

BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY OF NC

Looking Back on 25 Years with Thanks. . . By Alicia Davis Porterfield

In preparation for our 25th Anniversary Celebration, I have been sorting through stacks of old BWIM,NC papers. Two faithful members who were there in the earliest days of our organization sent me their papers, ranging back to 1983. I imagine there are many more such documents floating around in file cabinets and forgotten storage boxes. We'd love to have more, so if you have some papers or pictures, please send them our way (Alicia Davis Porterfield, 412 Dover Road, Wilmington, NC 28409).

But for now, this almost two foot high stack offers plenty of fodder for reflection. It has been so humbling to look through these papers and see all the hard work that has been done over the years. So many willing hands and servant hearts have joined to champion the call of women to ministry. So much input from such a diverse group of people has all been used by God to bring us where we are today.

In the days before e-mail and conference calls, hand-typed letters snailed back and forth as committees did their work and board plans were made. Worship bulletins were painstakingly typed, illustrated and copied. Women had to struggle simply to be counted and valued in the world of ministry, especially in the hardest days of the takeover of the seminaries.

Thank God for modern modes of communication, desktop publishing, and a more open environment for women—in part, thanks to these sisters and brothers in Christ who helped pave our way. We're not there yet, but we

have come so, so far, thanks to the faithfulness of those who have gone before us. By the grace of God, we are reaping what they carefully and courageously sowed by the grace of God. And it will be by the grace of God that we continue to sow and reap for a new generation of women in ministry who call North Carolina home.

What a *privilege* to be part of this long line of service. What a blessing it will be to gather to celebrate God's faithfulness at our 25th Anniversary Celebration in April 2008. What a gift it is to serve such an amazing God. Amen and Amen.

25th Anniversary Convocation

Baptist Women in Ministry, NC

Ridge Road Baptist Church
Raleigh, NC

Friday, April 11th, 9:45 am

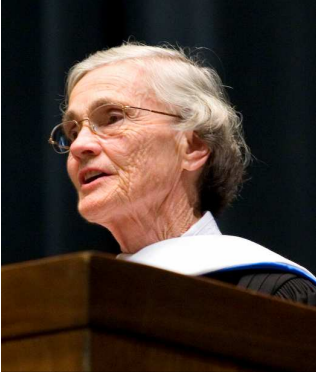
A "Cloud of Witnesses" Quilt, honoring women of our past and present, is being made to support the Kay Simpson Memorial Scholarship Fund.
Information at www.bwimnc.org.

Deadline for Submissions November 30, 2007.



Catered
Lunch on site

A Cloud of Witnesses



Sue Fitzgerald
during Mars Hill
Commencement in May
'07. She was awarded an
honorary doctorate.

Before There Was Google

By Don Gordon

Before there was Google there was Sue Fitzgerald. Rev. Fitzgerald was the Director of the Christian Resource Center (CRC) at Mars Hill College in 1990 when I began my first pastorate at Central Baptist Church in Spruce Pine. First time preachers are nervous, anxious about finding enough preaching ideas and solid biblical resources to sustain a congregation. I know I was. They are also struggling with time management, trying to determine how much time for sermon preparation alongside pastoral care and administrative duties. I know I was.

Early in my time at Central Baptist I decided to drive 45 minutes one to Mars Hill College every Monday and spend all day secluded in the library. I would get more accomplished in the 6 hours in this library than I would for 3 days in the office. That's when I got to know Sue Fitzgerald. I had seen this stately lady before at Baptist meetings, smiling kindly, and walking with a cane. When I came to the CRC I came to see how valuable she would be to me as well as many others, who needed sound theological guidance.

Like a faithful heirloom clock, Rev. Fitzgerald would approach me with a smile and say, "What are you preaching on this week?" I would say, "The cross" or "Stewardship" or "A series from the Sermon on the Mount" or something like that. Like a computer processing information in milliseconds, Rev. Fitzgerald would say, "Have you read what Herschel Hobbs wrote about that?" or "Have you seen E. Stanley Jones book?" She would begin to pull out resources for me, journal articles and books. This was done with a smile and an encouraging word that a young pastor needed. Before there was Google there was Sue Fitzgerald at the Mars Hill College CRC.

I did this faithfully for several years. Then one day Sue told me they were

closing down the CRC. The school was undergoing renovations. Her space was being closed out during the renovation because, in part, it was being under utilized. I was stunned. I thought, "How can I continue to preach with the CRC? Without Sue Fitzgerald?" I relayed my concerns to Rev. Fitzgerald. She told me, "We'll figure something out."

Just before they closed the center down for good, Sue told me, "I am converting my garage into a library. I'm going to have to get rid of a large number of resources, but I'm going to keep the most essential works of the center." Then she handed me one of the best gifts I've ever received. She extended her hand and said, "Here's a key to the garage. You can come whenever you like."

My ministry would continue. I wouldn't have to say to my congregation, "Sorry, but the center has closed down and there is no Word from the Lord." Oh, I probably would've found a way to continue. But for this young preacher in the mountains of North Carolina with only a few books on his bookshelf, the CRC, and more importantly, Sue Fitzgerald was a rich treasure for me I will never forget. Her immense knowledge of the Christian faith in the Baptist tradition was surpassed only by her Christ-like love and generosity. I will always be indebted to this woman preacher who taught me how to feed a congregation.

Photos wanted!

From past Convocations, Retreats, Board Meetings! Of you or a woman you know involved in ministry

by February 1
Send to:
Lynn Odom at
momof3knights
@triad.rr.com

Baptist Women in
Ministry, NC, publishes a newsletter
3 times a year.
Editor: Alicia Davis-Porterfield
Graphic Editor: Lynn C. Odom
momof3knights@triad.rr.com



“Miss Jacobs” and Others

By Jack Glasgow

My own spiritual journey has been shaped by women in ministry from the very outset. Most were ministers without the benefits of theological education, ordination, or calls from the church to serve on the staff as leaders. Yet, their commitment to ministry was evident as they taught me in Sunday School, Sunbeams, Cherub Choir, Training Union, and Vacation Bible School. I wonder how many of those marvelous Christian women might have followed a call to vocational ministry if the church had been more open to blessing the ministry of women in the years of my childhood.

My home church in Atlanta called its first woman to the staff as children’s minister during my childhood. Lynette Jacobs was single, energetic, fun, loving, and caring. “Miss Jacobs” found her place on an otherwise all male staff and went to work serving Christ. She brought a missional outlook to our children’s ministry long before that term was popular. Vacation Bible School and Sunday School were opened to children in the nearby orphanage. Unchurched children were welcomed. A bus ministry brought them to church. She was the first minister to teach me that church was not something we “own” through membership, but that the church is to be a people on mission for God who reach out to others with inclusive, warm embrace.

I remember learning to love to sing the songs of faith with Miss Jacobs. She was a large woman; I can remember her huffing and puffing as she played kick-ball games with us on Sunday evenings. I am sure her ordination would have never been considered, much less approved by our Southern Baptist congregation during the 1960’s. But, that lack of affirmation did not keep me from recognizing that Miss Lynette was a minister, and that her

ministry was an important part of my own spiritual development. Her embrace was the first I received after baptism. She was waiting to hand me the towel after I climbed the steps from the baptistery and did not hesitate to hug me and tell me that she was proud of me, soaking her arms and chest in the process.

Sadly, no other churches in my youth and young adulthood called any women ministers to the staff. Youth ministers, pastors, ministers of education, ministers of music – all were male. But, I rejoice that in seminary a wonderful church called me to serve them, the Zebulon Baptist Church. Their affirmation of women in ministry has been a part of their DNA for many decades. So many women have become heroines for me in this church – whether laity serving as deacons, teachers, and leaders, or the many wonderful women who have served on our church staff in every role except Senior Pastor. Perhaps if I will ever move or retire, even that role will be filled by a woman minister.

My pilgrimage in Christian ministry is better because of serving a church so open to affirming God’s call to all persons. We have ordained five women as Christian ministers during my time at Zebulon Baptist. Two grew up in our church family; three were called to our church staff. I am hopeful that two more women who serve on our staff may soon be ordained. I am grateful for those early pioneers like Lynette Jacobs. They served God without all the opportunity and affirmation they deserved. But, their faithfulness paved the way for us to see our way to a better way, a way that affirms all persons God calls to serve as ministers.

A Cloud of Witnesses

“Lynette Jacobs was single, energetic, fun, loving, and caring. “Miss Jacobs” found her place on an otherwise all male staff and went to work serving Christ. She brought a missional outlook to our children’s ministry long before that term was popular.”



Dr. Daisy Machado
Professor of Church
History at Union Theological
Seminary in New York City

**Women's Spirituality
Retreat
Cuernavaca, Mexico
January 17-22, 2008
"Women's Experiences,
Women's Journeys:
Spirituality in the Borderlands"**

The second retreat on this theme hosted by Cemanahuac Educational Community and led by Dr. Daisy Machado, Professor of Church History at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, will be held in January, 2008. This affordable 5 day retreat will include seminars, personal study, reflection, conversation, and touring related to the theme.

The retreat is limited to 15 participants and we anticipate spaces filling quickly. The cost is \$830. Information on the schedule of sessions, excursions, guest speakers, housing, and registration can be found online at:

<http://www.cemanahuac.com/womens-spirituality/>

**Been involved
in BWIM
during the
past 25 years?**

If anyone has documents, pictures, meeting minutes, etc. of BWIM,NC life from the past 25 years, **please contact Alicia Porterfield.** aporterfield@ec.rr.com

We'd like to gather copies of such materials for our 25th Anniversary Convocation

**Register for our
25th Anniversary
Convocation Luncheon**

**By March 25
Via
Our website**

www.bwimnc.org

**Cost \$10
Paid at door**

***Journey Without Map:
Words of Hope for
Changing Times***

**Collaboration of Anne Thomas
Neil, Karen L. Caldwell and
Karen S. Moore**

Cost: \$18

Book may be pre-ordered by sending \$18, plus \$1.22 tax and \$3 shipping (\$22.22) to:

**Advent Spirituality Center
PO Box 191
Mars Hill, NC 28754**

UpComing Events

- 11/13/07 CBF Fall Fellowship Gathering, FBC, Greensboro**
- 12/9/07 Duke Chapel
Dr. Walter Brueggemann**
- 2/25-28/08 CBF Youth Ministers' Retreat, Myrtle Beach**
- 2/28-3/2/08 5th Annual Women of the Church Conference
Myrtle Beach**
- 3/4-5/08 Tribble Lecture Series
Wait Chapel, WFU**
- 3/28-30/08 Alliance of Baptists Convocation
St. Charles Avenue BC,
New Orleans**
- 4/11/08 BWIM,NC Convocation
Ridge Road BC, Raleigh
9:45 am
Lunch afterwards, \$10
Reservations: Katie Fam
marykatherinefam@yahoo.com
Or call (910) 692-8750.**
- 4/11-12/08 CBF NC General Assembly
Forest Hills BC, Raleigh**

“A Cloud of Witnesses” Quilt

These people have been honored
with a square on our quilt.

Dr. Sheri Adams
Dr. Katherine E. Amos
Rita Bennett
Karen H. Bolton
Mrs. Alice Justice Bovender
Bettye Howell Briggs
Ava Hawthorne Brown
Caralie Brown
Rev. Linda Browne
Ernestine J. Burns
Bethany Cartledge
Jan Cartledge
Dr. Doug Dickens
Ms. Irma Duke
Martha Branon Edwards
Mrs. Doris Eller
Delma Galloway
Elizabeth Garner
Dr. Daniel E. Goodman
Margaret Hightower
Rev. Billy Honeycutt
Nancy Hopkins
Rev. Laura Mae Johnson
Susan Johnson
Martha Kearse
Dr. Gerald L. Keown
Cleo Satcher Letbetter
Nan Leaptrott
Vera Mace
Sandy Mashburn
Frances Moore
Alan Neely
Anne Thomas Neil
Sandy Pittman
Rev. Mary Anne Ramsey
Vivian Ricks
Paula Settle
Rev. Kay Simpson
Dr. Layne Smith
Linda Smith
Dr. Sophia Steibel
Rev. Maria Stinnett
Blythe Taylor
Lynn S. Vining
Dianne Viverette
Bobbie Warena
Carolyn Weller
Dr. Danny West

Sisters who came before and
Sisters yet to come

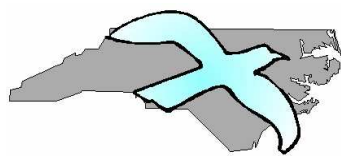
Creative Giving

By Katie Fam

As we approach the holiday season we begin to think of the perfect gift for the special person on our list. What about a quilt square? The BWIM quilt is an opportunity for churches and individuals to honor those who have encouraged them in their journey of faith. It's also a great opportunity for

- * Sunday school classes to show appreciation for teachers.
- * Committees to show appreciation for chairpersons.
- * Congregations to show appreciation for ministers.
- * Families to remember a loved one.
- * Schools to show appreciation for teachers and administrators.
- * Ministers to honor church support staff.

God has blessed us by surrounding us with a great cloud of witnesses who encourage, support, challenge and inspire us in our faith. By giving to the BWIM quilt project, we honor those people - not just by putting their names on a quilt, but also by supporting scholarships that will encourage other young ministers. It's an easy way to make a difference!



Kay Simpson Memorial Fund

Goal by Convocation

\$25,000

Given to date: \$19,953.03
Needed by April: \$5,046.97

5th Annual Women of the Church Conference

Speaker: Dr. Diana
Garland, Dean, Baylor
School of Social Work

Clergy Conference
2/28-29/08

Conference Fee - \$40 plus
hotel
(\$115 per night)

Laity Conference
2/29 - 3/2/08

Conference Fee - \$30 plus
hotel (\$115 per night)

**Theme: “Spring Clean-
ing - Making Room for
God”**

The Hilton at Kingston
Plantation in Myrtle
Beach, SC

Contact Amanda Atkin,
Amanda.atkin@gfbccary.org
or Christy McMillin-
Goodwin at cgood
win@aoklandchurch.com

This conference is an opportunity for South and North Carolina women to gather together to grow spiritually. It is also an opportunity for fellowship, fun, and rest!

Sponsored by SC CBF, NC CBF,
and national CBF

BAPTIST WOMEN IN
MINISTRY OF NC

173 Grove Park Lane
Lexington, NC 27293

Website
www.bwimnc.org

Address Correction Requested

To submit a name for the Cloud of Witnesses Quilt,
fill out and mail in by November 30:

Giver's Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ ZIP _____

Phone number: (____) _____ E-mail: _____

Name of your Witness: _____

(circle one) In memory of or In honor of

**If you want us to let the witness or their family (circle one) know of this honor,
please provide the appropriate contact information:

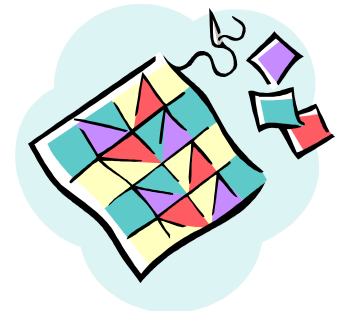
Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ ZIP _____

Please send this form and check payable to: **BWIM,NC, C/O JJ Johnson, Treasurer**
2719 Gordon Street
Raleigh, NC 27608

Thank you for your support of BWIM,NC's 25th Anniversary Celebration
and the Kay Simpson Memorial Endowment.



**A Cloud of
Witnesses
BWIM,NC's
25th Anniversary
Quilt
Deadline for
Submissions
November 30, 2007**

56 Names so far