

MID-WEST WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP
2020 ~ 2022 Historian Report and
MEMORIALS
April 2019 ~ March 2022

MORNING SUN, IOWA

Evelyn Mae McElhinney

DENISON, KANSAS

Eleanor Phillips ~ Helen Hug ~ Clara McCrory

SHAWNEE, KANSAS

Ruth Spear

TOPEKA, KANSAS

Mildred Lucille Smith

WINCHESTER, KANSAS

Alta Marie Tweed

LARAMIE, WYOMING

Terry McCracken ~ Betty L. Romsa

Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints. Psalm 116:15

ARE ALL THE CHILDREN IN?

~ Author Unknown

I think oft-times as the night draws nigh
Of an old house on the hill.
Of a yard all wide, and blossoms starred
Where the children played at will.

And when the night at last came down
Hushing the merry din,
Mother would look all around and ask
"Are all the children in?"

Tis many and many a year since then
And the old house on the hill,
No longer echoes to childish feet
And the yard is still, so still.

But I see it all as the shadows creep
As though many years have been
Since then I can hear my mother ask,
"Are all the children in?"

I wonder if, when the shadows fall
On this last short earthly day,
When we say good-bye to the world outside
All tired with our childish play.

When we meet the Lover of boys and girls
Who died to save them from sin,
Will hear Him ask, as Mother did
"Are all the children in?"

MEMORIALS

Evelyn Mae McElhinney

April 24, 1934 ~ October 11, 2020

Evelyn was born on April 24, 1934, the daughter of Hilton William and Lela Opal Adamson Pretz. She was a graduate of Wapello High School, then worked for Chittenden and Eastman before she was married. On February 23, 1957, she married Paul D. McElhinney in Wapello and became a farm wife and homemaker. Her husband Paul, went to be with the Lord on March 15, 2010.

Evelyn was a member of Sharon Reformed Presbyterian Church in Morning Sun, Iowa. She was a long-time member of the Women's Missions and held the many offices of the organization. Evelyn had taught Sunday School, Bible School and later enjoyed tending to children so their mothers could teach Bible School. She was especially known for her generous hospitality and hosting many dinners, luncheons, groups, and having many visiting preachers and guests stay at their home. As an Elder's wife, she was busy with the many activities that involved: including, visiting the sick, delivering poinsettias to the elderly, baking, and cooking for events. Evelyn also enjoyed raising flowers, decorating for the holidays, and especially time with her grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

Evelyn passed away on October 11, 2020 at Washington County Hospital. She was preceded in death by her parents, husband, and her sister Marjorie Jones.

She is survived by her three children; Matt (Annemarie) McElhinney of Riverside, California, Mark (Sandy) McElhinney of Morning Sun, and Susan (Shane) Barron of New London; six grandchildren Matt Jr., Melanie, Marshall, Samantha, Saige, and Sullivan; five great-grandchildren; Jake, Emma, Phillip, Sienna, and Sadie; sister Carol Winga of Washington, Iowa, and nieces and nephews.

"The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever." Isaiah 40:8

Helen M. Hug

February 8, 1923 ~ November 22, 2020

Helen M. Hug, 97, died Sunday, November 22, 2020 at Medicalodges Jackson County in Holton.

She was born February 8, 1923 at Denison, the daughter of Charles and Jesse Snair McCrory. She graduated from Denison High School. After high school Helen received Normal Training and taught at different county schools.

Helen was a member of Reformed Presbyterian Church in Denison. She loved to sing the Psalms from the Bible. Her favorites included the 23rd, 121st, 146A and 98A. She really came to like 98A after going to Carleton the first time.

She played a variety of instruments including the piano, harmonica and accordion. Her ability to play piano was evident even in her years of living at the nursing home. Helen was also an accomplished seamstress.

She married Truman E. Hug on August 18, 1945 at Denison. He preceded her in death on Jan. 16, 2015.

Helen was also preceded in death by a son-in-law, Theo Hamer, a brother, Melvin McCrory and two sisters, Kathryn Copeland and Leola Porter.

Survivors include a son, Darrell Hug (Ellen), Mayetta, two daughters, Phyllis Phillips (Ralph), Mayetta and Yvonne Hamer, Denison, twelve grandchildren, thirty-two great grandchildren and three great-great grandchildren.

Eleanor Phillips

March 12, 1926 ~ September 19, 2020

Eleanor Jean Phillips, 94 1/2, formerly of rural Mayetta, died September 19, 2020 at Medicalodges Jackson County, Holton, KS.

She was born March 12, 1926, at their farm home in rural Mayetta, Kansas, daughter of John Wallace and Margaret Vera Moffett Robson. She attended Fairview Grade School, and graduated as valedictorian from Denison Rural High School, class of 1944.

Eleanor married Harlan Phillips on June 28, 1943 at the family home in Denison. Eleanor worked as a bookkeeper for the Co-op in Denison while Harlan was overseas during WWII. They lived on their dairy farm just west of Denison for more than 60 years. They raised their five children there. They celebrated 68 years of marriage. Harlan passed away February 4, 2012.

Eleanor was a lifelong member of the Denison Reformed Presbyterian Church and taught children's classes where she enjoyed teaching a favorite Psalm, the 121st using the "hilly tune" (Abbeyville). She was a member of the Women's Missionary Fellowship and for many years was Historian for Midwest Presbyterial.

Eleanor served on the board of directors for Jackson County Nursing Home. She was a member of the Fairview Community Club. She was a Denison Builders 4H leader for many years. Hobbies included sewing, quilting, embroidery projects, reading and gardening. She also wrote Denison news items for the Holton Recorder for many years which included a recap of the week's sermon and other local news she was aware of.

She is survived by her children, Ralph (Phyllis) Phillips of Mayetta, George (Sarah) Phillips of Holton, Carole (Bill) Chapin of Coal City, IL, Mitzie (Steve) VanHorn of Denison, and Margaret (Mike) Sibley of Cary, NC; three sisters-in-law; seventeen grandchildren; 51 great grandchildren, 4 great great grandchildren, many nieces, nephews and cousins.

Clara I. McCrory

October 16, 1922 ~ July 23, 2021

Clara Irene McCrory, 98, of Holton, KS, formerly of Denison, KS, passed away Friday, July 23, 2021 at Medicalodge Jackson County. She was born October 16, 1922 in Idana, KS, the daughter of Robert James and Amelda J. (Black) Mann.

Clara graduated from Clay County Community High School in Clay Center, Kansas. She also earned a "normal training" certificate and taught in one room school houses in Clay County. She later worked at JC Penney in Clay Center. She married Charles Melvin McCrory on September 1, 1948 in Idana, KS. He preceded her in death on July 23, 1997 after over 49 years of marriage. She was also preceded in death by her parents, a son, Gary M. McCrory (Karen) of Denison and a brother, Howard Mann. Upon marriage in 1948, she moved to Denison and lived as a farm wife at Denison. She later worked at JC Penney in Holton, then Luce Press Clipping Bureau in Topeka. She lived on the family farm until she moved to Minnesota to live with her daughter & family in Minnesota for 2 years. She then moved back to Kansas in 2014 and lived at Medicalodge in Holton until her death.

The 23rd Psalm was her favorite! During devotions at the nursing home after Clara was blind, she would join in singing every verse. Clara was a lifetime member of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, a member of the H.D.U. (Home Demonstration Unit) in Holton and Fairview Club.

Survivors include her son, Glen McCrory (Karen) of Rossville, KS; 2 daughters, Colleen Oakes (Patrick) of St. Cloud, MN and Carolyn Thornburg (Jerry) of Hoyt, KS; sister, Elva M. McCrory of Denison, KS; 14 grandchildren; 29 great-grandchildren and 1 great-great-grandson.

The Life Story of Ruth Adams Spear April 2, 1928 ~ September 20, 2021

Ruth Adams Spear, age 93, passed into eternal life on September 20th, 2021, at Forest Creek Memory Care in Overland Park, Kansas. She was born on April 2, 1928, the fifth and youngest child of Richard and Belle Adams at the Cache Creek Mission in Apache, Oklahoma. Her playmates were Native American children with whom she worshipped each week, under her father's preaching. She had four older siblings who loved her and took care of her.

One time in the night, she thought something crawled over her. She called, "Mommy!" Her mother came, and they looked everywhere but couldn't find anything. Her mother sang to her and got her back to sleep. In the morning, her brother Roy found a snake coming down the stairs. She also learned to always check her shoes for scorpions before putting them on.

In 1942, when Ruth was 14, her father was called to pastor the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Beulah, Nebraska where she eventually graduated from high school. She then went on to earn a B.S. degree in mathematics at Sterling College, graduating as salutatorian in 1950.

That's also where she met Gene Spear to whom she was married, in a gown of white embroidered silk from China, on August 16, 1951. Gene went on to seminary, and Ruth helped pay for their room and board by assisting overnight in a school for the deaf and, after the birth of their first child, working as a live-in cook. She did not seek a lucrative career, although many would have been available to a young woman with such mathematical ability. In fact, she was paid a salary for only one year of her life, when she was a schoolteacher in Bloom, Kansas.

Her parents had been missionaries in China before they came to Oklahoma, and her heart's desire from childhood had been to take the good news about Jesus to other lands. This desire was fulfilled in 1955 when she and Gene sailed with their two children, Carol and Bruce, to Kobe, Japan to serve there under the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America.

She learned to speak Japanese fluently and sometimes on the phone was even mistaken for being a Japanese person. She and Gene were blessed with three more children, Mary Jane, Joyce and Bonnie. She nurtured them all, while hosting Bible classes and church in her home and providing countless guests and friends with meals, refreshments and gifts of homemade cookies.

For many years we cleared two rooms, lined up chairs, and had church in our home each Sabbath morning. She taught Sabbath School and Vacation Bible School, found crafts for the Women's Group to make and was a valuable member of the Psalm Committee, searching for tunes that fit the words of each psalm for the Japanese Psalter. Twice a year they would have parties for each of the English Bible classes with refreshments and games in our home.

A missionary's salary was \$5,000 a year when Carol was in high school. Ruth, who was good at pinching pennies, served nutritious food, making do with powdered milk, oatmeal, and other inexpensive ingredients. When money was tight, Ruth would sometimes buy whale meat, and serve it to the family. (It was good food but usually given to pets.) The butcher must have caught on to this because he raised the price. Who knows, maybe other women had begun feeding it to their families, too.

The Women's Missionary Society would send clothing and fabric, and Ruth somehow kept a family of seven dressed by altering clothes and adapting the few patterns we had. She made clothes that fit each of us and looked nice, and she taught her kids to sew, too! In the early 70's the Foreign Mission Board adjusted their salary based on a cost-of-living index, so their need to pinch pennies was lessened.

Her purpose in life was to help Gene serve Christ. They were a great team. Together they showed the love of Christ and found various ways to interact with people, sharing the gospel and modeling Christian love to everyone they met.

Any foreign visitors who didn't know Japanese would be handed a psalter in which Ruth had typed or written the Japanese words phonetically so they could sing along in Japanese. Also, her whispered, simultaneous translation of Gene's sermons was very helpful to visitors from other countries.

Every summer, setting aside her own comforts, she spent a month in a fishing village, without a refrigerator or washer and dryer, so Gene could get away from his work, and the family could enjoy swimming and fishing. Blocks of ice were delivered every three days for the icebox, and the family washed clothes outside in tubs, happy to get a suntan.

Gene and Ruth made sure their children received an excellent education, whether it was home schooling, Japanese public school, or the Canadian Academy, and then Geneva College. We don't remember Mom pushing us to excel, but she must've transmitted her work ethic because we all got it!

Bruce later told Dad and Mom that he had an easy time passing his ordination exams because of twice daily family worship and good teaching in the home. We are all thankful they taught us to love and serve the Lord.

Ruth helped her children with Japanese kindergarten, which was our first total immersion in Japanese culture. She read notes from the teachers and helped us behave and stop pretending we didn't understand Japanese when told to come in from the playground. She helped us be comfortable with our family physician, Dr. Mori, and the awful, powdered medicine packets she would prescribe for us when we were sick. Ruth was such an adjustable and flexible person, and she helped her children learn to be that way, too.

After we were mostly grown, she branched out and was able to spend more time loving and enjoying Japanese culture and crafts while serving alongside her husband. She learned to do oshie, shippouyaki, and harie, and even took flower arrangement lessons. And then one day, we heard she'd been going to sumo matches with a friend! And that supper time was planned around watching sumo on TV!

She and Gene were a team from beginning to end. Starting from their seminary years, then to their first home in Ichinotani, then to the Covenanter Book Room in downtown Kobe, to Okamoto, to Mukonoso, and then back to Kansas (showing hospitality, distributing letters in the neighborhood, hosting small group Bible studies) – she served faithfully, encouraged everyone, and helped people come to know and grow in Christ.

Gene and Ruth retired from mission work in 2001, returning to Topeka, Kansas to care for Gene's mother and then moving to Olathe in 2005. That same year, Ruth and Gene received the Distinguished Servant Award from Sterling College.

Ruth was a blessing to the Shawnee Reformed Presbyterian Church with a ready smile and a kind word for everyone. Until Alzheimer's Disease restricted her, she prayed for her many grandchildren by name every day, and for numerous Japanese friends. Her children enjoyed caring for her as she grew weaker, especially Joyce and Mary Jane who lived nearby. Carol, Bruce and Bonnie were able to stay in touch with weekly Zoom meetings. She passed into glory quietly in her sleep on Monday, September 20, around 3:30 AM.

Ruth was preceded in death by her husband Gene Wilfred Spear, her parents, Richard Cameron and Belle Edgar Adams, her brothers Roy M. and Bruce E. Adams, her sisters Lois N. Graham and Marion E. McMillan, and by three grandchildren, Andrea Ward, Jonathan Weir, and Peter Spear. She is survived by her five children, Carol and her husband Christopher Wright, Bruce and his wife Susan, Mary Jane and her husband Harry Ward, Joyce and her husband Charles Schofield, and Bonnie and her husband David Weir. She is also survived by fifteen grandchildren and thirty great-grandchildren.

She is remembered by all who knew her as a woman of God, a woman of prayer, a sacrificial servant, a great wife and mother, and a cheerful person who trusted God in all things and enjoyed every minute of her remarkable life.

Mildred Lucille Smith

May 17, 1931 ~ January 2, 2022

Lucille was born May 17, 1931 on a farmstead outside of McLouth, Kansas. She was the second of six children. She graduated 8th grade from a one room schoolhouse in rural McLouth and high school from McLouth high school. She then moved to Topeka where she was employed by Meyer's yearbook. Lucille met her husband, James, through his sisters. They were married October 18, 1953. He brought with him three children whom Lucille loved as her own. Another daughter arrived in 1958. Lucille became a homemaker upon getting married, sewing many items including school clothes, many bridesmaid dresses, and quilts.

Lucille and James loved to travel and camp. They were members of the Cow Pasture Campers where the group traveled to all 50 states, all by camper, except Hawaii.

Lucille and James became members of the Topeka Reformed Presbyterian Church and she was a faithful member of the Women's Missionary Fellowship as long as her health permitted. Many might remember Lucille and Louise Calhoon who worked together cooking at our Forest Park Presbytery conferences.

At the time of her death, the family designated the Women's Missionary Group of the Topeka Reformed Presbyterian Church for her memorial contributions. This was a first for our WMF. A special project will be planned to honor Lucille's memory.

*Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing,
But a woman who fears the LORD,
She shall be praised.
Give her of the fruit of her hands,
And let her own works praise her in the gates.
Proverbs 31.verses 30, 31*

Terry McCracken

February 22, 1957 ~ September 25, 2021

Terry McCracken, age 64, died on September 25, 2021. She was born on February 22, 1957, attended Geneva College 1976 -1979, with an elementary education degree. She married Larry McCracken on August 4, 1978, and as Larry says, was a beautiful, energetic girl. They have one son, Christopher, Chris and his wife, Cassandra have two children, Gia and Zion. The Lord has been good in giving them a wonderful life together for 43 years. Psalm 150! Terry was a member of the Laramie congregation for about a year, and we will miss her.

Betty L. Romsa**August 25, 1925 ~ October 11, 2021**

Betty L. Romsa, age 96, died on October 11, 2021. She was born on August 25, 1925 in Burns, Wyoming, and graduated from Albin High School. She married William K. Romsa on August 24, 1943, and they lived on the family farm in Albin until 1986, after which they made their home in Laramie. Betty worked at the Laramie Care Center, Walmart, and the University of Wyoming, retiring at the age of 80.

Betty was a long-time member of the American Legion Auxiliary and assisted with the Legion Girls State Program for many years. Being raised on the Brown Ranch in the Meriden, WY area, she always said she grew up on horseback, and loved all animals. She had a special ability to deal with difficult situations. She was a faithful and encouraging member of the Laramie, WY congregation from its beginnings. We will miss her.

Alta Marie Tweed**October 11, 1932 ~ March 25, 2022**

Alta Marie Blackwood Tweed, 89, of Winchester, KS passed away Friday, March 25, 2022 with family at her side. She was born October 11, 1932 at Quinter, KS, the daughter of Henry George and Florence Jane Blackwood. She graduated from Denison High School in 1950, where she was sophomore class president, participated in class plays, played basketball, was a member of the Girl's Glee Club, girl's basketball team and Pep Club. Alta attended Geneva College in Beaver Falls, PA, where she met her husband, John, while working in the college bookstore. John and Alta were married August 5, 1954, at Beaver Falls. John spent his life serving as a minister of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. Alta shared in his ministry throughout their lives. They served faithfully in churches at Youngstown, OH, Fresno, CA, Kansas City, MO, Shawnee, KS, Pittsburgh, PA, and at two churches in Beaver Falls, PA, first at Geneva RPC, and later at First Beaver Falls RPC.

In 1996, after 42 years in gospel ministry, they retired to Winchester, KS. Alta co-labored with John for 18 additional years as he served as interim pastor at 16 different congregations in the U.S. and internationally in Japan and Ireland.

Survivors include two sons, Stuart (Laura) Tweed, Springfield, VA, and Alan (Lisa) Tweed, Madison CT; and three daughters, Carol (Bill) Boyle, Shawnee, KS, Cynthia (Jay) O'Neill, Winchester, KS, and Alison (Chad) Agnew, Darlington, PA; 15 grandchildren, and 14 great-grandchildren, one brother, Carl Blackwood, and two sisters, Twila Cunningham and Corajean Smiley.

She was preceded in death by her husband John, two grandchildren, Nathan O'Neill and an infant grandson; three brothers, Junior, Dwayne and Dale Blackwood, and four sisters, Fern Sublette, Lois Wing, Della Crissman, and an infant sister Louise.

Alta was a loving wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, sister, and friend. She complemented John's gifts by showing hospitality and caring for the needs of the members of the congregations they served.

There will be a funeral service for Alta at the Winchester Reformed Presbyterian Church on Saturday, April 23rd, 2022. Due to COVID restrictions when John died, the family was unable to hold a memorial for him; therefore this will be a combined memorial service for both John and Alta. Visitation will begin at 10:00 am, with a memorial service at 11:00 AM, and interment for Alta at the Winchester Reformed Presbyterian Cemetery.

2020-2022 Historian Report

This the 103rd meeting of the Midwest's Women's Fellowship. Organized as Midwest Presbyterial in 1915, meetings have been held annually except in 1932 or 1934, years of the Great Depression; 1942 during World War II; and 2020 and 2021 when meetings were restricted during the Covid-19 Pandemic. **This is the 12th time Winchester has hosted.**

March 23-24, 1921 Mrs. D.H. Elliott, Topeka, was president. The theme was "Having God's Presence." Of 17 societies in the Presbyterial, 14 had delegates present. Missions speaker Rev. A.J. McFarland admonished the ladies to "expect God to do greater things in the future than He has done in the past. \$800.24 was raised for Rose Huston's salary. Seven Junior societies reported 173 members.

April 27-28, 1927 Mrs. Jennie McFarland was president. The theme was "Ye Serve the Lord." Eleven Junior societies reported having 220 members. The Winchester Juniors had 50 members and scored 96% on the "Stand of Efficiency." They presented the Wednesday evening program. Bible studies from Philippians were led by Rev. Taggart, Topeka. Due to conditions in China, Miss Huston can no longer be our representative there. In support of Foreign Mission work, it was decided to support Miss Elizabeth McElroy in Latakia, Syria. A letter from Miss Alice Robb, China, asked us to "Pray for China, as never before." A cablegram received said our missionaries were safe in Hong Kong. Miss Huston entertained with a clever impersonation of a Chinese grandmother.

Presbyterial again met at Winchester on **May 4-5, 1937**. Mrs. H. T. O'Neill was the president. Mrs. John Henery, Sterling, gave devotions on "Mary Chose Christ." The convention Psalm was Psalm 73. Sam Boyle sent enough tea from China to serve all the delegates at the evening meal.

Mrs. Paul Wright, Kansas City, presided when Presbyterial met at Winchester, **April 30-May 1, 1946**, Miss Mary Adams spoke on "Goodbye, Kentucky, Hello, Japan." Devotional theme was "What is worthwhile? - For my family, my neighbor, myself, my country," led by various members. Mrs. Ruth McCrory, Denison, urged the ladies to choose their books as carefully as their friends.

On **April 24-25, 1956**, the theme was "For The Mouth of the Lord Hath Spoken it." Mrs. Paul Faris, Quinter, was president. Speakers were Rev. Blair, missionary to Korea for 39 years and Miss Rose Huston, Kobe, Japan. Miss Huston told of the need of obedience to the first commandment. The Japanese believe in many gods. Because of modernism many churches are a mixture of Christianity and Buddhism.

Mrs. Scott Milroy presided when Presbyterial met at Winchester, **April 5-6, 1966**. The theme was "In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths." The Winchester Juniors, under Mrs. Bob Catloth, repeated Isaiah 55 in unison and sang the 23rd Psalm to an Irish tune, and gave a little play from Rose Huston's book. Lunch cost \$1.00 and dinner \$1.50.

"The Open Door" was the theme **April 8-9, 1975**. Mrs. Max Mann, Quinter, was president and Carlene Hutcheson, precentor. 108 persons registered from 12 congregations. Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Sanderson reviewed events in Cyprus in relation to our mission work there.

Presbyterial met at Winchester, **April 16-17, 1985**. Saundy Milroy, Shawnee, presided and the theme was "A Very Present Help in Time of Trouble." Ruth Falk was precentor and the convention Psalm was Psalm 46. Betty McBee from Pennsylvania, spoke on "A Theological Understanding of Disabilities." She told us she was not *confined to*, but *liberated by* her wheelchair.

Winchester WMF hosted the **April 21-22, 1994** meeting, held at the Kansas Grange Camp. Mary Ann Caskey was the president. "Creatures of Clay Being Salt and Light" was the theme with Linda Lamp from Wichita speaking. Psalm 27 was the convention Psalm and Cindy Hindman was the precentor.

Roberta McFarland presided over Presbyterial at Winchester, **April 1-2, 2004**. "A Heart of Hospitality" was the theme with Gretchen Edgar, speaking. "Hospitality in Japan" was presented by Ruth Spear.

April 19-20, 2013 the 96th Annual Midwest Women's Presbyterial Retreat was held at Living Water Ranch, hosted by the Winchester WMF. Sue Johnston, Topeka, was president. "Experiencing God's Presence and Love in Suffering" was the theme with Miss Katie Long and Pastor Dave Long, speaking.

I have provided information to those requesting it, maintained the files and updated the President's book which is on display. I'm honored to follow Nancy Hemphill in preparing the Memorial booklets honoring our ladies who have entered their eternal rest, since our last meeting.

Regarding the boxes of historical materials that have been scanned and archived, I communicated with Ralph Joseph at RP Archives, RPTS in Pittsburgh. They are happy to receive all materials we're willing to part with. My plan was/is to take boxes of materials to RP International Conference where RP Archives will receive them. The materials I will continue to maintain are the metal box with files of programs and other materials that I refer to regularly, also the President's Book which I update and display each year.

Mitzie VanHorn, Historian