years, Warsaw witnessed some of the darkest atrocities of the war, including Treblinka, the Warsaw Ghetto and the deaths of more than 150,000 non-Jewish Polish civilians and several hundred thousand Polish Jews.

It is difficult to imagine the fear that cloaked Warsaw’s proud citizens as the war raged around them. Polish citizens suffered through the most extreme conditions in all of German-occupied Europe, and in Nazi-



occupied Poland, helping Jews in any way was punishable by death – not just for the helper, but for the helper’s entire family. Despite such grave conditions, thousands of Poles still bravely put their lives on the line to save others. Malicki’s husband was among those willing to risk everything he had for what he believed was right.

were forced to focus on their own survival. It was not a labor camp, but conditions were still harsh. They had to pick through garbage to find food, and Malicki stood in line for hours to get a single bowl of water for her young daughters – Theresa, 8, and Barbara, 7.

Malicki and her girls were miraculously reunited with William in April 1944, when all four were transported to a camp in Vittel, France, for

British and American citizens. The camp was liberated by Americans that fall, but Malicki and her family had nowhere to go. Their home in Warsaw and all of their possessions had been destroyed after their capture. Nothing remained for them in Poland, but they dreamed of making a new start in America.

William and their daughters were offered passage to America because they were U.S. citizens, but not Malicki. She didn’t even speak English. William implored U.S. Army staff to allow his wife, who was pregnant, to travel to America with them. He vowed to take her to night school so she could learn English and become a U.S. citizen. His pleas fell on compassionate ears, and in December 1944, the family of four set sail on the USAT Thomas H. Barry.

“We landed in this wonderful country, Christmas Eve of 1944, in Boston, Massachusetts,” wrote Pike.

The family was “home,” but had no home to go to. According to O’Rourke, they had no possessions, “only the money in Mom’s shoe.” They were taken in by a priest who housed them until they were able to make their way to Michigan, where William’s family still lived.

In 1945, not long after

arriving in America, Malicki gave birth to O’Rourke in a U.S. Marine hospital.

“My mother told me she was very embarrassed to be in a hospital full of men,” said O’Rourke. “She was especially embarrassed because a good-looking, young doctor did the delivery.”

The Malicki family quickly adjusted to Michigan and their new surroundings. Malicki enrolled in night classes and made good on her promise to learn English and become a U.S. citizen. Meanwhile, William began working as a radio announcer for a local station and then went on to work for Packard Motor Company and General Motors.

Driven by her talent and love of music, Malicki eventually connected with the Detroit opera and started singing professionally again, but her husband did not want her to have a career, so she gave it up.

Malicki’s daughters remember a happy childhood, nothing like their mother’s Warsaw upbringing.

“She was a positive thinker,” said O’Rourke. “She always had a strange ability to know what was going to happen next. She loved children, loved to fish and hunt and cook, and she was always singing.”

Holidays were a special time for the Malickis, including home-

cooking (especially traditional Polish dishes), lots of polka and taking communion together as a family at Christmas. Through the rest of the year, the family enjoyed camping in Port Austin, Michigan, and the adults enjoyed going to shows, entertaining and gambling.

“Whenever Mom’s hand was itchy, it meant they needed to

16 years later, Malicki decided to stay near O’Rourke.

“She’s an awesome mom,” said O’Rourke. “She’s always been adventurous. She was still riding on the back of my Harley when she was 90 [years old].”

Malicki found other ways to stay young, too. Family members say she could still do a split at the age of 97!



gamble,” said O’Rourke, “because she was going to win.”

Theresa passed away in 1972, but the Malickis found pleasure in their growing family – which today includes seven grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren and four great-great-grandchildren. Although many family members were still in Michigan, the Malickis relocated to Arizona in 1983, to live near their youngest daughter, a motorcycle enthusiast. When William died

Today, Malicki is a resident at Payson Care Center in Payson, Arizona, where everyone simply knows her as Grandma Malicki. Although she is fluent in seven languages, these days, she prefers to communicate in her native Polish. Much has changed in the past 102 years, but the music she passionately discovered as a young woman in Warsaw remains. And, the songs that still fill her heart are beautiful melodies in any language. 🎵

Separated from her husband and unaware of his plight, Malicki and her daughters were forced to focus on their own survival.

“My father worked with the Polish underground,” said O’Rourke. “He owned a bakery where the underground tunnels began for the Jews to escape.”

According to O’Rourke and her older sister Barbara Pike, their father helped more than 200 Jews and others escape capture. But this was war, and valor rarely meets its reward on the battlefield. Despite William’s selfless efforts – or maybe because of them – Nazis abducted Malicki and the couple’s two young daughters in December 1943 and sent them to an internment camp. William was arrested soon after.

Separated from her husband and unaware of his plight, Malicki and her daughters



# Perseverance IN THE FACE OF PREJUDICE

By Tanya Bumgardner



Photo by Jim Medford Photography



• DR. BERNARD F. GIPSON SR. •

“Claude, I want to be a doctor.”

Many 12-year-olds arbitrarily declare that they want to be doctors. Or astronauts. Or dancers. ... Dreaming about our future selves is a natural part of growing up. Likewise, it is not uncommon for children to change their minds in the next moment. But when a young Bernard Gipson told his brother he wanted to be a doctor one day as they traveled down a rural Texas road, he meant it.

Yet for a poor African-American farm boy born on Sept. 28, 1921, a time between slavery and the civil rights movement, his chances of becoming a doctor were slim.

A lot can change in 80 years. Bernard F. Gipson Sr., M.D., is now one of Colorado's most notable residents, having become the state's first African-American board-certified surgeon. He is praised throughout the state for paving uncharted pathways for the success of black Coloradoans who followed him.

Perseverance and determination seem to be consistent themes throughout Gipson's life story. He overcame obstacle after obstacle while the words of his mother, Alberta, were constant in the back of his mind: “Bernard, when the going gets rough, and it will, you just keep going. Don't stop. Just keep going.”

A 10-year-old Gipson needed that encouragement when his father passed away from a sudden heart attack. Lack of a doctor nearby that would treat blacks likely contributed to his father's premature passing. Gipson feels that moment was one of the first that would influence his decision to become a doctor.

“Maybe I didn't know it then, but I know now that it came into my mind from across the infinite airwaves,” Gipson wrote in his memoir, *You Can Make It If You Try: An African-American Surgeon's Inspiring Journey*. “If there had been a colored doctor in our community who was close by, Papa would have received the proper medical attention throughout his life, and he wouldn't have died so young.”

Two years later, Gipson himself would need treatment for appendicitis. It was at this time that he met Dr. William Watts. He was the only black doctor he had ever known and quickly became the source of Gipson's inspiration.

“There was a family doctor from Marshall, Texas. He used to come out to our church – Dr. Watts,” recalled Gipson. “And I was just so impressed with him. And, of course, I was attacked with appendicitis, and he operated on me at his hospital. And I told him when I was a child, I was going to be a doctor.”

With that determination, Gipson pursued education, even moving from Bivins, Texas, to Marshall to attend high school while living with extended family. Gipson studied hard and graduated as salutatorian of his class.

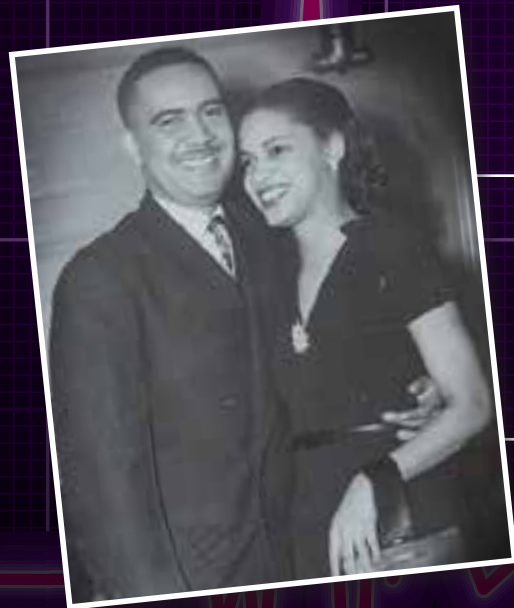
He approached college with the same determination, attending Bishop College with a scholarship in Marshall, then later attending the reputable Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia.

It was during his studies at Morehouse in 1941, in the middle of World War II, that his medical career was threatened.

“As others were being drafted, I was by law deferred from the military if I was accepted for admission to medical school,” Gipson wrote. “But, before I knew if I had been accepted at any of the schools, I received the news that the local Draft Board in Texas reclassified me as I-A and ordered me to report for military service.”

Gipson had no choice but to report. But a miracle was happening without his knowledge as he was traveling home to Bivins.

Previously, while dining with his Uncle Marcus Rambo and Aunt Thelma, Gipson met Dr. Benjamin Mays, president of Morehouse College, and his wife, Sadie. When Mays got word of Gipson's situation through Sadie, he immediately took action, making phone calls



**“The day following the appointments, I received several calls from my white colleagues, congratulating me on my appointment,” recalled Gipson. “It meant that the civil rights movement was having some impact.”**

to advance Gipson’s acceptance to medical school.

Mays succeeded, and when Gipson reported, he was told to go back to college because he had been deferred. He returned to Morehouse to discover that he was accepted to Howard University College of Medicine in Washington, D.C., to begin classes in the fall of 1944.

In 1946, one of Gipson’s Howard classmates asked him if he knew Ernestine Wallace, who had attended Spelman College in Atlanta while Gipson was at neighboring Morehouse. Gipson remembered her fondly. They had worked together at the Atlanta University System Library years before. Once he found out where she was, he immediately sent her a letter special delivery. It was not long before Gipson and Ernestine became a couple.

“She and I visited frequently during my senior year,” wrote Gipson. “I was in Washington, D.C., and she was in Philadelphia, which was not too far to travel. When I began my residency at Harlem Hospital

in early 1947, I visited her in Philadelphia as often as possible, and she came to New York when her schedule would permit.”

Gipson and Ernestine married on Dec. 19, 1947.

According to Gipson’s youngest son, Bruce, no one expected Gipson and Ernestine to get together.

“Occasionally, I will get him on the phone with a few of his remaining classmates that are still alive, and they will say, ‘Gip, how could you get that beautiful girl? She was homecoming queen,’” Bruce said.

“She was popular,” Gipson laughed. “Then Dr. Bernard Gipson came along!”

While at Howard, Gipson’s decision to become a surgeon was largely influenced by Dr. Charles R. Drew, professor and chairman of the Department of Surgery. Drew was internationally known for discovering plasma preservation during World War II, saving the lives of thousands of Allied soldiers. Drew selected Gipson to complete his surgical residency at Freedman’s Hospital, a teaching hospital for Howard University Medical School in Washington, D.C. Drew became a mentor to Gipson.

“Dr. Drew was a very dedicated surgeon and teacher,” wrote Gipson. “His joy seemed to come with our development, with the increase in our skills and confidence.”

Sadly, Drew was killed in a car wreck before Gipson started the second year of his residency. He completed his residency under Dr. Burke Syphax, who also influenced Gipson.

“He was an outstanding teacher,” said Gipson.

In 1953, Gipson became certified by the American Board of Surgery.

After he completed his residency, Gipson was still indebted to the United States military for his deferment. He joined the Air Force and was assigned to Lowry Air Force Base in Denver. Soon, Gipson became the first African-American head of surgery at Lowry.

“I took the Colorado State Medical Board and I was encouraged by my surgical consultants to stay and practice in Denver,” Gipson wrote. “This was a big decision for my wife and me. Although we knew a few people here and had made some friends, we were from the South. ... Denver was a

nice, clean town. We liked the atmosphere. After completing my military obligations, I entered the private practice of surgery in Denver. I was the first African-American board-certified surgeon in the state of Colorado.”

Gipson’s career began to flourish, despite the prejudices of some of his colleagues. He was given hospital privileges at Mercy Medical, General Rose Memorial Hospital and Children’s Hospital. He became a member of the American College of Surgeons in 1960 and treasurer of the Denver Medical Society in 1970.

Gipson knew times were changing when the Sisters of Mercy appointed him to the

executive committee of Mercy Medical Center.

“The day following the appointments, I received several calls from my white colleagues, congratulating me on my appointment,” recalled Gipson. “It meant that the civil rights movement was having some impact.”

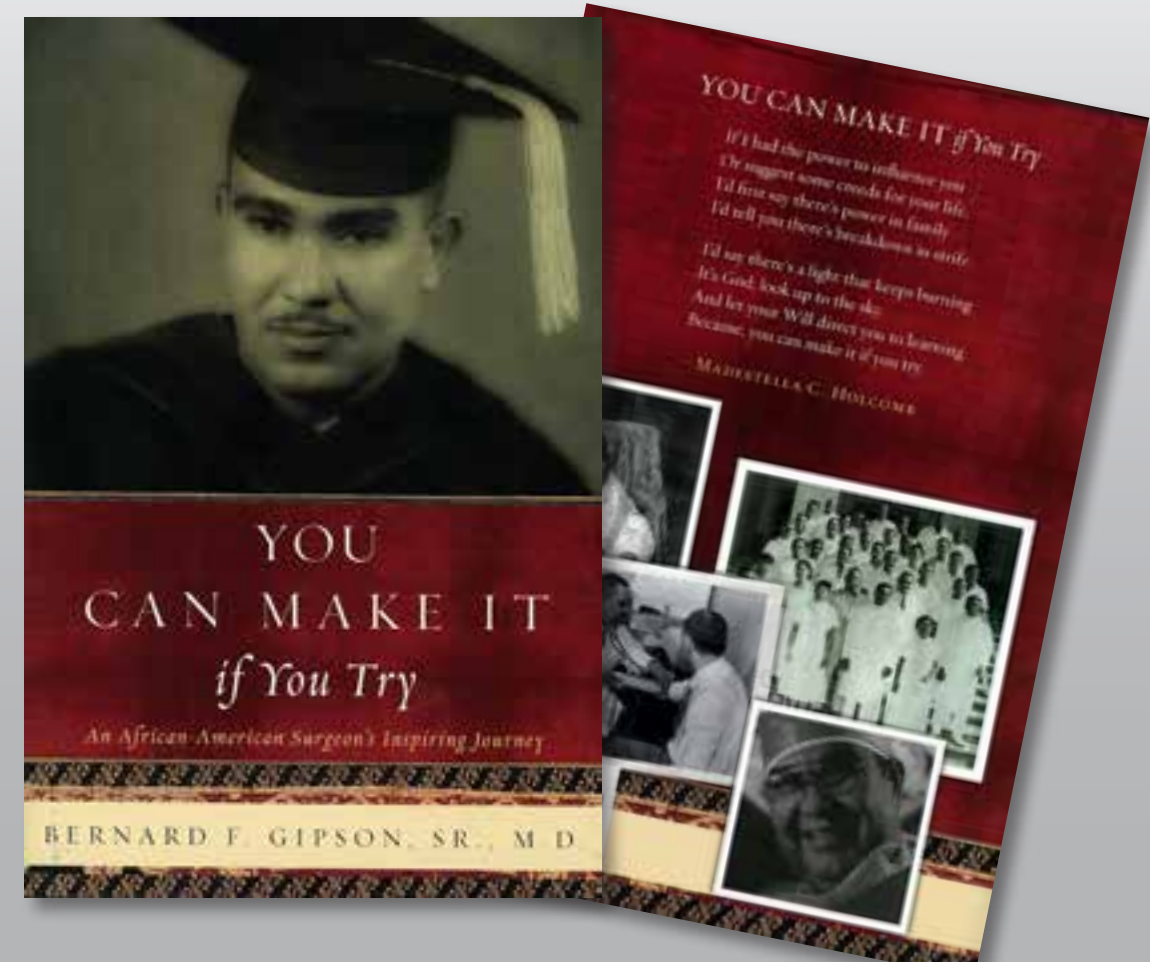
Part of the impact came from the influence of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He visited Denver on a few occasions, and Gipson treated both him and his wife, Coretta, twice.

“Dr. King and Coretta both came to Denver on separate occasions – Coretta to sing and Dr. King to preach, deliver messages,” said Bruce. “Both

of them, being Atlantans, had trouble with the mile-high altitude. It was automatic that whoever was hosting them would send them to Dr. Gipson. [One] afternoon, he walked into his office with the Rev. Dr. King, and those church ladies [in the waiting room] about collapsed.”

For many years following, King and Gipson exchanged Christmas cards, and King often sent Gipson a book as a Christmas present to show appreciation for his medical services.

Gipson served Denver through his private practice and teaching for 41 years. His oldest son, Bernard Jr., also became a doctor, and the two







**“When I became Chairman of the Department of Surgery at Mercy Medical Center, the African-American community was pleased and expressed a feeling of accomplishment for black physicians in Denver.”**

practiced together for a time. He also served on the faculty at University of Colorado. Gipson had many papers published, earned many accolades and held memberships in a variety of medical organizations in Colorado, including the Denver Medical Society, the Colorado State Medical Society and the American Cancer Society. But when he became the first African-American to be named chairman of the Department of Surgery at Mercy Medical Center, his influence was clear.

“When I became Chairman of the Department of Surgery at Mercy Medical Center, the African-American community was pleased and expressed a feeling of accomplishment for black physicians in Denver,” wrote Gipson. “Reference is made to this assignment even

today to our youth by the adults in our city, because today, African-American physicians have positions at practically all levels – as teachers and trainers at the University of Colorado Medical School.”

Gipson retired from his practice in 1992. Of course, the term “retired” could have been used loosely. One month after he retired, he started working part-time for a geriatric clinic serving long-term care patients. In fact, he spent some time as a medical director for Briarwood Health Care Center in Denver, where he resides today.

Today, Gipson’s influence is all over Denver. Denver Health’s Gipson Eastside Family Medical Center bears his name. The Center for African American Health presents the Dr. Bernard F. Gipson Sr. Health Leadership

Award – of which he was the first recipient – annually to an outstanding Denver physician.

Gipson did accomplish his dream, born as a poor farm boy to become a medical pioneer of Colorado, saving lives just like he hoped to. But what inspired Gipson all these years to accomplish so much when faced with prejudice and adversity?

Perhaps the answer can be found in his laugh. It’s a sincere, joyful laugh that is produced easily at the mention of a pleasant memory. It appears to be evidence of a positive, persevering attitude that says giving up is not an option – just keep going. Just like his mother told him to. 🙌



# THE MORAL *of the* STORY

*By Ryan Faricelli*



Photo by Vick Laney

• MARTHA BELL MILLER •

“My story begins in 1925,” announced Martha Bell Miller, a spry, sharp woman with a devilish grin. “You can figure it all up.”

Figuring up the story of this teacher and storyteller isn’t as easy as one would think, and the witty Miller knows it. It’s not a playful suggestion – it’s a challenge.

One of six children, Miller was born on Jan. 20, 1925, atop scenic Lookout Mountain, where the corners of Tennessee, Georgia and Alabama meet. Miller is the daughter of prominent judge and commissioner J. D. Miller Sr. and Edith McAllester Miller. When she was just a few months old, her father provided her with her first brush

with history when he took Miller to attend the Scopes Monkey Trial in Dayton, Tennessee.

“I was there,” she mused, “but of course, I don’t remember it.”

Miller does remember her next historic adventure, a moment that would shape her future and eventually allow her to touch the lives of millions of children.

On May 21, 1932, Miller accompanied her mother and grandmother to Rock City Garden’s opening celebration atop Lookout Mountain. Though only 7 years old at the time, Miller vividly remembers the green punch and green icing on the cakes being the exact same shade of green as the dress she wore.

That experience, and her love of Lookout Mountain, remained in the back of Miller’s mind as she graduated from Chattanooga High School in 1942 and moved on to college, driven by a developing fondness for great stories, teaching and entertaining.

“I was up in Tennessee Wesleyan College in 1942, and I was kind of shy,” remembered Miller. “There was some boys out there who were talking, and I thought, ‘I’m going to go meet these young men.’ So, I started letting off some of my jokes.”

“Martha Bell always loved to impersonate people and had all sorts of costumes for it,” Miller’s



older sister, Rinehart Lackey, said. “She was always being called on by different groups.”

Miller’s first stage personality was created in 1943: Miss Ethyl Bessie from Turniptop Ridge on Mowbray Mountain. She was a rowdy, Southern hillbilly inspired by an old folk song Miller’s father sang to her when she was a child.

Miller completed her bachelor’s degree at Tennessee Wesleyan College in 1949 and her master’s degree from the University of Chattanooga in 1958, both in elementary education. She received a fellowship to travel to the University of Colorado in 1954, where she learned to fly an airplane in order to work with the Tennessee Teachers Association in creating the basic curriculum for aviation education.



After completing her fellowship, Miller taught elementary school in the Hamilton County School System in Chattanooga. She was involved with the elementary education departments at several local colleges and universities, teaching future teachers in methods to motivate children through the use of rhymes and stories. She taught swimming for the YMCA, was a lifeguard at Harrison Bay State Park and served as waterfront director at YMCA’s Camp Ocoee.

She remembers when President Franklin Roosevelt came to Chattanooga to dedicate the Chickamauga Dam and when Babe Ruth hit a baseball from Point Park off of Lookout Mountain. Miller had even taught many of the teachers and superintendents of Hamilton County School Systems that she left behind when she retired in 1981.

Miller supplemented her retirement income by working as a travel agent from 1982 through 1985.

“If you could get 10 people lined up for a tour, you could go with them for free,” bragged Miller. “It didn’t take me very long to take a group to Europe, Mexico, Russia. ... I once took a group of 28 people to Hawaii, and we had the best time learning to do the hula!”

One destination she’ll never forget: the Holy Land.

“That was one of the most interesting places I’ve ever been,” said Miller, with quiet awe. “After you’ve walked on the grounds where Jesus walked, you know there’s a man upstairs taking care of you.”

While a travel agent, she also developed and led historical tours, teaching visitors about Chattanooga and Lookout Mountain. Her tours included visits to Rock City Gardens, Ruby Falls, Point Park and the Incline Railway.

“I didn’t mind getting out with them,” said Miller, “because I love to talk about the history.”

It still wasn’t enough for Miller. When she received a call from Rock City asking if she would be willing to play their Mrs. Claus in 1987, Miller jumped at the chance to return to Rock City Gardens. And she wasn’t willing to let it end after Christmas was over, either.

“I wasn’t going to return to sitting there being retired,” Miller remembered with a mischievous laugh. “So, I created a job! I would go to the schools and put on Mother Goose shows. I named my show the Ten Cool Colorful Cats of Character.”

In just a few weeks, Rock City Gardens embraced Miller as Mother Goose, and in 1989, they gave her show a permanent place in the attraction. The Mother Goose show featured 10 cats, each of a different color. Each pigmented feline represented a different lesson about being a good person, accompanied by a short rhyme that conveyed the lesson. Miller, as Mother Goose, would give children “Goosey Hugs” and entertain with her goose puppet, Gussie.

“I tried to motivate the children in minding their parents, teachers and bus drivers,” explained Miller. “Be honest, responsible and polite. Learn how to get along with each other and treat people like you want to be treated, and you’ll have a friend for life. Say no to smoking, alcoholic drinking and drugs, and you’ll have a nice life.”

Miller’s Mother Goose character and her show became increasingly popular. Her apartment became a museum of memorabilia and articles about her Mother Goose character, Rock City Gardens and her show. She began traveling

across the United States, performing the show at schools in more than a dozen states as far away as Illinois, Texas, Virginia and Florida.

“When she wasn’t on the road,” said Deb Ellis, executive office manager of Rock City Gardens, “she was here at Rock City as Mother Goose or Mrs. Claus. She did the official ribbon cutting when the first Rock City Enchanted Garden of Lights opened on Nov. 17, 1995. She even drove a white minivan with Rock City decals, and her official license plate tag issued by the state was personalized ‘MaGoose.’”

**“She is one in a million,” proclaimed Ellis. “Worth a million and loved by millions.”**

While visiting a friend in New York in 1998, Miller went to watch a broadcast of the “Today” show.

“I had a Rock City hat on, and this girl named Jodi Applegate saw that hat and said, ‘I know where that is,’” said Miller, recalling meeting one of the show’s hosts. “We started talking, and then she put me on the TV show! After that, people called Rock City wanting me to appear everywhere.”



Miller’s far-reaching fame garnered appearances on several major networks, including CBS, NBC and CNN. She was invited to the Tennessee governor’s mansion for several years by Gov. Don Sundquist to entertain the children during the annual Easter egg roll. “Tennessee Visitor Guide,” a publication dedicated to directing tourists to the major attractions in the state, featured Miller as Mother Goose on the cover. On Jan. 20, 2000, Miller was presented the State of Tennessee Ambassador of Goodwill Award.

Miller’s impact was always profound, personal and filled with kindness and love. Ellis related the first time she met Miller at Rock City Gardens in the fall of 2001. She had been encouraged to bring her family to the attraction before making her final decision to accept the job as Rock City’s executive office manager. Her 5-year-old grandson, Caleb, came with her. Caleb had just been diagnosed



with autism and was easily provoked into emotional breakdowns by things such as smells, noises or being spoken to by a stranger.

“Just as we were about to enter into the Gardens, I noticed this lovely white-haired lady sitting in a big chair in a Mother Goose costume with a big stuffed goose beside her,” Ellis said. “My immediate thought was, ‘Please don’t let her notice us.’”

“Before I could shield Caleb, I heard her booming voice say, ‘Welcome to Rock City, little boy! Come here and let Mother Goose give you a big old goosey hug.’ We all froze, anticipating the screams and meltdown that we feared would surely follow... but there was silence. It was like

slow motion, and then Caleb was in her arms with this big smile on his face. This stranger was touching him, talking to him, hugging him – and he loved it. I knew at that moment, this place was where I was meant to be and this amazing lady was meant to be my friend.”

In 2005, health issues forced Miller to retire from Rock City Gardens. Rock City’s No. 1 ambassador would no longer be at the attraction every day, but her love and dedication to the site continued.

“She is indeed a legend,” declared Ellis. “We still have guests who met her in the past make inquiries about Mother Goose, hoping she was still here so their own grandchildren could meet her. Until about a year or so ago, we still had schools calling to inquire about her Ten Cool Colorful Cats of Character.”

In 2008, See Rock City, Inc., established an annual scholarship fund in Miller’s name for employees wishing to

continue their education. The first annual Martha Bell Miller Scholarship was presented in 2009. Miller has been sure to attend every presentation. Miller also attends the Rock City employee Christmas party each year.

Rock City Gardens celebrated its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary on May 21, 2012, and Miller was a guest of honor, wearing a Rock City hat shaped like one of the famous Rock City red barns. Great care had been taken by the staff to make certain the cookies and punch were the same shade of green that matched Miller’s dress so many years earlier. She told the crowd her story of being in that very same spot 80 years earlier on opening day, and that even today at her home at Life Care Center of Collegedale, Tennessee, she still tells everyone to be certain to “See Rock City.”

“She is one in a million,” proclaimed Ellis. “Worth a million and loved by millions.”

And her story isn’t over yet. 🍷

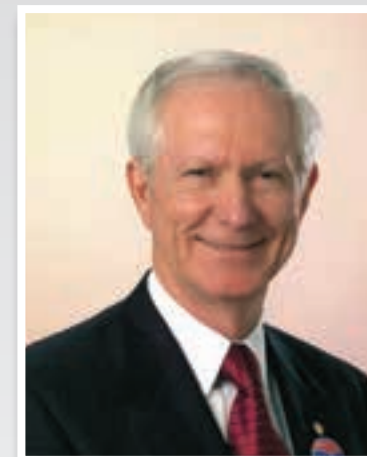
## A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT

“A River Runs Through It” is a beautiful movie, directed by Robert Redford, which played in theaters across the country in 1992. The film was based on a semi-autobiographical novella written by Norman Maclean and starred Craig Sheffer, Brad Pitt, Tom Skerritt, Brenda Blethyn and Emily Lloyd.

The movie told the story of the Maclean family, who lived in western Montana early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The father was a Presbyterian minister – stern but loving. His wife was supportive and nurturing. They had two sons: the first-born, Norman, and a younger son, Paul.

The real protagonist in the story, however, is the Blackfoot River that runs through the town of Missoula. That river becomes the focal point of their family life and the catalyst for everything significant that takes place in their individual lives.

It was walking along the banks of that river on Sunday afternoons that the father forged a relationship with his young boys – turning over rocks, teaching them about the



world, about life and about the God who made it all. It was the river that the boys ran to after their studies were over. Sibling rivalry and brotherly affection flourished as they fished for trout together on that beautiful stream.

It was on the river that young Paul made a name for himself as the finest fly fisherman in the territory. When Norman came back from college searching for himself and his roots, it was to the river that he went to fish, alongside his brother. Always, the river was there. It was the defining force and the spiritual center of that family.

There is a river running through the lives of Christians;

it is called the Purpose of God. You were His creation in your natural birth, and He purchased you in your spiritual birth with the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ. He did it because He had a plan in mind for you.

Thankfully, thousands of Life Care associates have found God’s purpose for them in faithfully serving others.

Are you struggling with some tough questions today? Perhaps a failed marriage of years ago is haunting you, or maybe someone dear to you has just passed away. Or could it be a dream that won’t go away, one that you keep chasing?

Whatever has happened to you in the past, whatever your present circumstance may be, whatever the future might hold, know this: A river runs through it; the river called the Purpose of God. 🍷

*Beecher Hunter*  
BEECHER HUNTER  
President

