

# (BP)---FEATURES

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Southern Baptist Inducted  
Into Gospel Music Hall of Fame

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By James Lee Young 8/6

NASHVILLE (BP)--The orchestra swung into a soft rendition of the late E. M. Bartlett's "Victory in Jesus" as the former Southern Baptist gospel music giant was inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame.

Gene Bartlett (Eugene Monroe Jr.), church music secretary for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma and a well known composer, was present as the Gospel Music Association eulogized his late father for contributions made as gospel music composer, publisher, educator and promoter during the early 1900's.

The event was the 1973 Dove Awards here, sponsored by the Gospel Music Association and attended by more than 1,200 persons in the Grand Ole Opry House.

"My reaction to my father's selection for the Gospel Music Hall of Fame (GMHF) was that of a son's admiration," Bartlett said. Another son, Charles Scott Bartlett, also a Baptist, lives in the Wichita Falls, Tex., area.

One of 10 other Hall of Fame inductees included the late Homer Rodeheaver, former singer for the late evangelist Billy Sunday. Rodeheaver taught in the elder Bartlett's popular singing schools.

"Albert E. Brumley (a 1972 GMHF inductee) was one of my father's outstanding students," said Bartlett in an interview with Baptist Press. Brumley composed such gospel songs as "I'll Fly Away," "I'll Meet You in the Morning" and "Jesus, Hold My Hand."

"A typical country boy," according to his son, the elder Bartlett became a nationally known song writer and publisher in the country music field. His best known of 400-500 songs is "Victory in Jesus."

"My father was quite a humorist," Bartlett said. A tongue-in-cheek song by the late composer, "Take an Old Cold Tater and Wait," satirized preachers coming to dinner and "Mom" telling the children to "Take an old, cold tater and wait for the second table," Bartlett said. "Too often, just the neck and little else was left of the chicken," he recalled.

The saga of the "cold tater" was recorded by country-western artist Little Jimmy Dickens, Bartlett said. Former Louisiana Governor James H. (Jimmy) Davis, a singer and composer, also sang the song "quite a lot," Bartlett added.

Another of the Southern Baptist composer's gospel songs, "Just A Little While," was sung by Mahalia Jackson, famed gospel artist. Jazz musician Pete Fountain also recorded the song, said Bartlett.

The elder Bartlett was owner-publisher of the Hartford Music Company in Hartford, Ark., and an "oldtime singing teacher." His company published gospel music exclusively.

"For awhile, my father was an evangelistic singer for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in the days when the board sent out evangelism teams. He felt more compelled to write music for the masses and to teach them how to sing gospel music," Bartlett said.

Bartlett accompanied his father to the "widely popular" singing schools, often driving the car as they made their rounds. The schools ran day and night for three weeks at a time. Payment was usually \$25 per week and the "proceeds of a pie supper" for conducting a school, Bartlett recalled. His father's first singing school was held around 1907 in Liberty Hill, Okla.

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"There wasn't much else to do during the depression years of the '30's," Bartlett noted. Consequently, "the gospel music business actually flourished," he said. "I was a typical boy and never would practice," even though "I grew up attending the schools."

Still, Bartlett acquired a solid grounding in music theory in his father's schools, he said. "In those days they taught music by shaped notes, one of the quickest ways to learn to read music." Major church music publishers don't print shaped notes now, except gospel music firms, Bartlett added.

"Homer Rodeheaver was one of the better singing school teachers and had a big influence on my life," said Bartlett. "He made me want to do something big in music." Bartlett later "surrendered my life to Christ," at age 21, then dedicated himself to a career in church music.

"I came in late one night and heard someone praying in a bedroom. It was my mother. She prayed, "Lord, if you don't save Gene, I'll die," Bartlett said. "I was converted shortly after that." He later wrote the song, "I Heard My Mother Call My Name in Prayer."

Bartlett's mother was the former Joan Tatum of Greenwood, Ark. Her father was a Baptist minister and lawyer. She studied piano and voice at Moody Institute in Martin, Tenn., the same college her husband attended. She later taught music privately.

"My father was highly educated for his day and earned bachelor's degrees in arts, science, music and oratory. He studied foreign languages, was good in mathematics, was a great musician and orator."

An "old-fashioned" speaker, he could "make people laugh one minute and cry the next. His orations were very emotional."

Bartlett said his father left the gospel field for a time to open a meat packing firm in Harrison, Ark., "but he couldn't stay away from music" and finally went back to Hartford to song writing, publishing and promoting gospel music groups.

Bartlett's father died at age 52 in Jan., 1941 in Siloam Springs, Ark., where he is buried. His widow died in Sept., 1972 in Ft. Smith, Ark., at age 77 and is buried in Siloam Springs.

"The last thing I heard my mother say was on her death bed as she briefly came out of a coma and sang the first stanza of 'Victory in Jesus.'" Bartlett said.

He stood by his mother's bed as she began the second stanza. "Her voice faded as she lapsed back into the coma and never regained consciousness."

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James Lee Young is feature editor of Baptist Press.

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Stoneham, Retired Annuity  
Board Executive, Dies

10/8/73

DALLAS (BP)--Funeral services were conducted here for J. D. Stoneham, who retired in 1970 as director of Relief and Annuity Service for the Southern Baptist Convention's Annuity Board.

Stoneham, 70, died September 29 in Fletcher, N. C., after suffering a stroke while visiting relatives there. Burial was in Dallas.

A layman, Stoneham spent 12 years with the Annuity Board. He was a deacon at First Baptist Church in Dallas, where he lived for 63 years.

He retired in 1970 on the eve of a reorganization at the Annuity Board in which the title of director was changed to vice-president.

Wrapup

Cauthen Urges Older Baptists  
To Vacate Rocking Chairs

4<sup>63</sup> BC  
By Roy Jennings

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Southern Baptists, 50 and older, were urged here to get out of their rocking chairs and get on the ball for Jesus Christ.

Baker James Cauthen, executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, threw out the challenge at a four-day conference for older Baptists, sponsored by the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission.

"Don't get back in those rocking chairs. You'll rust. And don't die until the Lord calls you home," Cauthen said.

The Baptist leader asked the group of older Baptists from 13 states to adopt a slogan, "Get Involved," and a theme song, "To the Work."

Owen Cooper, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, opened the conference with a plea for more Southern Baptists to get involved with missions.

"I believe there are 1,000 Southern Baptists who reach 65 years of age each year who will get meaningfully involved in our missions army if we start early and lead them into it," said the retired chemical corporation executive.

On the subject of mission support, Cooper said Southern Baptists are just playing around with home missions.

"The average Southern Baptist gives \$1 for home missions each year. If this dollar represents the commitment of Southern Baptists to home missions, good gracious alive."

Wendell Belew, director of the missions division of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board outlined opportunities for older Baptists to serve in missions, while Eugene Grubbs, the Foreign Mission Board's consultant for laymen overseas, told how they could serve in foreign countries.

Jerry Clower of Yazoo City, Miss., humorist and recording artist, entertained the conferees with accounts of his boyhood days in Amite County, Miss., while interspersing advice about treating all persons, regardless of color, as creations of God.

During morning conferences, older Baptists also heard a variety of testimonies from volunteer missionaries about how they used their time to minister to needs.

Mr. and Mrs. Billy Stallard of Danville, Ky., told of spending their vacations the last three years conducting a Vacation Bible School in Connecticut and a beach ministry in Florida.

Mrs. Gail Leininger, a 33-year-old Orlando, Fla., housewife, recounted her efforts to lead literacy and citizenship missions ministry through her church. She said 100 out of 750 persons who participated in the program professed faith in Christ.

During the conference, the older Baptists, a hyperactive group, resisted any references to them as "retired" or as "senior citizens" and refused to sit in rocking chairs to pose for pictures.