

Presbyterian Heritage Center at Montreat

Collection Number:

Collection Title: Jo Ann Griffith Collection

This is a finding aid. It is a description of archival material held in the Presbyterian Heritage Center at Montreat. Unless otherwise noted, the materials described below are physically available in our reading room, and not digitally available through the World Wide Web.

Collection Overview

Size: 2 document boxes

Abstract: This collection consists of letters and some photos from 1959-2004 plus the ETHIO-ECHO.

Creator: Jo Ann Griffith

Language: English

Information for Users

Restrictions to Access

No restrictions. Open for research.

Restrictions to Use

No usage restrictions.

Copyright Notice

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Preferred Citation[Identification of item]

Jo Ann Griffin Collection, Presbyterian Heritage Center in Montreat

Acquisitions Information

Gift of Whom: Jane Griffith Kennedy

Additional Descriptive Resources

A copy of the original finding aid for this collection is filed in each box.

Sensitive Materials Statement

Manuscript collections and archival records may contain materials with sensitive or confidential information that is protected under federal or state right to privacy laws and regulations. Researchers are advised that the disclosure of certain information pertaining to identifiable living individuals represented in this collection without the consent of those individuals may have legal ramifications (e.g., a cause of action under common law for invasion of privacy may arise if facts concerning an individual's private life are published that would be deemed highly offensive to a reasonable person) for which the Presbyterian Heritage Center at Montreat, NC, assumes no responsibility.

Biographical Information

Missionary to Ethiopia 1959-2005

Jo Ann Griffith, 90, a gentle, faithful, and beloved servant of God, died at The Renaissance Senior Facility in Due West, SC on Saturday, December 21, 2024. Born on September 30, 1934, she was the first of four children of the late Reverend Murray W. Griffith and Willma Miller Griffith in Covington, VA. Surviving is a brother, Dr. M. Dale Griffith, and wife Janet, of Lenoir, NC and a sister, Jane G. Kennedy, and husband Mark, of Flat Rock, NC. Also surviving are six nieces and nephews and ten grandnieces and grandnephews. Ms. Griffith was preceded in death by one sister, Carolyn G. Allen and husband Hillard, of Due West, SC.

Ms. Griffith was a graduate of Erskine College in Due West, SC, with a B.A. degree in Elementary Education. She taught first grade in Charlotte, NC, for one year. She then received a Master of Religious Education degree from Pittsburgh Xenia Seminary in Pittsburgh, PA.

During her childhood, Jo Ann was influenced by missionaries who visited in her home. They planted the seeds of living a life of service to others. Through her early years, she followed her dream of one day serving God in Africa. She turned that dream into reality, and, in 1959, was commissioned to serve in Ethiopia, Africa, by The United Presbyterian Church.

For the next forty-seven years, 1959-2005, Jo Ann lived her dream of service to God and the Ethiopian people. She lived in three different locations while teaching in different schools in Ethiopia. Her first school was the Addis Ababa Girls School in the capital city of Ethiopia. There, she was a teacher and Assistant Director. In early 1970, Jo Ann moved to Dembi Dollo, a town of 25,000 in western Ethiopia. This was home to the Bethel Evangelical Secondary School (BESS) where she served for thirty years. She was a teacher, supervisor of the girl's dormitory and lived there as the dormitory mother. Jo Ann sought to be their mother, their friend, and their sister in Christ, and always put others first. Also, during her time at BESS, she was known as "the seed lady" who provided and cultivated an entire seed-growing and distribution enterprise which benefited the school, the students, the town, and the region. She planted seeds that nurtured the body, soul, and spirit.

Jo Ann retired to Due West, SC, in 2005. In her humble way, she served her community and numerous organizations she loved. These included the Due West Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, Erskine College and Seminary, Cherokee Trail Elementary School and The Lions Club. She was also an active member of the Board of Advisors for Bonclarken Conference Center in Flat Rock, NC. Jo Ann received numerous honors, awards and degrees. Throughout her life, she always remained focused on the work of God and her community.

In the words of one of her BESS student..."Sweet Mother Misge is a true champion of change and a key figure responsible for producing many agents of change now dispersed across various parts of the world. Her impact is immense and immeasurable. Isaac Newton once said: 'If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.' Misge is one of those early giants for many of us. She has positively impacted countless lives and her legacy

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will live on forever. She lived a life worth living!" In Isaiah 8, it is written: "God said, who will hear my request and who will go to my people?" Jo Ann answered, "Here I am Lord, Send Me." A funeral service will be held at 2:00PM, Saturday, January 11, 2025, at the Due West ARP Church. Burial will follow in the church cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to one of the following: Erskine College, P.O. Box 338, Due West, SC 29639, Bonclarken Conference Center, 500 Pine Dr., Flat Rock, NC 28731, Due West A.R.P. Church, 112 N. Main St., Due West, SC 29639, or Presbyterian Foundation, Attention Operation Dept., 200 E. 12th St., Jeffersonville, IN 47120 - Directed to Ethiopia Education Fund (EEEF).

Subject Headings for Collection

Presbyterian Church in the United States
Jo Ann Griffin
Missionaries to Ethiopia

Scope and Content

1959-2005

Content List

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Folder 21 June 2004

Folder 22 1960-1977

Folder 21 1960-1977

ETHIO-ECHO

Box 2 Letters 1980-1989

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Folder 6 1985

Folder 7 1986-1987

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Folder 10 Undated letters

Folder 11 Undated letters

Folder 12 Letters-Ethiopia (check artifacts)

Folder 13 Letters/Photos

Folder 14 B&W Photos

American Girls School,
Addis Ababba, Ethiopia