

April 29, 1974

**Handicaps Are Inspiration
To Baptist Woman's Friends**

By Larry Jerden

NICEVILLE, Fla. (BP)--Sixty years ago, doctors put a needle in Helen Demeree's spine to save her life from spinal meningitis.

The operation destroyed her auditory nerves and she was deaf.

Years later, deaf and unable to see well at dusk, she lost a leg when hit by a train as she walked across the tracks.

Now, recovering from double eye surgery, she weeps as she sits at her easels, haunted by the fear that she may never paint again.

But if anyone has the idea her spirit is broken at age 67, a minute in her presence will dispel the notion.

Mrs. Demeree, wife of M.R. Demeree, 70, also deaf and a retired home missionary to the deaf, is as much an inspiration to visitors in her Niceville home today as she has been to thousands whose spiritual lives have been strengthened by her living testimony over six decades.

To someone interested in a wide spectrum of the arts--painting, sculpture, poetry, songwriting--Mrs. Demeree provides a stimulating challenge.

Paintings adorn almost every wall in the house, and many are accompanied by poems that lend further depth and meaning.

Mrs. Demeree never took painting lessons but by the Depression years was able to sell her art work in Louisville to earn grocery money.

Her painting began to develop seriously in 1962, when she and her missionary husband moved to Denver for work with the deaf.

"She would paint in the basement late into the night," he remembered, "sometimes until 3 a.m. I would go to the top of the stairs and turn out her light so she would come to bed."

One of her favorite subjects is the American Indian. Not only does she paint pictures of Indian scenes, but while in Colorado she learned enough Indian language to put Indian inscriptions on the frames. She also makes Indian jewelry and while in Colorado made it for sale.

Mrs. Demeree "met" her husband while she was attending the Kentucky school for the deaf in Danville. She picked out a name from the Colorado Index, the Colorado deaf school paper, for a "pen pal." Four years later, when she went to Colorado on a vacation, she married the man who went with the name and moved there with him.

Demeree was Baptized the year they were married. Helen was already a Christian. He felt an "early call" to the ministry but didn't realize there was any opportunity for a deaf person. "I didn't know I could have gone to the seminary in Louisville," Demeree lamented.

It was 1955, 26 years after the deaf couple had moved to Florida, that J.E. Rowles of the Ballast Point Baptist Church in Tampa, helped Demeree realize he could answer the call to the ministry.

"I had been translating (interpreting) Sunday School and church services long before that in various churches," Demeree said. The couple was appointed home missionaries in 1958, serving the deaf in Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, North and South Dakota, and Nebraska.

Since retirement, he has continued working with the deaf in Florida, teaching a sign language class for the hearing on Thursday nights, conducting services for the deaf, and continuing to perform marriage ceremonies for both deaf and hearing couples.

Mrs. Demeree has difficulty walking from the living room out onto the front porch and to her studio. The pain and the artificial leg wobble, and the sunlight is too much for her recuperating eyes.

Back at her easel, tears begin to bead as she struggles to paint.

It is private pain that comes from her ambitions to paint again, to get back to teaching her Sunday School and sign language classes and to the songs she "signs" with beauty and grace.

Of the work she has completed, Mrs. Demeree says, "God does it. I just do what he wants. I'm always surprised at what happens."

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(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers.

Adapted from the May, 1974 issue of World Mission Journal

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Missionary Bud Fray Elected
Southern Africa's Field Rep

4/29/74

RICHMOND (BP)--Marion G. (Bud) Fray Jr., missionary to Africa for 17 years, has been elected by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board as field representative for Southern Africa.

The action came at the board's April meeting.

As a field representative, Fray will provide a personal link between the board and approximately 85 missionaries in Rhodesia, Botswana, Angola, Mozambique and South West Africa.

He will also serve missionaries who may be assigned at a later date to the Malagasy Republic, where initial steps leading toward the opening of Southern Baptist mission work have been taken; South Africa, which has requested a missionary; and other South African countries where Southern Baptist missionaries may open work.

Fray has been working in Gwelo, Rhodesia, at the African Baptist Theological Seminary since 1972 and before that the Frays worked in the Gokwe district of Rhodesia where he began Baptist work in 1963.

The Frays were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1957. Before moving to Gokwe, he did education and evangelistic work on the nearby Sanyati Reserve and evangelistic work in Gwelo, where he opened a Baptist bookstore and reading room.

Born in Kennett, Mo., Fray lived there until his family moved to Arkansas when he was 16. He received the bachelor of arts degree from Ouachita Baptist College (now University), Arkadelphia, Ark., and the bachelor of divinity and doctor of theology degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Tex.

Mrs. Fray is the former Jane Dawley. She was born in San Antonio, Tex., but grew up in Nashville, Ark. She attended Central College (no longer in operation), Conway, Ark., Ouachita Baptist College and Southwestern Seminary.

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Holcomb Asks Nixon to Withdraw FCC Nomination

WASHINGTON (BP)--Luther Holcomb, an ordained Baptist clergyman and a Democrat appointed by President Nixon to fill an unexpired term on the Federal Communications Commission, asked that his name be withdrawn from consideration.

There is no indication that opposition to the nomination voiced earlier this month by several fundamentalist preachers had anything to do with Holcomb's request.

Since the two-day hearings on Holcomb's nomination held by the Senate Commerce Committee in early April, the Washington Post reported, letters and memoranda were presented to committee members which indicated that Holcomb actively sought President Nixon's reelection. Because the political party with a congressional majority is by law entitled to four of the seven FCC seats, the nomination of a Democrat who supported Nixon's campaign effort seems to be the only factor which could have disqualified Holcomb.

The documents, which according to the Washington Post were leaked to the committee by an undisclosed source, revealed that Holcomb had written board chairman Donald M. Kendall of Pepsico, Inc. and White House special counsel Harry Dent promising support for the president's reelection. A published report also maintains that Holcomb contributed financially to the reelection effort of Sen. John Tower (R.-Tex.)

A member of the commerce committee staff said that before the new data surfaced, Holcomb's approval by the committee seemed certain, in spite of bitter opposition to the nomination by fundamentalist radio preacher Carl McIntire and a group of his associates.

In his letter to the president, Holcomb wrote, "Due to the confusion that has arisen regarding my party loyalties, I do not believe that my nomination is worth pursuing in light of the short time remaining in the term. Therefore, I respectfully request that my nomination be withdrawn. I do intend to complete my term at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission."

In an interview with Baptist Press, Holcomb explained that he had not contemplated a delay in his confirmation to the FCC beyond May 1. Since there is so little time remaining in the unexpired term to which he was being appointed, Holcomb said that every day's delay in his confirmation would shorten his time of service significantly.

The possibility of long delays in the confirmation process, as happened in the immediate preceding confirmation, led Holcomb to step aside, he said.

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Two Radio-TV Commission Programs Win Major Awards

4/29/74

PHOENIX, Ariz. (BP)--"Country Crossroads" and "MasterControl," two radio programs produced by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, will receive two major awards from UNDA-USA, formerly the 25-year-old Catholic Association of Broadcasters.

"Country Crossroads" will receive the association's coveted Gabriel Award for excellence, and "MasterControl," an award of merit at an awards ceremony here, May 30.

Both are half-hour programs designed for broadcast on public service time by the radio department of the Radio and Television Commission. "Country Crossroads," produced by Jim Rupe, is heard on 537 stations across the country and "MasterControl," produced by Charles Yates, is on 632 radio stations. Both are heard on 357 American Forces Network stations around the world.

"This is not the first time that the Catholics have honored the Radio and Television Commission with Gabriel Awards," observed Edwin Malone III, vice president, radio department. "The commission has received Gabriels before for television programs. But this is the first time that programs produced by the radio department have been cited and we are particularly proud of the work our producers are doing."

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