



Born in Follett, Texas, and raised in Pratt, Kansas, Nina was the daughter of Bernard and Alta Matilda (Putman) Detwiler. After earning a Bachelor's Degree in Theater Arts at Ottawa University, Nina married the Rev. Roscoe Robison. The

Robisons were married for over 78 years, and also served as partners in ministry.

Nina will be lovingly missed and remembered by her husband Rev. Robison of Worcester; her son, Curtis Robison and his wife, Delphine of Windsor, CT; her daughter, Christyn Billinsky of Columbia, SC; her grandchildren, Kathryn, Peter, John, Christopher, Nolwenn and Kaelig; and her great-grandchildren, Trevor, Henry and Eleanor; and her brother, Ralph Detwiler of Dallas, Texas.

Nina and Roscoe (himself 99 years old and in declining health), had decided that they wanted a joint memorial service at some future date after both have made their transition that would fully celebrate and tell the story of their long life together.

Memorial contributions may be made to First Baptist Church, 111 Park Ave. Worcester MA 01609.

Frank Christine, Jr., 91, passed from this life to eternal life on Feb. 3, 2023, at the Good Life Oasis Board and Care Home in West Hills, Calif. Christine served as President of American Baptist Churches (ABC) USA for the 2010-2011 biennium. His lifelong dedication to ABCUSA blessed the denomination.

In addition to his service as president, Christine also served as past president for the 2012-2013 biennium, and as vice president for the 2008-2009 biennium. He was on the General Board as a nationally nominated representative for two terms. During that first term on the board, he served on the Task Force for the Alive in Mission Fund Raising Campaign, the Biennial Program Committee, and as President of International Ministries. He was also Chair of the ABCUSA Statements of Concern Committee, and on the Review Commission on Denominational Structure and Process. He returned to service on the General Board as a Regional Representative for the American Baptist Churches of Los Angeles for two terms through 2007, and during that period of service, Christine also served as the General Board Parliamentarian.

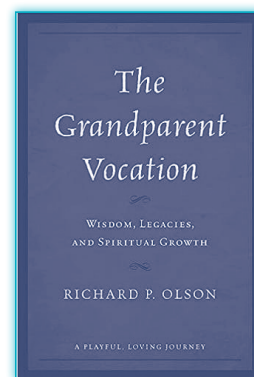
Regionally Christine served as President of the American Baptist Churches of Los Angeles. He was a trustee on the Board of Atherton Baptist Homes and served terms as a trustee on the Board of the American Baptist Seminary of the West.

Frank received a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering from UCLA, and later became a California Registered Civil Engineer. He worked for many years at the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. Christine was preceded in death by his wife of 65 years, Enither Christine, who died on April 20, 2020. In their later years, Frank and Enither became active members and worshipers at Shepherd Church in Porter Ranch, Calif. There they enjoyed spending time as part of the Vintage Group, a ministry for members blessed with achieving their 80th birthday milestone.

Book Review

***The Grandparent Vocation* by Richard P. Olson.** Published by Rowman and Littlefield Publishers November 2022.

"I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lives in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I'm sure, lives in you."
— 2 Timothy 1:5



When becoming a grandparent, people often feel an overwhelming amount of happiness and pride that this person who was your baby is now raising a baby of their own whether it be through birth or adoption. Images of snuggles, playing cars, dolls, amidst park and beach trips race through your head. At the same time, you're reminded of how you raised your children. Retired minister Richard Olson claims this unconditional love is a calling from God, a vocation.

Olson, a grandfather several times over, uses a biblical perspective to share his grandparenting journey and to dive into conversations with a diverse set of grandparents. Through biblical examples, he talks about not only caring for grandchildren in various roles but discusses how to handle issues that arise as they grow up as well as concerns about their future world. Faith, values, and moral guidance are themes he mentions when discussing our ever-changing world. He demonstrates various ways to explain beliefs and values with grandchildren such as using mealtimes as a simple way to share faith.

The various relationships a grandparent may have with the child are also discussed. These relationships include grandparents serving as primary caregivers, step-grandchildren, adoptive grandchildren and having a special needs grandchild along with interfaith families. Relationships are explored with discussions on respecting and having boundaries, how the role of grandparents changes with age, being friends, living by example, leaving a legacy both financially and on our planet, and most of all for grandparents to trust and pray.

Each chapter ends with questions for personal or group reflections.

Richard Olson's writing career has arisen from the variety of ministry opportunities in which he was involved. He has been associate minister, sole pastor, or senior minister in rural, urban, suburban, and university settings.

Any views or opinions presented in this book are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of MMBB. We welcome all submissions of books for review in News & Notes. Because of the large number of submissions received, we are not able to publish a review of all of the books sent to us. We are grateful for the suggestions you share with us and look forward to publishing some of them during the year.

Lifestyle

Bird watching boosts well-being

Every summer morning, the sun is greeted with a chorus of songs as dawn begins to break. Birds let the world know the day is beginning, always showing up to sing their songs without fail.

Since the 2020 lockdowns during the pandemic, the United States Department of Agriculture reports birdwatching has increased in popularity. Over nine hundred different species of birds live in the United States in various habitats: grasslands, deserts, forests, open areas, and cities.

While watching birds can be entertaining, this hobby has several health benefits, including improving mental health, getting in daily physical exercise and stimulating cognitive function, making it an excellent activity for older adults. The Institute on Aging states that observing minute details such as a bird's habits and recognizing the animal's routines is an excellent memory exercise. Learning each type of bird's name, call and appearance gives the brain a workout.

Reconnecting with nature helps people relax and get into a meditative state. It's an activity that just about anyone can do, alone or in groups. You can begin birdwatching by walking on a trail, sitting in a yard or even from a bed looking out of the window. It is a hobby with almost no cost associated with it and little or no equipment is needed. To get started the basic supplies are helpful, especially a bird guidebook for your area and a pair of binoculars, but neither are required.

Birdwatching in the city is as enjoyable as anywhere else. Once you open your eyes to the world of birds you'll see them everywhere. While you can see birds as you



sip coffee at your favorite shop, every city has birding hot spots. These hot spots are usually found in parks, especially along waterways.

If you want to attract more birds to your yard, bird feeders and birdbaths can be purchased and placed in shady areas close to a viewing window. Bird houses can also be hung in the yard from a tree branch. Both houses and feeders are something that can be purchased fully assembled or as a Do It Yourself (DIY) project from painting to completely building from scratch.

Birdwatching can also cross over to gardening by planting flowers to attract birds to the yard. The top flowers for attracting birds are sunflowers, coneflowers, daisies, asters, and black-eyed Susan's, all of which also attract other pollinators such as butterflies.

The National Audubon Society has a variety of resources to help people get started, from guides identifying the birds at your window to finding local birdwatching groups. For more information on how to find a birdwatching group in your area go to <https://www.audubon.org/about/audubon-near-you>

News & Notes

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“The summer night is like a perfection of thought.”

—John Geddes, *A Familiar Rain*

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— Colleen McSpirit-Brush Editor

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Spotlight on Rev. Kathryn Choy-Wong

Pastor (retired)
New Life Christian Fellowship



The Rev. Kathryn Choy-Wong's road to becoming a pastor wasn't as clear as some others may have been, but what was clear is that God had a plan.

When Rev. Choy-Wong, aka Rev. Katie, was growing up one of the only places she truly felt she belonged and was comfortable was in church. Growing up in San Francisco in a predominately black neighborhood and later moving to a San Francisco suburb, she always felt "odd and different."

"I was always a minority in both my educational and living environments," she said. "Attending First Chinese Baptist Church in San Francisco, I didn't have to explain myself."

Choy-Wong said she didn't embrace who she was or appreciate her culture until attending San Francisco State University, where she graduated with a bachelor's degree in journalism. She was then hired full time with the Northern California Ecumenical Center as an active lay leader working with children, when she interviewed with an American Baptist Churches (ABCUSA) pastor to work with a hunger and homeless program. She was offered the job on the spot as they recognized her passion for social justice. Even though she accepted

the role Rev. Katie wasn't sure she wanted to give up her journalism dream.

For three years, she worked with different denominational church organizations and leaders and their hunger programs that included cooperative purchasing of basic staples (rice, beans, powder milk), distribution of donated foods, gleaning agricultural fields for fresh produce and passing a bill to exempt businesses from being for donated food. Choy-Wong saw many people serve through Christian churches and organizations. During this time Choy-Wong had her first experience with female clergy. One person who influenced her was a Maryknoll nun; she stayed for a couple of weeks to assist with migrant workers in the Central Valley of California.

"Wow," thought Rev. Katie. "I would love to do Christian work and social justice work. I saw how the Church can make a difference in the world."



"The hardest thing in retirement is not feeling useful or wanted. 'People often say, I don't hear from everyone any more or what am I supposed to do?' she said. 'Volunteer. Retired people still have a lot of gifts. Stay socially active.'"



After making the decision to attend seminary she found there was no degree for Christian Social Ministry at American Baptist Seminary of the West. She took the standard MDiv degree which focused on the local church. However, she soon discovered she loved working within the local church and with laity. Best of all her passion for marginalized populations found an avenue in which to continue her work. It was still a long road to being a pastor of a church. Rev. Katie received a Master of Divinity degree and was ordained in 1980. At that time women made up one third of the seminary's student body and many churches still weren't open to having a woman at the helm.

After seminary, Choy-Wong worked for American Baptist Home Mission Society (ABHMS) in Valley Forge, PA, where she was hired to work with Asian churches,

as the first full-time Asian Ministries Director. In the unit were also Hispanic, Native American, African American rural ministries and American Baptist Extension Corporation. “We helped these churches minister to their communities,” she said.

“We really got involved in each other’s ministry and found we all had common concerns,” said Rev. Katie.

Four years later she headed back to California, married Arthur Wong, and joined the staff of American Baptist Churches of the West with responsibilities in public ministries and area ministry. In 2000, Choy-Wong became the admissions director and adjunct professor at American Baptist Seminary of the West. She joined the staff and became the senior pastor in 2004 of New Life Christian Fellowship, an American Baptist Church in Castro Valley, Calif. When she first arrived, the small congregation consisted of middle-class Chinese Americans and by her retirement there were 13 different ethnic groups. Not only was there ethnic diversity but also economic diversity. One member was homeless and others former convicted felons.

“It was like being in Heaven,” said Rev. Katie, adding at first, she had a real feeling of being concerned on how educated middle class Asian Americans were going to accept the homeless members or those who had been incarcerated. “I told my husband this will either work or I may get fired.”

Choy-Wong said it worked because members of the congregation took the time to get to know one another and when one person didn’t show up, the others expressed genuine concern. She explained it started with a concern from a member who worked with a Christian organization that helped people to get clean and back on their feet. He explained that when the men showed up at a church, they often felt coldness and rejected. Rev. Katie responded, “Bring them here.”

“A lot of stereotypes come from the fear of the unknown,” said Rev. Katie. “But we got to know one another.” She emphasized the importance of being open to God’s opportunities. “I kept the door open and diverse people came.” When others saw the diversity in the congregation, they too joined, and the new people brought in new

connections which resulted in the church becoming more diverse.

Using her lifelong understanding of different cultures and experience of internalized racism, she wrote a short book called *Building Bridges: A Handbook for Cross-Cultural Ministry*. Shortly after retiring in 2019, she was asked by Judson Press to expand the book. The perspectives of Dr. Lucia Ann McSpadden and Rev. Dr. Dale M. Weatherspoon, two colleagues whom Choy-Wong worked with for over 25 years in intercultural ministries, were added. The trio range in age from late 50s to 70 and 80 bringing even more diversity to the book. They began to work on the book in 2020 when much of the nation was on lockdown. Their collaboration took place over Zoom calls. The new edition, *Building Lasting Bridges: An Updated Handbook for Intercultural Ministries*, accompanied with an online free workbook, was released in November 2022.

One of her biggest challenges during retirement comes from the book’s success. She wants to continue to do diversity workshops and speaking but doesn’t want it to be a full-time job.

“I need to monitor my time,” she said. “I want to do other things like travel before we aren’t able to. Health issues can happen quickly.”

She believes when in retirement you need to pursue your passions, and one of her passions is writing. She is working on a fiction novel based on her father, something she has dreamt about for 20 years. Rev. Katie also believes you should spend time with loved ones. Create a plan together and then pursue it.

The hardest thing in retirement is not feeling useful or wanted. “People often say, I don’t hear from everyone any more or what am I supposed to do?” she said. “Volunteer. Retired people still have many gifts. Stay socially active.”

Lastly, she recommends churches not cut out retirement benefits. While she’s aware young pastors need the cash and aren’t always paid well, retirement benefits are important so there are adequate funds later in life, to live comfortably and especially to pursue delayed passions.

Celebrations



The Rev. Dr. John A. Henschke celebrated his 90th birthday on May 12, 2022 in St. Louis, MO. His entire family of 43 gathered for an evening of reminiscing, fellowship and dinner. The next afternoon he was surprised by a gathering of 100 or more friends, former students, and family for

a time of entertainment and special remarks about him. His 15 grandchildren performed with special vocal solos, violin solos and group singing. This was all planned by his wife, Carol, their three daughters and grandchildren.

Education has been a passion for Dr. Henschke all his life. He graduated with a BA degree from Bob Jones University, Greenville, SC in 1955, a BD degree in 1958 from Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Chicago. He went on to complete the ThM degree in 1963 and an MDiv in 1973. Later that same year he received an EdD degree from Boston University. He pastored First Baptist Church, Hutsonville, IL from 1959-1963 and was then called to First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, IL from 1963-1967. He also served as part-time pastor at several churches, the last one at First Baptist Church, Hartford, IL from 1989-1998.

From 1970-1983 Henschke worked for the University of Missouri Extension service in Maryville, MO. In 1983 he moved to the University of Missouri/St. Louis as an Associate Professor in Adult Education and retired in 2009. From 2009 to 2016 he was a Professor at Lindenwood University, St. Charles, MO in Adult Education with a specialty in Andragogy—the art and science of helping adults learn. He conducted workshops and taught in 19 foreign countries, including Germany, Brazil, Thailand, Taiwan, China, and the U.K. As Professor Emeritus he continues to help students who are finishing their dissertations and doctoral degrees and writes articles for publication in research journals on Andragogy. IGI Global published his career capstone book, *Facilitating Adult and Organizational Learning through Andragogy*.

Celebrate MMBB members

Do you know a current MMBB member who is celebrating a special milestone? Let us know. We'd like to feature them in News and Notes. Send an email to communications@mmbb.org

In Memoriam



Muriel Penn Jerigan, 77, who achieved a 50-plus year record as the longest continuously serving employee in the history of MMBB and American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA), made her transition from life to eternal life on Feb. 10, 2023. Jerigan began her career with MMBB Financial Services on Oct. 30, 1967, and retired on Feb. 28, 2019, as Senior Member Service Specialist, serving a total of 51 years and four months.

In honor of her remarkable tenure and dedicated service to MMBB a formal celebration was held on Dec. 12, 2017, at MMBB's New York City headquarters to mark her noteworthy achievement. The Rev. Dr. Lee B. Spitzer, General Secretary of ABCUSA NY at the time, was on hand to offer a special tribute and grateful appreciation for Jerigan's longstanding and dedicated service. It was a time of great joy, fond recollections and laughter as her colleagues, friends, and family expressed tremendous admiration for her. To demonstrate their gratitude for her length of service, MMBB named a conference room in Jerigan's honor. The MMBB Board of Managers presented her with a Resolution of Appreciation that cited how her "steadfast and joyful nature has been an unflagging source of inspiration to everyone who knows her."

Muriel was known for her endearing smile, encouraging spirit and genuine love for the mission of MMBB. At the time of her celebration, MMBB CEO Louis P. Barbarin remarked, "We are very thankful for the years that Muriel has served with us. So many members have benefited from her steady approach, calming presence, and warm smile."

Upon sharing the sad news of her death with the MMBB staff, Barbarin commented. "Muriel was steadfastly dedicated to the mission and to the ministry of the organization. She often shared her pearls of wisdom with her colleagues, and many referred to her as 'mom.'"

A Homegoing Celebration of Life service was held on Feb. 25 at Crowe's Funeral Home, Jamaica, N. Y. Longtime friend and MMBB colleague, the Rev. Dr. Perry J. Hopper, officiated and offered the eulogy.

Nina (Detwiler) Robison, 100, died peacefully at her home on Feb. 18, 2023, at the Briarwood Retirement Community in Worcester, Mass with her beloved husband, Roscoe, by her side.