

The Oklahoma Baptist Chronicle



Bob Nigh, Editor
history@oklahomabaptists.org

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Oklahoma Baptists

Term Expires 2021

Terry Brooks
Lindsay

Bill Haggard
Oklahoma City

Leona Marion
Oklahoma City

Term Expires 2022

Don Baxter
Oklahoma City

Mary Ellen Keeton
Kingston

Andy Latta
Tahlequah

Term Expires 2023

Mark Hamm
Moore

Lee Herring
Sand Springs

Bill Rowland
Henryetta

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OKC, Shields Blvd. donates 1613 ‘He’ Bible to Gaskin archives

>> by Bob Nigh, Historical Secretary, Director of History

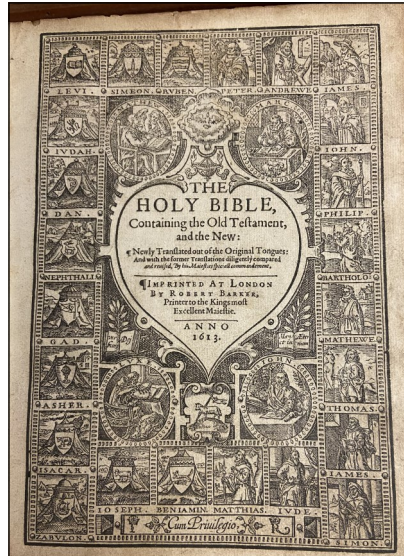
Members of Oklahoma City, Shields Boulevard recently donated to the J.M. and Helen Baptist Historical Library and Archives at Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee a rare King James “He” Bible printed in 1613.

The “Great He Bible,” refers to a typographical error in the third chapter of the Old Testament book of Ruth, verse 15, which uses the incorrect pronoun “he,” instead of the correct pronoun “she.”

The actual text reads: “he (Referring to Boaz) measured sixe (six) measures of barley and laide (laid) it on her; and *he* went into the citie (city).” The correct text should read “and *she* went into the citie.”

Julie Rankin, director of library services at OBU, said, “We at the OBU Library are honored to be able to house the generous gift of the 1613 King James “He” Bible from Pastor Gary Bostwick and Shields Boulevard Baptist Church in the J.M. and Helen Gaskin Baptist Historical Library and Archives. It is a humbling experience to be able to see such a rare piece of history before our own eyes. This Bible was one of the earliest printings of the King James Bible, and we hope to preserve it for many years to come so that more people can experience this sacred piece of our Christian heritage.”

Rachel Walker, OBU collections librarian who oversees the Gaskin Archives, said an expert with the Museum of the Bible in Oklaho-



ma City is in the process of calculating the cost of making needed repairs to the book.

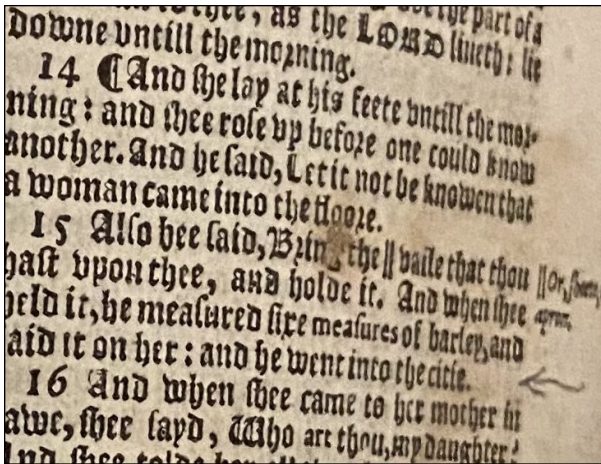
"A conservator came to the archives on April 5 to see the Bible, and will submit a cost estimate for doing conservancy work on it," Walker said. "That might include cleaning it, repairing some pages and rebinding it."

The Bible was donated several years ago to the church by Linda L. Drabik, who obtained it from the private collection of Mr. and Mrs. David C. Sprague of Oklahoma City, who procured it from the late W.A. Stewart, a collector in Pittsburgh, Pa.

The Bible's title page shows that it contains "the Old testament and the New: Newly translated out of the original tongues: and with

the former translations diligently compared and revised, by his majesties special commandment. Imprinted at London by Robert Barker, printer to the king's most excellent majestie. Anno 1613."

Barker was one of three printers—along



with Bonham Norton and John Bill—authorized to print the 1611 King James Bible, a task that actually took three years to complete.

The Bible's exquisitely ornate title page also features the names of the twelve tribes of Israel and the Apostles, along with the names of the four Gospel writers: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Bostwick said the Bible had been displayed in a wooden and glass case in a hallway of the church for years.

"The church members are one hundred percent in favor of donating the Bible to the archives," he said, "Because they want it preserved and taken care of, which is something we couldn't do. I'm just glad it is going to be in good hands."

"We are so thankful for this gift to the archives at OBU," BGO Historical Secretary Bob Nigh said. "This is a very rare item and is a monumental gift to the convention."

20th anniversary of 9-11 Attacks approaching

On Sept. 11, 2001, 19 militants associated with the Islamic extremist group al Qaeda hijacked four airplanes and carried out suicide attacks against targets in the United States. Two of the planes were flown into the twin towers of the World Trade Center (WTC) in New York City, a third plane hit the Pentagon just outside Washington, D.C., and a fourth crashed into a field in Shanksville, Pa. Almost 3,000 people were killed during the attacks, which triggered major U.S. initiatives to combat terrorism and defined the presidency of George W. Bush.

At 8:45 a.m., Sept. 11, 2001, on a clear Tuesday morning, an American Airlines Boeing 767 loaded with 20,000 gallons of jet fuel crashed into the north tower of the WTC in New York City. The impact slashed a gaping, burning hole near the 80th floor of the 110-story skyscraper, instantly killing hundreds of people and trapping hundreds more on the floors above. Almost 3,000 people eventually were left dead, including more than 400 first responders.

As the evacuation of the tower and its twin got underway, television cameras broadcasted live images of what initially appeared to be a freak accident. Then, 18 minutes after the first plane hit, a second Boeing 767—United Airlines Flight 175—appeared out of the sky, turned sharply toward the WTC and sliced into the south tower near the 60th floor.

The hijackers were identified as Islamic terrorists from Saudi Arabia and several other Arab nations. Reportedly financed by the al Qaeda terrorist organization of Saudi fugitive Osama bin Laden, they were allegedly acting in retaliation for America's support of Israel, its involvement in the Persian Gulf War and its continued military presence in the Middle East.

Some of the terrorists had lived in the United States for more than a year and had taken flying lessons at American commercial flight schools. Others had slipped into the country in the months before Sept. 11 and acted as the "muscle" in the operation. The terrorists easily smuggled box-cutters and knives through security at three East Coast airports and boarded four early-morning flights bound for California, chosen because the planes were loaded with fuel for the long transcontinental journey. Soon after takeoff, the terrorists commandeered the four planes, transforming ordinary passenger jets into guided missiles.

Those terrorist assaults on the United States changed more than the lower Manhattan skyline. The unprecedented attacks that ended so tragically in New York City and in Washington, D.C., and rural



Chaplains Sam Porter, right, and Paul Bettis—in their distinctive SBDR yellow jackets—stand ready to minister at Ground Zero in New York City. The Oklahoma logo on the back of their jackets created an immediate connection with the first responders.

Pennsylvania also forever changed the face of Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBDR).

Out of chaos came advancements that few disaster response pioneers would have dared dream. In the decade following 9-11, tens of thousands of Southern Baptists became trained disaster relief volunteers; relationships were forged and deepened with faith-based groups, law enforcement and government entities; and SBDR gained recognition and influence.

That influence grew from the respect victims and other responders gave SBDR volunteers, who have used those opportunities to present the Gospel and seen thousands come to faith in Christ. The SBDR logo—now widely recognized—opened doors for an historic response to Hurricane Katrina.

As leader of the disaster relief team for the North American Mission Board (NAMB), Mickey Caison was at the center of disaster response and for development of the ministry. Like many Americans on the East Coast that morning, Caison was in his office Sep. 11 working on something that quickly became less important.

“A co-worker came into my office and asked to turn on the television,” Caison recalled. “The first tower was burning. A short time later, the dozen people standing in my office gasped as the second jet hit. My heart sank.”

Ironically, months earlier, Caison had participated in discussions

with the New York City Office of Emergency Management in a meeting held in one of the other World Trade Center buildings.

"I knew people in the building. They were in my prayers," Caison said. "I went in disaster response mode, making phone calls—all the while knowing that SBDR must be there."

The first people Caison thought of immediately following the attacks were Oklahomans Sam Porter and Joe Williams.

Porter, disaster relief coordinator for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma (BGCO), and Williams, former chaplaincy specialist with the BGCO, had the experience of responding to the massive destruction caused by the May 3, 1999 tornadoes which swept across central Oklahoma, and the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building downtown Oklahoma City, April 19, 1995.

Understandably, Caison wanted that "experience" walking alongside him when he led Southern Baptists' response to the national tragedy.

"They want us to come as quickly as possible," Porter said at midday Sept. 11, as he scrambled to organize a response.

"We'll be responsible for assessing the situation and setting up the SBC's chaplaincy response to this tragedy; it's going to be a massive job. It's overwhelming to think about it."

Porter quickly assembled a response team from Oklahoma to help get the job done. Also packing their bags for New York were Leslie Sias, BGCO chaplaincy specialist; Paul Bettis, BGCO prison chaplaincy consultant and Jack Poe, chaplain with the Oklahoma City Police Department. Accompanying the group was *Baptist Messenger* managing editor Bob Nigh, who quickly got "on-the-job" chaplain training over the next two weeks.

"I was driving to work when the second plane hit," Porter said. "About an hour later, my phone rang. 'Porter, what are you doing the next few days?' I said, 'Mickey, you don't need Okies in New York.' He said, 'You're right. We already have Tennessee and Kentucky preparing to roll. But no one knows as much about terrorism as Oklahoma.' Those words rang in my ears for the next 12 months, and literally impacted our DR ministry from that day on."

The Oklahoma chaplains eventually led chaplaincy efforts at the temporary morgue at Ground Zero in New York, ministering to firefighters, police officers and other volunteers who dug through the rubble on the 16-acre site and recovered remains of victims.

BGCO executive director Anthony Jordan announced Sept. 14 that the state convention had sent \$20,000 to the New York convention to help in the wake of the disaster.

Williams, who created the Crisis Intervention Institute, conducting seminars and training in traumatology, compassion fatigue, disaster preparedness and response to violence, worked with the Oklahoma group informally, but also was part of a four-expert team of chaplains sent to New York by the FBI.

"Initial responders—firemen, police and medical personnel—to the World Trade Center twin towers' collapse and damage to other nearby buildings, initially tried to determine who was dead and who was still alive and rescue them, if possible," Williams said. "Our chaplains' services will be crucial as those responders become fatigued as the search for survivors continues."

"After a certain period of time, rescuers and relief workers blow a gasket," Porter said. "They need counseling and encouragement. Unfortunately, we in Oklahoma have experience with that after having dealt with devastating tornadoes in 1999 and the Murrah building bombing in 1995. Remember, we had to deal with the worst terrorist attack that occurred on U.S. soil until this happened!"

The Oklahoma chaplains also worked closely with personnel with the American Red Cross and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

"We will be situated at ground zero right at the heart of the destruction in south Manhattan," Porter said. "In addition to setting up counseling services, we will likely be contacting New York City churches that could be used to house SBC feeding units from four states which have been activated," he noted. "Those units will prepare approximately 40,000 meals per day."

In 2001 there were 24,874 trained SBDR volunteers. Ten years later, there were more than 82,000. The first year Southern Baptists provided more than 2 million meals in disaster response was 2001. In 2004, that number was 3.5 million. In 2005, the year of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma, OSBDR volunteers prepared more than 17 million meals.

The Southern Baptist Disaster Relief fleet—units equipped by churches, associations and state conventions for mass feeding and a range of disaster relief services, from chainsaw response to child-care—grew from 335 in 2001 to 1,552 in 2011.

Hurricane Katrina and 2005 are the benchmarks for Southern Baptist disaster response, but it was 9-11 that set the stage to make those responses possible. Some services now expected from SBDR response did not exist prior to 9-11.

Sources:

Baptist Messenger, Sept. 20, 2001.

Baptist Messenger, Aug. 29, 2011

History.com

Historical Commission Welcomes new members

The Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission (OBHC) welcomed three new members, made committee assignments and reflected on happenings during the past year when they convened at the Baptist Building in Oklahoma City, March 4.

Returning Commission members Terry Brooks, Lindsay, First (Chair); Andy Latta, Tahlequah, First (Vice-chair) Leona Marion, Oklahoma City, Trinity (Recording Secretary); Don Baxter, Oklahoma City, Quail Springs; Bill Haggard, Oklahoma City, Putnam City; and Mary Ellen Keeton, Willis, welcomed new members Mark Hamm, Moore, First; Lee Herring, Sand Springs, Broadway and Bill Rowland, Okmulgee, Calvary, to their first semi-annual meeting.

Special guests at the meeting included Julie Rankin, Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU) director of library services, and Rachel Walker, OBU collections librarian. Both led discussions about how to display and proceed with repairing/restoring the 1613 King James “He” Bible recently donated to the archives by Oklahoma City, Shields Boulevard. (See accompanying article on pages 4-5).

Commissioner Andy Latta made a motion for the OBU representatives to “proceed with locating a conservator to find the cost of conserving and rebinding the Bible and report back within a reasonable amount of time.” The motion, seconded by Mark Hamm, passed unanimously.

Walker updated the Commission about the progress of the digital conversion of 18 audio and two video tapes recorded at Falls Creek Baptist Convention Center during the past several years. Walker said the tapes have been digitalized and are loaded onto a dedicated computer in the Archives for viewing.

Chairman Brooks announced committee assignments for the coming year: Oklahoma Baptist Hall of Fame, Brooks (Chair), Keeton and Herring; Distinguished Service Award, Latta (Chair), Brooks and Hamm; Gaskin Baptist Archives, Marion (Chair), Baxter and Rowland; and Gaskin Church History Award, Baxter (Chair), Keeton and Haggard.

During his report to the Commission, Oklahoma Baptists’ Historical Secretary Bob Nigh said activities by state churches were severely curtailed during 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Only two churches—Poteau, Double Branch and Okmulgee, Calvary—conducted celebrations for their anniversaries (100th) during the year.

The Commission held its second semi-annual meeting at the Baptist Building in late September 2020. During that meeting, Com-



Don Baxter of Oklahoma City, right, opens the recent Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission meeting at the Baptist Building in Oklahoma City with Scripture and prayer. Other Historical Commission members, from left, include Leona Marion, Oklahoma City; Mark Hamm, Moore; Mary Ellen Keeton, Kingston and Bill Rowland, Okmulgee.

mission members approved the induction of Victor Kaneubbe and William Tanner into the Oklahoma Baptist Hall of Fame; presentation of the 2020 Distinguished Service Award to Eli Sheldon; and presentation of the Gaskin Church History awards (2019) to Noble, Etowah and Midwest City, First.

The Historical Secretary mailed letters and response cards to 54 Oklahoma Southern Baptist churches celebrating milestone anniversaries during 2021. Thus far, response cards indicating dates of observances have been received from Ardmore, Emmanuel (125th); Bartlesville, New Harmony (100th) Morris, Trinity (25th) and Shawnee, University (100th).

The Historical Secretary has completed production of the autumn 2020 issue of the *Oklahoma Baptist Chronicle*, which has been posted to the Oklahoma Baptists' web site. Nigh also announced that a feature article concerning the Baptist Foundation of Oklahoma's (Now WatersEdge) 75th anniversary would appear in the Autumn 2021 issue of the *Chronicle*.

The Commission's next meeting will be held at 1 p.m., Sept. 16 at Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee.

Fifty Years Ago: Stewardship Development; BGCO finance

(Editor's Note: These articles by Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma Assistant Executive Secretary Joe L. Ingram appeared in the Spring and Autumn 1971 issues of the *Oklahoma Baptist Chronicle*.)

Stewardship Development among Oklahoma Baptists (Spring 1971)

The trend in stewardship promotion has been away from hard and fast dollar pledges to a budget. In 1964, the Forward Program of Church Finance was changed to the Forward Program of Christian Stewardship. The latest promotional material advertising the Forward Program reads, "The need of the churches and their mission programs for additional funds is tremendous. But, greater still is the need to deepen the spiritual lives of the members."

A need was felt to reach smaller churches who wanted a stewardship program emphasis but who did not feel they had the resources of people and money to have a "Forward Program" emphasis. So, in 1962, the "Growth in Christian Stewardship" program for churches with under 300 members was published by the Stewardship Commission and vigorously promoted in Oklahoma. As a result, the number of churches using a formalized stewardship program increased from 12 percent in 1961 to 23 percent in 1963.

The Stewardship Commission challenged the state convention in 1964 to enlist more tithers. In order to try to reach the 72 percent of Oklahoma churches still not reached with a formalized stewardship emphasis, Joe L. Ingram, assistant executive secretary, created a simple tool called "Tithers Enrollment Day." The convention adopted Nov. 12, 1967 as "Tithers Enrollment Day" with a special report made to the annual meeting of the convention. Seven hundred and thirty-two churches participated and reported 72,760 tithers. In 1968, 87,460 tithers were reported to the convention and 816 churches ordered TED materials, which were provided through the convention's promotion budget. "Thank You" dinners for church treasurers were held in 1969 in 17 associations and ten more will be held in 1970. The executive office provided the dinners.

The 1970 stewardship goal is to lead every Oklahoma Baptist church to have a stewardship emphasis so as to give every member an opportunity to make a stewardship commitment.

Finance: the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma (Autumn 1971)

The period of 1955-1960 was a time of steady growth in steward-

ship development in the churches and in Cooperative Program giving. Total gifts through the churches increased from \$14,859,270 in 1955 to \$21,226,327 in 1960. The Forward Program of Church Finance was vigorously promoted in the churches and many of the larger churches were successful in subscribing greatly enlarged budgets. The increased income in the churches was reflected by increased Cooperative Program receipts—from \$1,828,703 in 1955 to \$2,364,360 in 1960. During this period, per capita gifts increased from \$35.90 to \$45.99 and per capita Cooperative Program gifts increased from \$4.42 to \$5.12.

W.E. Grindstaff resigned as assistant executive secretary in 1960 to become director of Cooperative Program for the Southern Baptist Convention Stewardship Commission, and was succeeded by Joe L. Ingram.

The convention voted in 1960 to no longer deduct certain administrative and promotional expenses before calculating the Southern Baptist Convention percentage and to go to a 60% state and 40% SBC division.

In 1963 the convention adopted a 12 year blueprint of mission advance, which called for churches to increase their income by 5% a year and to increase their Cooperative Program percentage by 1% a year. The plan provided a definite formula for increasing the percentage of the Oklahoma Cooperative Program to the Southern Baptist Convention. The program proposed to increase the income of Oklahoma Baptist churches from \$23,000,000 to \$40,000,000; Cooperative Program receipts from \$2,494,000 to \$5,000,000; and Southern Baptist Convention percentage from 40% to 50%. From 1962 to 1967 churches increased their income by more than \$9 million, Cooperative Program income by almost \$1 million, and Southern Baptist Convention percentage from 40% to 43%. However, due to the tremendous needs of Oklahoma Baptist University and Baptist Student Union work, the 12 year plan was altered by a special meeting of the convention on May 19, 1967. The following were the basic points of the eight adopted:

1. That for five years a basic budget be adopted each year on the basis of 57% state and 43% Southern Baptist Convention, and that all receipts over the basic budget be divided 75% for Oklahoma Baptist University and 25% for Baptist Student work.

2. That budget allocations for state work be held to an annual increase of approximately \$35,000. The plan provided for increasing the Cooperative Program objective from \$3,125,000 in 1967 to \$3,500,000 for 1968 and increasing \$100,000 each year thereafter through 1972, with the stipulation that the convention make the necessary adjustments year by year. Through this plan, if the Cooperative Program budget should be reached for the five year period, OBU would receive a total of \$3,781,777.50, BSU work \$950,252.50 and giving to SBC causes from \$1,343,750 to \$1,475,760.

After the May 19, 1967 special convention, leaders took the convention to the people in ten district Cooperative Program rallies. Six thousand from more than 600 churches attended the rallies presided over by T.B. Lackey, executive secretary-treasurer, and heard Grady Cothen, president of OBU; Joe L. Ingram, assistant executive secretary; and Clyde Clayton, state BSU director.

At the close of 1969, the second full year of the advance plan, OBU and BSU work had received \$749,716.53 in advance funds in addition to their regular allocations from the basic Cooperative Program budget. Cooperative Program receipts for 1969 were \$3,590,636.99.

Preliminary plans have been presented to the Board of Directors for 1973-75 which will undergird the gains made to OBU and BSU work and at the same time restore "across the board" giving to the Southern Baptist Convention.

Since 1963 special emphasis has been given to weekly mission giving by the churches through the Cooperative Program. Three-hundred and fifty-six churches in 1969 gave on a weekly basis.

Couple donates B.B. McKinney's Portable pump organ to Convention

>> by Bob Nigh, Historical Secretary, Director of History

A Tennessee couple has gifted to Oklahoma Baptists an instrument that once was owned by Baylus Benjamin (B.B.) McKinney, a name forever linked to Oklahoma Baptist music history.

Wilson and Charlene Henderson of Spring Hill, Tenn. recently donated the portable pump organ used by McKinney as he led music in revivals and at Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly in North Carolina.

"As a Baptist minister of music, now 64 years, my family has enjoyed having the little organ," Wilson Henderson said. "We have

used it to sing at family gatherings . . . it occupied a prominent place in our home. Now, my wife and I have down-sized, and it is time for the organ to again be with the memorabilia of its original owner, B.B. McKinney."

McKinney led music at Falls Creek Baptist Assembly in the Arbuckle Mountains near Davis for almost 30 years, and the original landmark chapel on the assembly campgrounds was



B.B. McKinney's portable pump organ is shown with a copy of the book, The Songs of B.B. McKinney.

dedicated in his name in 1965. The original free-standing chapel—one of the centerpieces of the assembly grounds—was removed in 2005 to make way for construction of the new, 7,056-seat, climate-controlled tabernacle at Falls Creek. An updated McKinney Chapel was included in the design of the new tabernacle.

The book, *The Songs of B.B. McKinney*, compiled by William J. Reynolds, says, McKinney, (At Falls Creek) "became a returning hero each year. His songs became a common bond with Oklahoma Baptists."

Randy Lind, Oklahoma Baptists' Ministry Partner, *Worship/Music*, Church Resources Group, said the organ's trek to Oklahoma was a three-step journey.

It began with McKinney's accompanist, Mamie Helm, who kept

the instrument when McKinney died in September 1952 from injuries he sustained in an automobile accident in August while returning home from directing Church Music Week at Ridgecrest. At that time, McKinney was secretary of the Church Music Department of the Southern Baptist Convention's Sunday School Board—now known as LifeWay Christian Resources—where he edited the *Broadman Hymnal*. When she died, Mamie Helm left the organ to her brother, Harry, who later passed it on to the Hendersons.

Lind said he would like for the three-octave organ to be housed either in the Oklahoma Heritage Room on the third floor of the Baptist Building in Oklahoma City or in the Gaskin Baptist Archives at Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU) in Shawnee.



Randy Lind plays a hymn on the Portable pump organ once used by Baptist icon B.B. McKinney.

“McKinney is one of the iconic shapers of church music; certainly for Baptists,” Lind added. “For example, the melody of the song, ‘Wherever He Leads I’ll Go’, is titled ‘Falls Creek.’”

McKinney was involved in writing more than 500 hymns and gospel songs, including such endearing tunes as “Breathe on Me,” “Speak to My Heart,” “Glorious in Thy Name,” “The Nail Scarred Hand,” “Let Others See Jesus in You,” and “Have Faith in God.” His song, “Lord, Send a Revival,” was used as a theme song in Billy Graham revivals.

McKinney also was a professor of music (Voice) at Southwestern Seminary and conducted music for hundreds of revival meetings and music conferences in Oklahoma and other states. He was the editor and compiler of four hymnals—including the *Broadman Hymnal* (1940)—and 19 song books. In 1922, he earned a Bachelor of Music degree from the Siegel-Myers School of Music in Chicago, and received an honorary degree of Doctor of Music from OBU in 1942. He was inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame in 1982, and the Oklahoma Baptist Hall of Fame in 1993.

Former Historical Commission Member publishes Book

By Bob Nigh, Historical Secretary, Director of History

Luke Holmes, pastor of Tishomingo, First and former member of the Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission, has published a book, *The Forgotten Faithful: Lessons from the Hidden Heroes of Church History*, which profiles those he calls the “forgotten heroes of church history.”

The 90-page volume was released in February and features stories of 10, mostly-unknown champions for Christ. It is available from Amazon, and as a Kindle eBook.

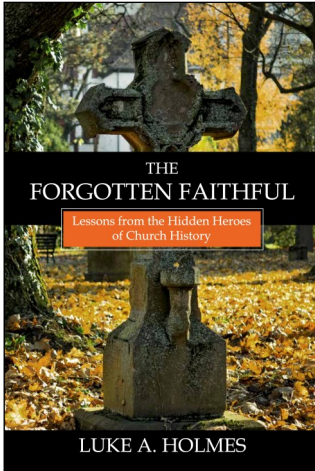
In the book, Holmes writes: “This book is not about main characters. It’s about the forgotten faithful in history, the servants of God whose work has been lost to history. Some of these people had a modicum of recognition in their own time, but today are forgotten. Others toiled in obscurity and no one knew them then or now. Regardless of where they came from, they lived in faithfulness to God, no matter the cir-

cumstances.

“History is filled with men and women who served God and left their mark on history. But this book isn’t about those people. Chances are you haven’t heard of a single person in this book. The stories of these faithful and forgotten servants are meant to encourage those who feel forgotten today. Each story should remind us that a life lived for God is never truly forgotten. It’s God’s plan to use the famous and the forgotten, the important and the insignificant, the noble and the normal.”

Holmes has been at Tishomingo, First since 2011. He is a graduate of Midwestern Seminary. Find more of his writings and work at www.lukeaholmes.com.

Editor’s note: The article on the following pages is excerpted from Luke Holmes’ book, The Forgotten Faithful: Lessons from the Hidden Heroes of Church History. Printed with permission.



Prophet in Ebony

From *The Forgotten Faithful: Lessons from the Hidden Heroes of Church History*, by Luke Holmes, Used by permission of the author.

It would be understandable if E.W. Perry was nervous as silence fell over the hushed crowd. He had stood before large congregations of all sizes for most of his life. But never before had someone like him stood before a group like this.

The seasoned preacher did what he always did. He opened his Bible and began to expound God's word. Over the next hour, those attending the mostly-white Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Oklahoma City in 1949 sat spellbound as his heart poured out the Gospel. Never before had a black man preached before the convention founded so that slaveholders could be appointed as missionaries. By this time, Perry already had been pastor at the legendary Tabernacle Baptist Church in Oklahoma City for 34 years. His message burned through him as he preached.

One viewer recounted it this way.

"He took his text from Philippians 3:10-11. In sublime eloquence and style he talked about the matchless glories of Christ. He called his hearers to renewed dedication to the all-important task of being good witnesses to the resurrection power of Jesus. He pointed out how every soul wants to live forever. He said, 'The hope of this immortality is like a beacon light shining through the mists of the future. It ever urges the soul onward and upward. It is the greatest boon on earth. Without it, how dark is life and how terrible the grave. Take away this hope and you rob the soul of its strongest support, you break the courage of the bravest hearts and mar the comforts of the best of men.'"

E.W. Perry was born in a log cabin in Noxubee, Miss. on May 14, 1882, the son of Jack and Mary Perry, both former slaves. He was the third of 11 children and was raised in the poorest of situations. As a child, he learned to draw water from the well and helped tend the crops of corn, cotton, potatoes, and (sugar?) cane the family raised. Often, the kids left the table hungry, and they were only able to go to school for three months out of each year.

Very little is recorded about his life and upbringing at that time, but anyone who grew up Black in Mississippi at that time faced great struggles and hardships. His parents would often speak of the cruel whippings they received as slaves or how blacks were often chased by dogs just for entertainment. Those memories and so much more might have been in his mind as he addressed the convention crowd that day decades later.

Still, there is no doubt God was working in his life. He had a dream where a man appeared to him in a white robe and called him to follow him, and so the young boy got up and did so. After a long journey, they came to water where the boy followed the man down to the water and was baptized. Upon coming out of the water, the man told the dreamer the story of Phillip and Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8. After that, the man disappears from the dream, just as Phillip does in Acts.

Soon after the dream, Perry went to church and went forward to be saved. When out picking cotton the next day, he began thinking about the dream, the church, and the revival at church. He went to tell his mother about what had happened. She asked him if the man in the dream was black or white. He thought for a moment before responding, "He was black." His mother was quick to reply "Uh-oh, that's of the devil."



E.W. Perry preaching the Gospel.

As he reflected later on the dream, Perry thought the man had no color at all. But when he went to church that night to share his testimony, he said the man was white, and that was persuading enough to everyone there.

Perry later moved to Bishop College in Marshall, Texas, and received a bachelor's degree. He later received the doctor of divinity degree from the

Oklahoma School of Religion; doctor of letters from Natches College, Natches, Miss.; and the doctor of theology from Ideal Bible College in Chicago.

After college, Perry headed west from home and wound up in Ardmore, Okla., where his uncle was a pastor. He helped edit a Baptist paper and pastored in Woodville, El Reno, and Lawton. His first church in Woodville paid \$2.50 a month, but he left because they would not hold services every week.

He came to Oklahoma City in 1915 to become the pastor of Tabernacle Baptist Church. He served there for 42 years until his retirement, and then served as Pastor Emeritus until his death. In retirement, he continued to preach even while his health waned. While in

Oklahoma City, he led the church to be one of the leaders in the state, regardless of race or denomination. He worked tirelessly and served in leadership wherever he could. He served the Oklahoma Baptist State Convention as president for 43 years (1919-1962). For 12 years, (1941-1953) he was vice-president of the National Baptist Convention (NBC), U.S.A., Inc. His influence in these areas can probably not be overstated. He is credited with saving the NBC USA during a sermon he preached at the convention in 1931.

He also worked to help raise up new pastors and leaders around him. In 1937, Perry founded the Oklahoma School of Religion at Langston University, and served as its president by virtue of his convention presidency. The school granted degrees through Langston University, and operated with a fair degree of success until it was decided to close it in 1963 as a result of growing integration across the country.

"When you go out into a great forest you will never see the bodies of the trees touching each other. But the roots are all entwined as well as the boughs overhead. So it is that we are all rooted and grounded in the love of God. When we get 'over there' we will all be members of the family of God."

— E.W. Perry

Dr. Perry was a pioneer in racial relations in Oklahoma City. He was continually working for the benefit of everyone around him. He was a leader in the simultaneous revival movement in Oklahoma City, which was the first of its kind in the nation. At one meeting in Oklahoma City, black and white Baptists gathered for some inspiration and fellowship among each other at the First Baptist Church. The governor of Oklahoma, Robert S.

Kerr, was there, along with

many leading citizens. When Perry was asked to say a few words, he told them of his poor upbringing in a cotton patch:

"Who would have ever thought of me sitting down to breakfast in this great First Baptist Church with the Governor of Oklahoma and all of these fine pastors? I am making a plea for my people. I am not asking for social equality. I am asking that we might have the same privileges and opportunities of others. When you go out into a great forest you will never see the bodies of the trees touching each other. But the roots are all entwined as well as the boughs overhead. So it is that we are all rooted and grounded in the love of God. When we get 'over there' we will all be members of the family of God."

His leadership in the church and denomination is what led to his being asked to be the first Black man to preach before the Southern Baptist Convention, held in his hometown that year. He was known

as "Prince of the Pulpit", and that day he did not disappoint. The legendary pastor R.G. Lee of Memphis was president of the SBC that year and is the one who had asked him to preach. Before he began in Oklahoma City, Perry asked that Lee "not ring him down" (put a timer on him) as he had been 60-plus years coming from a log cabin to preach that night.

The eyewitness account from before continued:

"When Perry had finished every eye was wet with tears. All present knew they had heard the voice of a prophet of God. Six thousand people gave a standing ovation.

"Then President Lee arose and said, 'Dr. Perry, come and stand by me and take my hand. I want this convention to witness a parable in black and white, written in red. Over 60 years ago you were born in a log cabin in Mississippi. I, too, was born in a log cabin in South Carolina. You and I have been placed in the high positions we occupy by the vote of confidence of our people. But the same Christ who saved you is the Christ who saved me—both of us have been washed white in the precious blood of the Lamb. This is the parable in black and white, written in red.'"

Perry finally got to meet the man from his dream face-to-face when he passed away on August 31, 1969.

NECROLOGY

Jan. 1–Dec. 31, 2020

Adams, Edwine died May 21. She was the wife of Larry Adams, former pastor of Eufaula, First; Shawnee, Immanuel and Piedmont, First and former BGCO director of development. The couple served with Baptist Village Communities. The Larry and Edwine Adams Assistance Fund was established to help BVC residents with living expenses. She also was the mother-in-law (Pam) of Wendell Lang, pastor of Yukon, Surrey Hills.

Aduddell-Peavler, Joy died Oct. 18. She was the wife of Hoyt Aduddell, pastor of Luther, First; Tulsa, Crusaders; Harrah, First; Lawton, Cameron; Tulsa, Olivet and Oklahoma City, Wilmont Place; and mother of Mark Aduddell, pastor of Edmond, Vintage.

Agee, Nelle Rose died Aug. 10. She was the wife of Oklahoma Baptist University President Emeritus Bob Agee. In 1999, OBU renamed Brotherhood Dormitory as the Bob R. and Nelle H. Agee Residence Center.

Banks, Martha Sibley died June 27. She served alongside her husband, Bob, who served for many years in men's ministry and with Royal Ambassadors. She also served as office assistant at Baptist Village of Oklahoma City.

Beggs, Francis died May 21. She was the mother of Ricky Crouch, pastor of Eldorado, Corinth.

Belew, Bobby died March 2. He was pastor of Salina, Lakeview.

Bentley, Jody died April 21. He was pastor of Claremore, Sequoyah.

Black, Rhoda, died June 25. She was the mother of Harry Black, Director of Missions for Capital Association.

Blackmon, Jr., Roye Leylon died Oct. 11. He served in education and music ministry for 64 years at Oklahoma City, Putnam City; Oklahoma City, First and Broken Arrow, First. He also served Capital Association as director of church development from 1993-98.

Boldin, Ellen died Nov. 22. She was the wife of long-time Boys Ranch Town Administrator Charles Boldin.

Boyd, Glenn Thomas died May 16. He was director of church music for Oklahoma Baptists from 1980-88, and served with the IMB in Africa from 1972-80 and 1988-89. He was a charter member of the Singing Churchmen of Oklahoma, receiving the Royce Brown Lifetime of Music Ministry Award in 2004.

Brown, Oran “Jack” died Feb. 27. He served as pastor of Oklahoma churches for more than 50 years.

Brown, Shirley Ann died Oct. 5. She was the mother of Jim Brown, pastor of Altus, Friendship.

Butcher, Orby Lee Jr. died June 21. He and his wife, Betty, served as IMB missionaries in Thailand for 20 years, where he was a missionary physician. He was very active in Oklahoma Baptist Disaster Relief and helped organize the convention's Medical Reserve Corps unit.

Cain, Clyde died Oct. 6. He served Oklahoma Baptists for 28 years in the ministry areas of evangelism and ministry leadership. He also served as pastor of Guymon, First. He directed and taught in the Southwestern Seminary Extension Program at Oklahoma Baptist University, a program he helped establish and nurture for more than 30 years.

Campbell, Mary Ellen died Aug. 31. She was the mother of Steve Campbell, pastor of Lahoma, First.

Carpenter, Lawrence Odell died Jan. 19. He served as a pastor in Oklahoma.

Champlin, Michael E. died April 9. He was a chaplain at Miami Baptist Hospital and Baptist Medical Center in Oklahoma City. He served for several years on the management team for Baptist Healthcare of Oklahoma.

Davis, Doug died Dec. 1. He was the father of Michael Davis, Falls Creek Multimedia Coordinator, and father-in-law of Liz Davis, Conference Centers Director's Assistant.

de Cordova, Frances Lillian Pugh died July 14. She was a pioneer in the area of literacy missions and served as Literacy Missions associate and as a member of the Literacy Missions Advisory Board of the SBC Home Missions Board. She and her husband, Ken, served as Mission Service Corps volunteers and led Oklahoma Campers on Mission.

Deere, Jesse died Dec. 4. He was pastor at Tahlequah, Boudinot.

Denton, Maxcine died Dec. 12. She was a former housemother at the Baptist Children's Home.

Dodd, Harry K. died July 22. He served as director of Falls Creek Baptist Assembly for 14 years. He also was pastor of churches in Oktaha, Checotah, Mounds and Depew and was active in Oklahoma Baptist Disaster Relief.

Dodd, Nadine died June 7. She was the grandmother of Todd Sanders, Falls Creek Program Director and Youth ministry.

Douglass, Richard “Brooks” died May 9. An Oklahoma State Senator, he championed ground-breaking legislation for crime victims. He co-created the movie, *Heaven’s Rain* (Later renamed *The Amendment*) to honor his parents, Richard and Marilyn Sue, who served in pastoral ministry and were murdered in 1979.

Earp, Chrystina died Dec. 24. She was the wife of Steven Earp, pastor of Moore, Elevate.

Flores, Saulo died Oct. 8. He was pastor of Enid, Iglesia Bautista Emanuel.

Gilliland, Carol Dene died Aug. 23. He served as pastor at Witcher; Edmond, Deer Creek; Guthrie, Abel Community; Greenfield, First and Watonga, Trinity, where he retired in 2019. He was Royal Ambassadors director for Capital Association for five years.

Goforth, Stephen died May 1. He taught music at Oklahoma Baptist University.

Hale, Betty died Nov. 12. She was the mother of Monty Hale, Washington-Osage Association Director of Missions.

Hall, Bethel died Sept. 7. She was the widow of Loyd “Tiny” Hall, who served as pastor of Burns Flat, First and Arapaho, First. She also was the mother of Greg Hall, pastor of Helena, First, and the late Shane Hall, pastor of Del City, First Southern.

Harris, Kenneth died Aug. 29. He was greeter/security at the Baptist Building for several years.

Head, Coetta died May 15. She was the wife of Howard Head, pastor of Greenfield church.

Hinson, Bob died Nov. 18, 2019. His ministry included pastorates at Marlow, First and Midwest City, First.

Hoffman, Jimmy died March 22. He was a pastor in Arkansas, Mississippi and Oklahoma, including Ada, Homer.

Holden, Carol died Feb. 23, He was pastor of six churches, including Commerce, Southeast; Miami, Liberty and Afton, First, and was a traveling evangelist.

Kalicki, Brandon died May 9. He was the youth pastor at Watonga, First., and recently-appointed associate pastor . He also served as youth pastor at Norman, Alameda and Ponca City, Northeast.

Kastner, Deryl died Dec. 1. He served in music and youth ministries at Noble, First most recently as music director at Norman, Horizon Pointe. He also was a faithful volunteer with Oklahoma Baptist Disaster Relief.

Keim, Charles died Dec. 7. He served as a pastor for 34 years and as a full-time evangelist for 16 years, affiliated with the Oklahoma Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists.

Kimbler, Jackie Hayes died Aug. 18. He and his wife, Lila, were avid supporters of Oklahoma Baptist Homes for Children, and he served on the OBHC Board of Directors. The couple were honored by having the Kimbler Cottage at Boys Ranch Town in Edmond named in their honor.

Lynn, Reed died Dec. 26. He served in pastoral ministry at Madill, Little City; Wetumka, First; and Shawnee, Rock Creek. He was a retired director of missions for Pittsburg Association.

Masteller, Rod died Dec. 13. He was pastor of Oklahoma City, Putnam City; Jenks, First; and Harrah, First. He served as Oklahoma Baptists' president in 1987-88.

Martin, Bob died Jan. 18. He was a faithful volunteer with Oklahoma Campers on Mission, leading groups to work on an estimated 300 church-related construction and repair projects in Oklahoma and many other states.

Mathis, R.B. died April 22. He was most recently pastor at Strong City. He also was a pastor in Guthrie, and at Piedmont, First; Cordell, First and Boise City, First.

Matlock, Philip died Oct. 29. He was the father of Tara Matlock, former Oklahoma Baptists' Church Relations Group administrative assistant.

Mayfield, Mary died Nov. 29. She was the mother of Bob Mayfield, Oklahoma Baptists' Small Groups and Personal Evangelism.

McClure, Richard "Dick" died Aug. 15. He served as Director of Missions in Muskogee Association and Frisco Association. He also ministered in several churches in Muskogee, Hugo and Westport.

McKee, Floyd died Jan. 26. He recently retired as pastor of Oklahoma City, Rancho Village after serving more than 40 years in pastoral ministry. He also was pastor of Millay, First and Beggs, First and as director of donor relations with the Baptist Foundation of Oklahoma (Now WatersEdge).

Melton, Wynema "Nema" died June 15. She was the mother of Doug Melton, pastor of Oklahoma City, Southern Hills.

Milner, Caroline died Aug. 19. She was the daughter of Carolyn and Chris Milner, pastor of Elmer, Hess.

Moody, Roy Dee died March 27. He was pastor of churches in Texas, Washington and Oklahoma, including Elgin, First; Tonkawa, First and Tulsa, Garnett Rd. At the time of his death, he was serving as minister of senior adults and pastoral care at Oklahoma City, Quail Springs.

Paxton, Karla died May 15. She was the wife of Casey Paxton, pastor of Mangum, First.

Peters, Patsy Ruth died Jan. 15. She was the wife of longtime Oklahoma pastor and director of missions, Gerald Peters and mother-in-law (Sheryl) of Sam Porter, former Oklahoma Baptist disaster relief director.

Poteet, Gwen died Feb. 10. She was director of "LifeWize," a program of Oklahoma Baptist Homes for Children.

Ramirez, John died Dec. 10. He was BSU/BCM director at Oklahoma Panhandle State University, Rose State College and Oklahoma State University. He also served on the staff at Oklahoma City, Wilmont Place; Goodwell, First and Midwest City, Country Estates.

Ringer, Don died Dec. 22. He was the father of Danny Ringer, Director of Missions for Great Plains Association.

Rowland, Jean died Sept. 15. She was the mother of Bill Rowland, North Canadian Association Director of Missions.

Schmidt, Louis died Sept. 12. He was the father of Arlene Epp, Great Plains Association ministry assistant.

Scott, Samuel George died March 8. He served as a pastor for almost 30 years, including Minco, First; Bradley, First; and Duncan, Immanuel. He also served as a church planting missionary with the North American Mission Board and Oklahoma Baptists.

Sebrant, Tammy died May 23. She was the daughter of Diana and Pete Wylie, pastor of Eldorado, First.

Servati, Dick died Feb. 13. He was pastor of Medicine Park, First; Faxon, First; Cache, Wichita; Fort Towson, First and Miami, Southern Hills. He also was moderator of Frisco Association from 1988-90.

Shook, Damon died March 28. He was pastor at Midwest City, Meadowood from 1972-78. He served 66 years in pastoral ministry.

Silvernail, Dale died Sept. 5. He was married to the late Linda Herndon Silvernail, who was a ministry assistant with the *Baptist Messenger* and Oklahoma Baptist Homes for Children.

Snyder, Linda died April 20. She was the wife of Sam Snyder, Falls Creek maintenance supervisor.

Stone, George W. died May 26. He served as mission pastor to what later became Oklahoma City, Bethel and later as pastor at Mustang, First; Bethany, First; Keyes, First and Oklahoma City, University Heights.

Vance, Jack died June 30. He was pastor at Okemah, Skyview; Hoffman, First; Dewar, First and Henryetta, Wilson. He also was interim pastor at Lamar, First.

Varela, Gloria died Sept. 1. She was the wife of Rigo Varela, pastor of Duncan, El Divino Salvador.

Vitosky, Pam died Dec. 26. She was the wife of Gary Vitosky, retired pastor at Retrop.

Wheeler, Mercedes died Feb. 6. She worked at the *Baptist Messenger* from 1975-78.

Woodley, Matilda died Nov. 29. She was the wife of Hollie Woodley, retired pastor of Del City, Solomon Temple.

Wooten, Donna died Oct. 25. She was the grandmother of Sarah Wooten, Falls Creek programming associate.

Worton, Harry "Von" died Oct. 17. He and his wife, Marge, served the International Mission Board in Indonesia for 24 years. He also was involved in Oklahoma Baptist Disaster Relief and Baptist Builders.

Memorial Gifts

On September 8, 1998 by vote of the Historical Commission, a memorial fund was established whereby a gift of \$25 or more may be made to the Gaskin Historical Archives and Library Forever Fund in memory of a deceased relative or friend.

Del Allen, Wilburton

Given by Sans Bois Association

Ramona Allen, Wilburton

Given by John and Pat Hart

Ramona Allen, Wilburton

Given by Delmer, Charity and Tim Allen

Donald E. Badgett, Del City

Given by Winfred T. and Grace L., Knight, Jr.

James Ball, Claremore

Given by Lemuel Ball

Margie Ball, Claremore

Given by Lemuel Ball

Bob Burrows, Amarillo, Texas

Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

Pluma Cantrell, Sallisaw

Given by Del and Ramona Allen

Rose Chronister, Sallisaw

Given by Sans Bois Baptist Association

E. Farrell Dixon, Tulsa

Given by Curtis and Betty Dixon

Donald R. Dunn, Chickasha

Given by Jimmie L. Dunn

Jack Everhart, Oklahoma City

Given by Del and the late Ramona Allen

Betty Farris, Muskogee

Given by Del and Ramona Allen

J. C. Folk, Midwest City

Given by Winfred T. and Grace L. Knight, Jr.

Virginia Ann Fry, Claremore

Given by Lemuel Ball

Helen Isom Gaskin, Durant

Given by Patricia Roberts

Jesse Marvin (J.M.) Gaskin, Durant

Given by Delmer Allen

Joseph Alexander Gaskin, Cartersville

Given by J. M. Gaskin

Jim Glaze, Montgomery, Alabama

Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

George Hill, Coalgate

Given by Margaret Hill

George Hill, Coalgate

Given by J. M. Gaskin

Mrs. Carrell Hooper, Durant

Given by J.M. and Helen Gaskin

Carleen Jones, Oklahoma City

Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

Norma Jordan, Bartlesville

Given by the Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission

Nadean Justice, Oklahoma City

Given by J. M. Gaskin

Thelma Juanita King, Del City

Given by Winfred T. and Grace L. Knight, Jr.

Murray Leath, Plano, Texas

Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

Dick Lovelady, Bethany

Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

Clara Luedecke, Weatherford, Texas

Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

Burl Mackey, Edmond

Given by Jonell Crawford

Carl Mackey, Kingfisher

Given by Jonell Crawford

Charles Mackey, Durant

Given by Mrs. Robert Mackey

Robert Mackey, Durant

Given by Mrs. Robert Mackey

Bob Maxwell, Stigler

Given by Del Allen

Lee McWilliams, Durant

Given by Patricia Roberts

Maye McWilliams, Durant

Given by Patricia Roberts

John H. Morton, Durant

Given by Bill J. Morton

Emma L. Shoemate Morton, Durant

Given by Bill J. Morton

Barbara Peaden, Oklahoma City

Given by Winfred T. and Grace L. Knight, Jr.

Wenonah Willene Pierce, Fayetteville, Ark.

Given by Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission

Wenonah Willene Pierce, Fayetteville, Ark.

Given by Del and Ramona Allen

Marie Ratliff, Wilburton

Given by Center Point Baptist Church

John D. Riggs, Durant

Given by J.M. Gaskin

Todd H. Sheldon, Dallas, Texas

Given by the Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission

Todd H. Sheldon, Dallas, Texas

Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

John L. Smith, Marlow

Given by Winfred Knight

Cathy Spain, Midwest City

Given by Winfred T. and Grace L. Knight, Jr.

Max Stanfield, Oklahoma City
Given by Winfred T. and Grace L. Knight, Jr.

William G. Tanner, Belton, Texas
Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

James Timberlake, Atlanta, Georgia
Given by Kathyryne Timberlake

Thelma Townsend, Oklahoma City
Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

Lawrence Van Horn, Oklahoma City
Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

H. Alton Webb, Anadarko
Given by J.M. and Helen Gaskin

Almeda Welch, Durant
Given by J.M. and Helen Gaskin

Hazel Marie Williams White, Wilburton
Given by Del and Ramona Allen