



Esther Lenora Megill

February 27, 1924 - August 26, 2023

Esther Lenora Megill was born in Lawrence, Kansas, on February 27, 1924. Her father, Harold R. Megill, and mother, Lenora Pearl Testerman Megill (both ordained) were rural ministers of the United Brethren in Christ Church (later E.U.B.). There were five other children, younger than she, all boys, one of whom died in infancy.

Her early years were spent in a number of small towns, as her father and mother were moved from one charge to another, mostly in the Kansas Conference. In 1942, she entered York College, the U.B. college in York, Nebraska (united with Westmar College, LeMars, Iowa after church union to form the Evangelical United Brethren Church in 1946). She graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1946. During the next four years, she taught high school science and English for one year at St. Edward, Nebraska, and served for three years in Dayton, Ohio as Director of the Central Girls Club. She then entered the School of Medical Technology at Miami Valley Hospital in Dayton and became a registered Medical Technologist. On June 1, 1950, she was commissioned as a missionary of the Evangelical United Brethren Church. After four months of study in England, she went to Sierra Leone, West Africa (arriving in January 1951). There she served as a medical technologist at the hospital in Rotifunk until June of 1962. She also worked with the local church and Conference as a Christian educator.

During furloughs and on her return to the United States in 1962, she entered graduate study in Hartford Seminary Foundation, Hartford, Connecticut, and received an M.A. in Religious Education in 1960, and a doctorate in religious education (Ed.R.D.) in 1966. Following graduation, she worked at McCurdy School in Santa Cruz, New Mexico, under the National Division of the E.U.B. Church. There she developed a curriculum for teaching religion in the high school.

In 1968, after church union, she was Executive Secretary for North and West Africa for the World Division, United Methodist Board of Global Ministries. In 1972-73 she took further postgraduate work at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. In 1973 she returned to Africa, and for seven years was a teacher and director of The Department of Church Leadership at Trinity College, a theological school in Legon, Ghana. Her work at the college included the training of pastoral leadership for the major Protestant churches in the country. She wrote a textbook for theological schools in Africa and edited a hymn book for African children. Earlier she wrote a prayer book for children, illustrated with her photographs taken in Sierra Leone. She at other times has written units of study for children in the Sunday School (both E.U.B. and U.M.). She also wrote the Leader's Guide for adult/youth for the 1983-84 Africa study (Friendship Press), and has written and edited a number of articles and manuscripts for extension courses for both Africa and the U.S.

From 1980-82, after her return from Ghana, she was a Mission Interpreter in Residence for the Southeastern Jurisdiction for the General Board of Global Ministries. In September of 1982, she went to Wood Junior College, Mathiston, Mississippi, to establish a new program of leadership development in small membership churches. The Center for Church Leadership Development was a joint program of Wood Junior College and the North Mississippi Conference. Dr. Megill was transferred to the National Division as

a Deaconess in 1983.

Upon retirement in 1989, Dr. Megill went to Africa for one year to serve as a volunteer, working in Christian education with churches in five different countries. At the end of the year, she went to Egypt, Israel/Palestine, and the Philippines, where she visited a number of projects to which the United Methodist Church contributes.

Since January of 1991 she has lived at Brooks-Howell Retirement Home in Asheville, NC, and during the years has been a member or chair of several different committees. Since 1996 she has been the editor of the Serendipitor, the Brooks-Howell newsletter. She is presently (2011) in charge of the Missions/Archives Library, does the computer work for the books in the Residents' Library, is a member of the chapel choir, and takes photographs of residents for the Courtesy Committee.

A member of Biltmore United Methodist Church, she is active in United Methodist Women. In the past, she was an officer of the Asheville District UMW, and for a number of years was responsible for the mailing list for the district newsletter. She is also a member of Church Women United and has held several offices, including President. As secretary (and formerly the treasurer) of the Methodist Federation for Social Action of the Western North Carolina Conference, she continues to be active in social issues. Community organizations of which she has been a member in the past, or at present, are the board of The Center for Diversity Education, member of the YWCA, the People of Faith for Just Relationships, and Western Carolinians for Peace and Justice in the Middle East.

Dr. Megill edited letters her father wrote to the family during the three years he was a chaplain in the U.S. Army during World War II. This book has not been

published but is preserved and has been shared on CDs. She has written two books about her life as a missionary: Sierra Leone Remembered and Return to Africa: a journal. *

*These can be ordered from AuthorHouse, on the Internet, or by phoning 888-519-5121.

Tribute Wall



“ *Esther Lenora Megill*

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