

# NASHVILLE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH FIRST ADULTS F.A.I.T.H. WATCH

**Faithful-Active-Involved-Trusting-Hoping**

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## Wherever He Leads

I was somewhat intimidated about interviewing Carroll and Barbara Owen for FAITH Watch. These two have lived such full lives, and I doubted that I could do justice on two pages. I knew a little about them, but there plenty that I didn't know.

### **Did You Know?**

- ...Carroll didn't graduate from high school?
- ... He had an opportunity to pursue a pro baseball career?
- ... Barbara and Carroll were wedding photographers?
- ... Barbara is a lifetime member of the Baptist Communicators Association?

### **Normal Childhood**

Carroll Owen was the youngest of four children. His father, Elbert Dee Owen, was a Baptist pastor, serving four Missouri Baptist churches during Carroll's growing up years. When asked whether being a pastor's son was difficult, he described his childhood as "normal." He played sandlot baseball, which led to a growing interest in sports.

Two months before his tenth birthday, Carroll accepted Christ as his Savior and was baptized by his father at First Baptist Church, Cape Girardeau. Just before he turned eleven, his father accepted a call to First Baptist Church, Moberly. Carroll started seventh grade, then moved up to junior high. Moberly had a unique school system. Junior high included 8th, 9th, and 10th grades. The high school was actually called Moberly Junior College, covering 11th and 12th grades plus the first two years of college. Thus, he never graduated from high school but went directly to college. In 1941, when Carroll's father moved to a church in Sikeston, Carroll transferred to Southeast Missouri State College in Cape Girardeau. There he joined a men's quartet,



singing first tenor. Carroll has many fond memories of the opportunities they had to sing for Baptist Student Union state convention and the Southeast Missouri Baptist Foundation. One of his favorite hymns was "Wherever He Leads, I'll Go."

### **Finding God's Plan**

Carroll's best sport was baseball. In 1941, he secured a try out for a New York Yankees farm team, but an emergency appendectomy interrupted that opportunity. In the spring of 1942, he was selected to attend a try-out camp for the St. Louis Cardinals organization. He did not make the cut but was encouraged to come back the next year. However, Carroll had already determined he wasn't interested in pursuing professional sports.

All of his life, Carroll was asked, "Are you going to be a preacher like your Daddy?" Later the question included "and your brother?" He struggled to determine whether the call he thought he was hearing truly came from God or was based on the expectations of others. His father advised him, "If the Lord really calls a man to preach, there's no higher office he could hold, but if the Lord did not call, there's not a worse job in the world."

**"The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Galatians 2:20 NIV**

Although he planned to attend summer school to make up for missing the spring semester, he was invited to serve as a counselor at Camp Ridgcrest in North Carolina. During that summer, he had the time and space to clarify God's call in a place where people didn't know his family background. By the end of the summer, he was certain God was calling him to preach.

### **A Compelling Interruption**

Carroll was licensed to preach in the fall of 1942, but his ordination had to wait. In January 1943, he received his notice of induction into the armed forces. He could have applied for a ministerial classification to avoid being drafted, but he chose not to. In March he was sworn into the United States Army, and soon, he left for basic training.

After basic training, he was placed in a specialized training program and spent six months in an accelerated engineering program at Georgetown University. However, a need for more troops brought him back to infantry training and the inevitable preparation to join the troops in Europe. In September 1944, he boarded the SS Sea Tiger for a fourteen-day crossing.

Carroll didn't spend much time in Germany. Although he did see combat, his war experience was cut short by a serious problem—his feet. After three to four weeks of cold, rain, and mud, he was able to sleep in a dry cellar. He pulled off his boots and socks, and by the next morning, his feet were swollen to double their size. He couldn't get his boots back on, and he couldn't walk. He was transported back to England, and eventually to hospitals in the U.S. After leaving the hospital, he served until his discharge in March 1946.

### **Back to His Calling**

Immediately, Carroll was back in college, and continued his education at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. There he met a music student named Joy Campbell. They were married soon after graduation in 1950. Within a few months, he was called as assistant to the pastor at First Baptist Church, Atlanta, GA. For the next twenty-nine years, with Joy by his side, Carroll pastored four Baptist churches in Atlanta, GA; Rogersville, TN; Harrisburg, IL; and Paris, TN. In 1981, Joy passed away after a long battle with cancer. The couple had three children.

Along with his church ministry, Carroll also held leadership roles in the Tennessee Baptist Convention

and the Southern Baptist Convention. In 1979, after completing seventeen years at First Baptist Church Paris, he accepted the position as Director of Convention Ministries. He fulfilled this role until 1988, along with numerous interims at Tennessee churches.

### **Big Changes**

In 1988, Carroll married Barbara Fly, who was also employed at the Tennessee Baptist Convention. Like Carroll, she had three children. The newlyweds happily welcomed six adult children, their spouses, and eventually, thirteen grandchildren into the family.

Barbara grew up in Lawrence County and attended Lawrence County High School. When she graduated from high school, she wasn't interested in going to college, but later, after she married, attended Columbia State College, majoring in communications. Her training led her to the Tennessee Baptist Convention where she started in public relations and, over 31 years and many changes, her title became communications specialist. She was honored to be selected as a lifetime member of the Baptist Communicators Association.

### **Still Serving**

Barbara is reticent to talk about herself, preferring to shine a light on her husband and his accomplishments. One of Carroll's hobbies is photography, so, as a retirement job, they decided to become wedding photographers. They enjoy telling humorous stories about this short-lived career. In one situation, the preacher, who was supposed to perform the ceremony, failed to show up, so Carroll was assigned the additional duty of marrying the couple and saving the day.

Carroll is writing his memoirs, while Barbara likes sewing and knitting, and they enjoy traveling together. But they both found their greatest satisfaction in serving churches as interim pastor. They have formed many permanent friendships through these temporary assignments.

Summing up the experiences of this wonderful couple comes down to dedication to their calling: loving and serving God, the church, others, and one another. All the rest has fallen into place. As for his ministry, Carroll Owens testifies to his reliance on God every step of the way: "Every opportunity I had in the ministry came as a total surprise to me. By the Grace of God, I have never had to seek a place to preach or a way to serve."

## ***FROM THE EDITOR***

***Dear friends,***

***It has been an honor and great pleasure to serve as editor of SAALT Shaker/FAITH Watch for the past four-and-a-half years. The people I've met, the stories I've recorded, and the responses I've received blessed me immensely. However, I didn't write these stories for myself, but as a tribute to the amazing First Adults who have honored and obeyed God by faithfully serving Nashville First Baptist Church for many years.***

***Sadly, I must tell you the time has come for me to step down from this role. For several years, I've felt God calling me to pursue another direction, but I managed to fill my time with too many commitments and neglected this challenge. However, I hope that the new editor will allow me to write. There are still many stories to be told.***

***Thank you all for your support and encouragement. I trust that our FAITH Watch will continue to bring you pleasure from month to month.***

***Rene' Holt***



## **Will You Get Involved?**

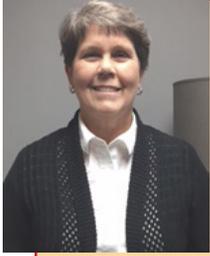
The First Adult Council has been asked to take over an ongoing ministry at Morning Pointe Assisted Living & Memory Care in Brentwood. The ministry involves coordinating a program that includes music and a devotional time for the residents. Our slot is on the third Friday of each month at 10:00 A.M. Volunteers are needed to help lead music (instrumental and vocal) and present a devotion. The total time for the program would be between 45 minutes to an hour.

This volunteer opportunity doesn't require much time or a monthly commitment. In fact, volunteers may commit to once or twice a year. But once you see how your presence affects the residents, you'll probably want to be there more often. Why don't you give it a try? A small amount of your time can have a big impact.

If you are interested and would like to know more, please contact Rene' Holt at (615) 948-8967 or [raholt@bellsouth.net](mailto:raholt@bellsouth.net).

# **No F.A.I.T.H Watch In July.**

# PAM'S Corner



As I watch my mother continue her journey deeper and deeper into Alzheimer's, I find myself reflecting on her words of wisdom, as well as her humor. One of my favorite lines when I was in junior high school was her response when I would wake her up in the morning. She would say, "You can't see me; I have my eyes closed." And when I would ask her to fix my oatmeal, she replied, "Would you go make it yourself? It's instant." Can you guess my mom was not and is not a morning person?

Somewhere along her journey, in her devotional time, she found this quote: "God don't need me to be God today." At that point, she would place her concern in her SFGTH (Something for God to Handle) box. Keeping those thoughts in mind, I find direction as I make decisions about her care.

I hope you remember to tell your family members often that you love them and how much they mean to you. And be careful for you never know what your children and grandchildren will remember about you.

Thank you for walking with me,

**Pam**

Dear Rene,

You are a real PIONEER...we are so thankful for you and so blessed by your faith commitment to Jesus Christ, through giving your skills/talents/abilities in serving Him in FAITH WATCH over the years you have served as editor.

Your writing, investigation, presentation and stories have brightened our lives; and have given us insights into other; and have helped us see how Jesus can shine through each of us.

Thank you for the sacrifice and commitment you have made to this bold purpose. We are all blessed through your eyes observing & words sharing.

Blessings,  
Pastor Tom Crow

## Thank you to Rene' Holt

We appreciate the time and commitment you have invested in our monthly SAALT Shaker and most recently FAITH Watch. It has been exciting to see who you would write about each month. We are anxious to see what God has for you next as you continue to serve His Kingdom.

**Pam Stockett**

## Anniversaries 50+

**Robert and Wilma Lehmann  
6-3-56**

**Glenn and Bettye Freudenthal  
6-02-62**

**Arnold and Sue Von Hagen  
6-7-63**

**Charles and Betty West  
6-10-56**

**J.W. and Evelyn Clark  
6-14-49**

**Fred and Glenda Turner  
6-16-56**

**Fred and Jo Ann Heifner  
6-17-61**

**Ray and Barbara Conner  
6-18-50**

**Dewey and Peggy Hamrick  
6-18-60**

**Wilburn and Carolyn Strode  
6-19-58**

**Bob and Lila Anderson Boyd  
6-28-52**

**Jim and Henrietta Powell  
7-12-59**

## YOUR FIRST ADULT COUNCIL

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