



ALUMNI NEWS

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Education for Time and Eternity

A newsletter for alumni of Oneida Baptist Institute

January 2013

An OBI Trustee and the coal miner's daughter



Judy Teague Powell (OBI '62)

Judy Teague Powell ('62) recently e-mailed us the following account of her Oneida story.

I came to Oneida from Clairfield, Tennessee in 1959, just after the Christmas holidays. My mom and I had heard **Mrs. Maude Dance** speak at a WMU meeting a few weeks before. She and Dr. Dance had been on staff at Oneida and were then at Clear Creek Mountain Preachers' School in Pineville. From the moment she started talking about Oneida I wanted to go.

So on a Sunday evening I arrived at Oneida carrying two paper sacks filled with my clothes--no sheets, towels, or soap. My mom asked for **Mai Mai (Mrs. D. C. Sparks)**. When she found us, Mom said, "I've brought you my daughter." I remember how beautiful the campus looked to me--the clean swept sidewalks; the stately, lofty windows looking out over stately old trees; birds that sang at daybreak. Coming from a coal mining camp, I

was in paradise!

A few days later I was called to Anderson Hall, then the president's home. Mai Mai had someone she wanted me to meet. It was **Mrs. Sally Deen**, a trustee of Oneida. I didn't know who she was, but I recall how beautiful she was dressed and that she was from Lexington. What I didn't know was that Mai Mai had told her about my background and how I came to be at Oneida. From time to time after that, I would receive a pretty card and a note from her. Enclosed would be spending money for me from her Sunday School class.

Two and a half years went by and it was time for college, but there was no way my parents could afford for me to go. Again, Mai Mai called upon Mrs. Deen to help me. I'll always remember Mai Mai practically shouting with joy when she told me of Mrs. Deen's invitation for me to live with her and Mr. Deen and go to the University of Kentucky. Sally Deen had gotten her friends to pay my tuition.

And so it was that I became her other daughter, her coal miner's daughter. I was taken in by Mrs. Deen, who would become by second mom and would give me all my dearest little mountain mom couldn't in culture and education. I have been blessed beyond measure by them both.

Mrs. Sally Deen is currently 106 years old and lives with one of her grandchildren. Judy shared with us a copy of a speech she delivered at the Alabama Homemakers State Convention in October 2012 about the impact Sally Deen had on her life. Following is just a small portion of her speech:

Happiness is a choice. An exam-

ple of this choice was the decision to stay in the same house Mr. Deen built for her when they were newlyweds... all through their lives together, raising their family, grandchildren growing up, the death of Mr. Deen, the same English limestone cottage with its gabled roof nourished and sheltered my friend. Mrs. Deen chose to be happy keeping a home, creating beauty for her own life, and along the way she made things more beautiful and harmonious for her family, her neighborhood, her friends. Like the Jewish *Fiddler on the Roof*...sunrise...sunset... the years flowed by like a stream of ever flowing joy and happiness.

Sally Deen could set a table worthy of the Lord she had chosen to serve. Good food, simply prepared and beautifully served, was an art that seemed to exude from her. I have been nourished and exquisitely pleased by the treasures of Sally's wonderful skills in the kitchen.

Fresh peaches from Mr. Deen's orchard fragrancd the house in summer and left one feeling Heaven

(See Trustee, page 2)



Sally Deen

(Trustee, continued from page 1)

mustn't be far away. In Sally Deen's kitchen, strawberries from the lavish strawberry patches at the University Gardens were turned into frozen jams that took your breath away. Country hams in the fall and red eye gravy with mashed potatoes and green beans that came straight from the garden linger in loving thoughts of those wonderful meals. Tender asparagus spears and new potatoes with fresh lemon grace my own table because I learned how to cook from Sally Deen.

And always on the round oak table there were beautifully colored placemats, cloth napkins, and sparkling silver with a fresh perky arrangement of flowers from the yard. For Sally, good food was cause for celebration and fellowship around her table.

In the back of Sally's Bible are these words: "True faith sees the invisible: believes the incredible: and therefore receives the impossible." She chose to see the invisible, to say, "Let's move on, and step out boldly, though it be into the night, and He will show us the way."

Saint Augustine said, "The reward for this faith is to see what you believe." Sally chose to believe the Bible and to follow the path of faith that Abraham and all the Christian saints and martyrs have taken, "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of her faith."

If you were at the Hymn Sing at Homecoming 2012, you learned that Judy Powell's most recent project is compiling a book about Barkley Moore and his years as President of Oneida Baptist Institute, 1972-1994. Currently, she is gathering information for the book and has already begun the writing process. Judy is married to Dr. Conley Powell, OBI Class of 1961. □

My Beloved Oneida

The year was nineteen sixty-one; Daddy's words rang loud and clear: "My third and last daughter dear, please attend my beloved Oneida."

Two sisters had gone on before while I was just in second grade. My dad insisted, "Follow your sisters' steps, and graduate from my beloved Oneida."

When my sisters came home on weekends, oh the stories they would tell. There was Dr. Sparks, Mai Mai, Barkley and Sylvia. I knew them all--even though I had never met them at my sisters' beloved Oneida.

The success of the school made a purpose for Dad--homemade jars of juices, jams, tomatoes and beans, donations and prayers from home and church. Oh, the students must all be fed at Daddy's beloved Oneida.

Youthful summer camps led to my senior year; my own stories I could now tell. The Jacksons, Kay and Buddy, Miss Bain and Mrs. Blaylock, the treasured memories of friends and staff make my heart rejoice--as I remember my beloved Oneida.

Half a century somehow has passed as each generation built a life based on faith, lasting lessons of compassion and love learned at our beloved Oneida.

Now, students come from here and there, from different states and far countries. So many lives forever touched at their beloved Oneida.

As future students come and go, fond memories made and held dear as each of you reminisce across the years, recalling your beloved Oneida.

My Beloved Oneida was written in tribute to my dad, the **Rev. George R. Williamson**, for his love and unwavering concern, dedication and faith in our school nestled among the Kentucky hills. For a time my dad served as a trustee of the school. He was so grateful to a school that cultivated character and integrity in students, taught Christian values, and most of all shared God's love with all of us.

~ **Patsy Williamson Thomas**, Class of 1962--the 50 year class of 2012

Alumni notes

From Mike Williford '63:

Just a note to say I hope these labels will be useful. I have people in my church, Central Baptist of Williamsburg, Ohio, saving them.

I spent many years at Oneida; in fact, I was born there. [Mike's mother, **Ferne Williford**, was working at OBI.] In my mind's eye I can still picture my grandfather, **D. C. Sparks**, standing on the campus talking with people and just going about the business of the school. He was the best positive influence on my life.

Oneida crosses my mind from time to time. Collecting these coupons gives me a way to help.

(See Alumni Notes, page 3)

Want to contact us?



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(Alumni Notes, cont. from page 2)

From Keshia Laney Woods '03:

In the summer months of 2002 I had gotten into some trouble. A decision was made on my behalf—one that I knew nothing about until I got this application in the mail—to go to a school far away from everyone I had known and loved. I fully believe God showed **Robert** and **Reva Watts** (my Sunday School teacher) a way to help me—to take me somewhere I could make a fresh start in becoming someone that I was always meant to be.

When I came to Oneida for my interview, the admissions lady asked me on a scale of 1 to 10 how badly I wanted to be here. I said, “Try beyond 10.” I was ready for a new start somewhere I could grow and mature as a Christian.

So on August 17, 2002, early in the morning, a big black SUV came to my house carrying four of the dearest people in the world to me—**Robert** and **Reva Watts** and **Jim** and **Vivian Hoskins**. They were ready to take me to my new home—a special place called Oneida Baptist Institute.

If I had not come to Oneida ten years ago, I do not know where I would be today. The school has helped to mold, guide, and lead me to a place I never thought possible. OBI staff led me to have a closer walk with my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I look at it like this: *Oneida is a life saver; it saved mine.*

My husband, **Mark**, and I are both on staff at OBI. We have two children, **Matthew**, age six and **Makenzie**, age two. □

In Memoriam 2012

Eliza Wooten Rogers, former student '26-'30
 Hazel Ponder Burns '32
 Georgia Combs Hooper '40
 Augustine Inyart Thompson '41
 Laddie Joyce Gilbert '52
 Ella Shepherd Hubbard '57
 Shirley Hensley Reed '60
 Sonya Biggs Doerr '75
 Steve Carlson '80
 Chuck Smith '82
 Chris Bennett, former student '82-'85
 Gary Roberts '05
 Sekinat “Tundun” Lawani” 2010
 Bill Burns, former staff
 Lillie Jane Bush, former staff
 Nina Hughes, former staff
 Mark Koziel, former staff
 Beverly McPherson, former staff
 Dorothy Collins Woods, former staff



Eliza Wooten Rogers OBI Student 1926-1930



Eliza Wooten Rogers was born November 17, 1918, daughter of **Curt** and **Catherine Wooten**. They lived on a farm on Hell-fer-Sartin Creek in Leslie County. When **James Anderson Burns** learned that the mother had died leaving eight children, he agreed to take seven into his school. Eliza was the youngest daughter. The oldest, **Nannie**, age 22, stayed behind to keep house for her father. After gathering up what few clothes the children had, their father hitched their two mules, Matt and Chub, to their wagon and headed up Hell-fer-Sartin and down Bullskin to Oneida—25 miles. For the first time in several years, the children would all attend the same school. They had formerly been scattered in Pine Mountain, Dry Hill, Big Fork, and Hyden.

One of Eliza's earliest memories was returning to Oneida from her first Christmas break when she was eight years old. It was so cold the mules couldn't take them. The seven children walked the 25 miles. When Eliza got tired, her brothers carried her.

The Wooten family had lived in Hamilton, Ohio for several years before their mother died. They had a player piano and Eliza loved to sing along with it and watch the keys. She learned that by pushing a lever she could slow the music down and memorize the notes. Soon she was able to play the piano herself instead of pumping it to hear the songs.

At Oneida, Eliza found several upright pianos that she was allowed to play. **Mrs. Margaret Burns**, who had been a concert pianist before she married James A. Burns, soon discovered Eliza's talent. Eliza, recalling her first piano lesson with Mrs. Burns, remembered that after she learned the scales she was given her first piece—"The Indian Dance." Because she had heard other students practicing the piece, Eliza looked out the window and played it from memory. Mrs. Burns thought she was a child wonder, though she was mostly playing by ear. In her autobiography, Eliza wrote, "From that day on, my career was determined. I would be on the stage and play for great audiences! Music became my life and Mrs. Burns my idol. I spent all my extra time at a piano. Mrs. Burns brought the first formal music program to Oneida—vocal music, orchestra, and piano.

What happened to that child wonder? After Eliza graduated from high school, her father borrowed enough money to allow her to attend one year at Union College, where she met her husband, **Garland Blair**. Soon after they married, World War II began. Garland joined the Navy and was shipped overseas. After the war they both returned to Union College and got their teaching degrees. In 1961, Garland had a fatal tractor accident on the farm he had bought in Owen County. Eliza sold the farm, moved to Lexington, and taught music in Fayette County for 32 years.

At the age of 93, Eliza died July 22, 2012. She had two children, three grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren. At her memorial service her grandchildren shared, "It was music that kept her alive in mind and spirit 'til the very end. About playing the piano, she would say, 'If you miss practicing for a day, you know it; if you miss practicing for a week, everybody knows.' So ends the story of the girl from Hell-fer-Sartin...and so ends a great generation of Kentucky Wootons. They were a family characterized by integrity, community, honesty, love, fierce pride, passion and independence."

Two of the Wooten brothers are graduates of OBI—**Clarence**, class of '29 and **Don**, class of '30. □

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More pictures from Homecoming 2012



Barbara Trail Duncan, Don and Martha Houchell--all Class of 1956-- at the Hymn Sing



Former teachers Diane Blades and Annette Rowe visit with Will Bowling '01 and Jolena Sizemore '87



Frank "Stormy" Burns '60 with his wife, Diane and his sister, Gail Burns '58 at lunch



Lewis Hatton '62 and Doug Treadway, former student '59-'61



Martha and Elmo Martin '47 relax on the Campus Ministry Center porch.



Harold "Frosty" Hubbard '54 shares a story at the Hymn Sing.



Frankie Brown, Kenneth Shepherd '48 and Doris Jean Morton '48 at registration



Portia Webb Jump '69 enjoys lunch with her brother, Nelson Webb '64 in the dining hall.



Leonard Gilbert '51, Rosa Davidson Combs '51, Emmet Woods '51 and Franklin Burns '51

