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Little Creek Newsletter February 1984

Little Creek Academy

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Little Creek Academy
1810 Little Creek Lane
Knoxville, Tennessee 37922
February, 1984

Dear Ex-Creekers,

On February 11, Sabbath afternoon at 5:00 Mama Goodge passed away and was buried February 13. Even though we know it is best, we found it to be a sad time and the end of an era. She was the "last leaf" on her family tree-and now we are the older generation.

But there were some things to smile about. She said to me so many times--"Honey, I hope I can find a convenient time to die so you'll have time to bury me". She would have been amused about it all. She seemed as well as usual. Ann Goodge had been on duty until 4:00. They fed her supper and as they were making her comfortable afterward, she just breathed irregularly a couple of times and was gone--no warning. Leland and I were in Meridan, Mississippi, for a board meeting at Pine Forest; Roger, Genevieve and Sarah Ann were in Morristown for a handbell choir performance, Ann Goodge had gone into Knoxville for a film at the church. Sarah Ann's daughter, Janice Carlson, was called but Mama was gone before she could get there. Rogene was cooking supper at the school kitchen but Mrs. Peek came to relieve her while she went over to console Janice. Janet and Stanford were at the film also. Kenny and Sharon arrived soon from Laurelbrook where he had the morning service that day. Soon the grandchildren gathered and did what had to be done. There was no commercial airplane available to get me home, so Kenny and Stanford flew down to get me. We flew home in less than 2 hours aided by a tailwind. It was a beautiful flight until we neared home. The fog was everywhere and we thought we'd have to land at McGhee Tyson, but there sat our runway, clear as a bell, surrounded by fog. What a miracle!

Leland drove home the next day and all the grandchildren and great grandchildren and Mama's one great, great grandchild (of Debbie Straw Tait) were here. Many tears were shed as we buried her at 11:00 o'clock that warm, cloudy day. Elder Lester Coon, who preached my Dad's funeral was able to be with us. I thought you might like to read the graveside message he gave.

"O toil worn soldier of the cross we come to your grave to say farewell.
We say Farewell but not Good bye.

On behalf of the Seventh-day Adventist Church whose God ordained principles and standards you upheld with dignity, devotion, integrity, honor, and distinction.
We say Farewell.

On behalf of the institutions you helped to build for the education of youth that they might in these hallowed places find the Christ and proclaim Him to earth's remotest bounds.
We say Farewell.

On behalf of men who were once headhunters, voodos, witch doctors, degraded heathen in darkened jungles, whose lives were changed, transformed, and cleansed because of your sacrifice in sending missionaries with the glorious news of a crucified, risen, redeeming Saviour.
We say Farewell.

On behalf of the Little Creek Seventh-day Adventist Church where you served inspiring anthems that moved the soul.
We say Farewell but not Good bye.

Farewell O Soldier of the Cross, sleep on until the trump of God shall sound and the resurrection of Christ shall call and clothe you with immortality and eternal life.
We loved thee much, God loved thee best."

The ladies of Little Creek and Grace church and community prepared a beautiful dinner for the family and out of town guests. Because there were so many, they served it in the large room on the lower level of the Sanitarium.

At 1:00 the memorial service in the church began. Even though the plans never were properly announced, the church was filled to overflowing. Marcia Van Arsdell provided the organ prelude. The congregation sang hymn number nine, "Praise Ye the Father, comforter of Israel". Our pastor, Elder Bruce Aalborg, read a poem and gave the prayer.

Our niece and nephew, Patricia and Bob Silver, came from Southern College. Pat played a lovely arrangement of "'Tis so Sweet to Trust in Jesus.". Mother always adored to hear her play.

Elder Aalborg read the obituary which told of her teaching and Evan Chesney, one of her students now teaching at Mt. Pisgah Academy, sang "The Living God", a favorite song of hers.

Then Elder Coon gave the sermon. (When I saw him a few weeks ago he said, "I'm just living to preach Mama Goodge's funeral". We were so glad he could come.)

"What an hour! This beautiful trumpet number! My mind went back across the years when I was pastor here. I remember the programs that Mother Goodge presented--not only to this school but to the public. Then this little lad who was just a little fellow when his voice hadn't changed. I remember how you used to sing, son. Now the years have come and gone. He's come to manhood to sing the song of Mother's life! We come today to rejoice that a loved one has walked in the footsteps of the Christ and at last is laid to rest--waiting the call of her Christ.

You know, the history of Mother Goodge and the family has been a tremendous experience. They were a very Godly family back in Evansville, Indiana. Members of a very large and beautiful church and congregation with a lovely pastor. Week by week on Sunday morning the whole family went down and worshiped in the house of God. Mrs. Goodge sang in a quartet in the church and also as a soloist--she had a friend who was an Adventist who sang with her. One day an Adventist preacher, Pastor Lukens, pitched a large tent out in the suburbs of the city and held a series of meetings. The Adventist young lady that sang for them night by night on one occasion was not able to be there and she asked Mrs. Goodge to take her place. Mrs. Goodge consented. She went on a picnic that day and toward evening she said to the folks, "I've got to go and sing over at this meeting." Well, it was a tent meeting. Tent meetings in those days were sort of holy-roller programs. The family laughed a little bit and the friends laughed a little bit, and she said, "I promised, and I'm going to fulfill my promise." She went down there and sang. The sweet Spirit of God charmed that congregation. I think God spoke a little deeper, a little sweeter, to Pastor Lukens as he preached that night. She sat on the front seat, the family, husband, and the rest of the family sat in the back. The people that had been at the picnic said, "Let's go and see what she acts like in this service." They looked at her face and they said, "What's going on here." She almost sat there with her mouth open as she listened to this man preach on the love of the Blessed Christ of the ages, died on calvary, slept in Joseph's tomb, came back to life again, went to heaven as our Mediator at the throne of God and would come again. The minister invited her to come back again--she went back every night. She gave her heart to God, and she told her husband I'm going to be baptized and join the church."

Elder Coon then told the rest of the story. (That she would make this decision against the wishes of her family, brothers and sisters all making fun of her, always impressed me. That decision was the beginning of Little Creek. We children decided to go to church with her and finally my Dad joined.)

He told of their coming to Little Creek when the Sanitarium was ready, 3 rooms and a combined treatment room and kitchen. She pioneered the work and soon had patients everywhere and helped us begin to make our own way. So many think of her only as a voice teacher--but she had a special burden for natural healing and God blessed in this.

"You know, I've chosen a text for this occasion, and I think I've done no damage to it when I reworded it just a little bit. I'm not a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but here in the great book of 2 Sam. 3:38, "Know ye not that there's a princess and a great woman fallen this day in Israel." This lovely soldier of the cross has fallen. She's laid down her baton and the anthems beside the podium with all her music. And, being weary for a moment, fell into that dreamless sleep that kisses down her eyelids still. When she fell asleep, she pillowed her head on the bosom of the blessed Christ, awaiting the call when He should come back again to take her home to glory. He who deemed it best that in these sunset hours she should slip into the valley of the shadow around which is woven a tapestry of death, decided that it was time to lay her to rest. She was a friend of heroic souls and could all of the students and the people and ministers and missionaries who have been blessed by her ministry in music and ministry personally in her life be here this hour and go out to that little cemetery and place one rose on her casket, she would sleep tonight under a mountain of roses."

He then went on using texts in Revelation building up to where the redeemed sang songs of victory. "Today I think we should join in that great song "The Hallelujah Chorus" singing that song because we know that the hour will come, when she too will join in the chorus with us. I challenge each one of you within hearing of my voice that you will prepare to meet Mother at the resurrection day. That you will prepare you hearts and surrender to the Christ she worshiped so faithfully, as we are in the last seconds of earth's history. Soon the heavens will be lighted with His glory and we'll be going home with Him to the land of beginning again, where all our mistakes, our heartaches, and all our poor selfish pride will be laid like an old cloak at the door."

The student choir in the balcony led the entire audience in the thrilling song of victory--The Hallelujah Chorus". Tonya Wessman and Leonard Smith played the piano and organ accompaniment. Mother will be thrilled to hear about it. She often said--"If I live so long I don't have any mourners, you hire some". But we didn't have to even though she lived to be 92 years of age.

Homer Barrett, pastor of the Wildwood church was here last Friday evening, February 17, and dedicated songs to Mother--his voice is so beautiful and we appreciated his talk. Clifford Tonsberg was able to come with him. Many of you remember his work here. He is visiting Wildwood just now.

This may all be too long, but some wanted to hear about it and I wanted to write it, makes me feel I've visited with you.

We have just learned the sad news that David Rutherford died suddenly on February 17 in California. His parents have just returned and we share their sorrow.

Another letter will come soon, so bye for now

Much love,

Alicia Straw