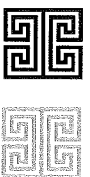


Celebrating Our Story:  
Trinity's Continuing  
Journey with God

WRITTEN FOR THE OCCASION OF THE  
50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CHURCH  
1960 - 2010



By

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Cover design by James R. Miller

Trinity Presbyterian Church  
Denton, Texas  
The Rev. Craig Hunter, Pastor

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“Who cares about what happened at Trinity thirty or forty or fifty years ago?” I can almost imagine someone saying. “I am more interested in who the congregation is now, and who it is becoming, than who it has been.”

The issue they raise is a legitimate one. One could point to all the work that the compilers of this work have put into the project, and suggest that the time and energy put into the work deserves respect. Indeed, the many who have been working on this history have been rather like archeologists, laboring for long hours over old documents, trying to listen to what they still have to say. At times, they have made significant “finds” as old memories or chapters of Trinity’s history have come back to them and become fresh once more.

But beyond the respect due to the time and energy involved in its compilation, the history reflected in these pages is important because, contrary to what we often tend to think, the past isn’t over. It isn’t even past. It continues to live in and amongst us, shaping our future and our understanding of our selves.



The Israelites recognized that fact. That is why so much of the Old Testament, and even some of the New, is told through the lens of history. God prefaces the Ten Commandments, for example, by telling the Israelites to “Remember”! They were to remember that they were slaves in Egypt who were saved by God’s hand. Similarly, when issuing the Great Commission to the disciples, Jesus tells them to remember his presence with them, to the end of the age. Every time we celebrate the Lord’s Supper, we remember Christ’s death on our behalf. Memory, in other words, is to some extent a holy thing, a God-thing.

I suppose that is partially because when the community of faith remembers its past, it remembers God’s presence with them in and through that past. Memory, in that sense, is an exercise in humility. We realize that we didn’t make it here, through at least a few dark valleys, on our own.

In reminding us of where we come from, history also reminds us of who we are. Indeed, the picture of Trinity thirty or fifty years ago that emerges from these pages strongly resembles pictures of Trinity today. We are still a church with a passion for creative worship, a church that dotes on its children, a church active in the community. We are still a church that values hospitality and inclusiveness, a church that seeks to live out the gospel in our relationships with each other and in our communities. It is remarkable how much Trinity has both changed and stayed the same.

To put it in other words, there is such a thing as a “spirit of an organization,” and our history tells us much about the spirit of Trinity. Just as with children, much of Trinity’s spirit was formed in its early years, but it has changed and grown since then as well. By God’s grace it will continue to do so.

Last but not least, it is my hope and my prayer that the spirit of Trinity that emerges from these pages bears at least a passing resemblance to the spirit of the one we claim to follow, namely Jesus Christ. You have, I am sure, witnessed people looking at babies or children and remarking how they have their mother’s eyes or their father’s smile. I hope that when people look at these verbal photographs, they will think to themselves, “I think I see a bit of God’s hospitality in their programs, a bit of God’s joy in the worship, a bit of God’s faithfulness in their perseverance.”

I hope, trust, and even believe, in other words, that in telling the story of this community of faith, we are to some very small but still holy extent, telling the story of God, a story that is of course much larger than us, but a story in which we have our own important and irreplaceable role to play.

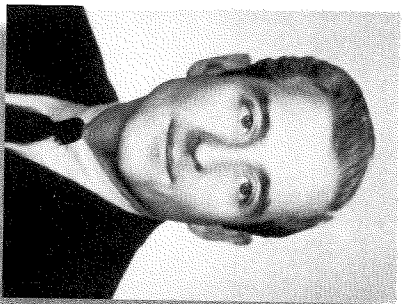
And we’re just getting warmed up!!!

In Christ,

*Craig Hunter*



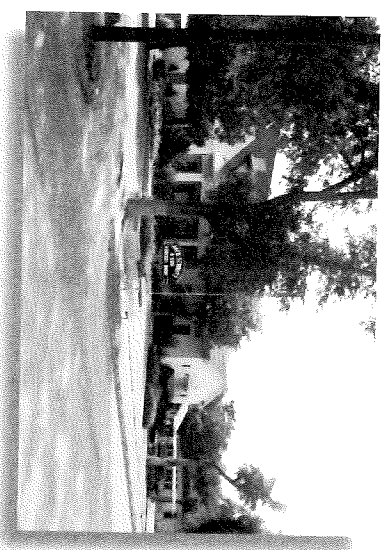
## Paul D. Young – 1960-1966



Trinity Presbyterian Church was first conceptualized as a means of meeting the needs of a growing city. In the 1950s, Denton was growing northward, with numerous new neighborhoods being built north of University Drive. Denton was changing, with an influx of growing young families after the upheavals of World War II. In the late 1950s the Synod of Texas Executive, the Rev J. Hoyt Boles, proposed to St. Andrew Presbyterian Church that it form a mission church in northeast Denton. At a church retreat at Lake Texoma, he brought a proposal to the congregation that Denton should have a second Presbyterian Church (USA), and that St. Andrew should take as a mission project the colonizing of such a church. St. Andrew accepted that challenge.

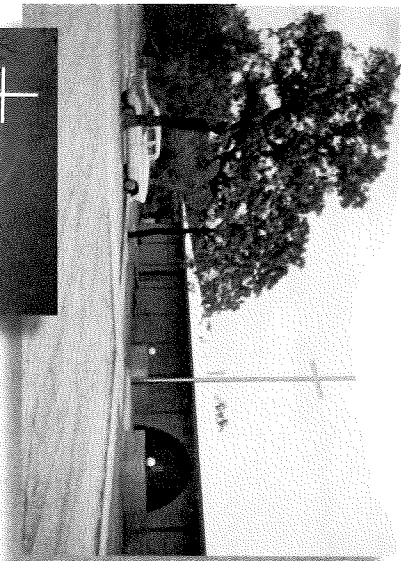
The original idea was to involve only members of St. Andrew who lived in northeast Denton and to draw new members only from that area. As the project went forward, it soon became clear that this premise was faulty: not all members living in the northeast wanted to leave St. Andrew, and St. Andrew members living in other areas of the city were interested in being a part of the mission. After much discussion, exploration, and prayer, thirty-eight St. Andrew members volunteered to be part of the new church. At a worship service, those members were formally dedicated to the project and “sent out” to implement the mission.

The Rev. Paul D. Young was called from his pastorate in Webster, Texas, to be the organizing pastor. He moved to Denton with his wife, Ann, and daughter, Gay. With Paul’s guidance, small groups held organizing meetings in homes and made visitations to find and interest others. On April 17, 1960, the first worship service was held in the chapel of Jack Schmitz Funeral Home, on North Locust Street. On July 31, 1960, the church was officially chartered in a special service, and fifty-eight members signed the charter that now hangs in the narthex of the present building. Thus Trinity Presbyterian Church came into being.



The first church school classes were held in a dance studio across the street from the funeral home. Later, classes and meetings were held in a former coffee house that had been acquired for the education program. A 1950’s coffee house served coffee and other beverages to the public and frequently had a garish and wildly painted décor. Some of the early church members cleaned and renovated and redecorated to make the building suitable for church school and other educational meetings. Worship was held across Locust Street in the Jack Schmitz Funeral Home chapel, with the organ and choir hidden in a niche at the front of the chapel. That summer (1960), Vacation Bible School met in church members’ garages and carports, with each age group meeting at a different home and garage.

March 21, 1961 was a cloudy morning as the members of Trinity Presbyterian Church gathered on a vacant lot at the corner of Sherman and Bell Avenue with digging implements of all kinds in hand. The children had wooden spoons and sand shovels, and the older members had shovels of every size. Brazos Presbytery had approved the plans to erect “the first unit of its building costing \$40,000” for Trinity Presbyterian Church of Denton, Texas. All members were ready to break ground on the new church building for their newly organized church. The Synod found and bought the property located at the corner of Sherman Drive and Bell Avenue. The name “Trinity” was chosen because of the triangular shape of the lot, adding meaning to the theological interpretation. Roland Laney, an architect and member of the church, designed the building. The original building is now the part that houses the educational wing and the offices. In the church library one can see where the original entrance was located, with glass on each side of the door. It led into a narthex that extended across the width of the building to a wall of windows on the east, overlooking grass and trees.



Byron Hundley, an elder and building committee co-chair, designed and built a cross of iron rails and erected it at the arched entrance of the building. The architect submitted a list of the minimum furnishings needed and a committee led by Jean Kooker, a session member, found creative means to supply these furnishings. The pulpit, communion table, and baptismal font were designed by the architect and constructed by the pastor, Paul Young. Trinity Presbyterian Church held its dedication service in the new building on September 17, 1961. Church school and worship were held in the morning and a special dedication service was held at 4:30 that afternoon. Joe David Ruffin, assistant pastor at St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, presided and Donald Swain, Stated Clerk of the Synod of Texas, delivered the sermon. An anthem, composed for the occasion by member Jodie Lyons, was sung by the choir. Mrs. F.S. Hamilton hosted the reception for members and friends following the service.

Some of the features of the building reflected the congregation's idea of what a church should be and do. The building

was simple, functional, flexible, and economical. The congregation felt that the first priority in expending their resources was to expedite their mission as a church and to serve the community.

The windows were meant to look out into the world and be open to it. The art glass windows that are now in the current sanctuary were commissioned by Maurine Gray as a memorial to her husband, Fred Gray, who was on Trinity's first session. They were designed by artist Dorothy Antoinette "Tom" LaSelle, a TWU professor, and installed in the original sanctuary, where they were dedicated on January 19, 1964. They were moved to the present sanctuary in 1980. Note that they do not fill a window like the traditional stained glass windows, but leave the worshipping community open to the world.

Paul Young helped to build a strong educational program, including participation in camps, conferences, and workshops. He also emphasized serving the needs of people within the church walls and out of it. He went to meetings of the City Council, School Board, and County Commissioners, and brought to the



congregation challenges posed by concerns in the community. He reached out to minority pastors in unprecedented ways that gave an opening for members to serve the community. During his ministry many members were actively involved in helping our children and youth prepare for the end of segregation in the schools, by finding ways for them to get acquainted with African Americans on a personal level before they encountered each other at school. Trinity's youth group had joint meetings with the youth from some of the African American churches. Trinity members provided tutoring for the students coming out of schools where their opportunities had been limited. Women in the church, working with women of other churches, formed the Denton Christian Women's Interracial Fellowship where they learned more clearly the ways African Americans were treated unfairly in the community. As they worked together to eliminate such discrimination, friendships were formed that last until this day.

Paul led the church until 1966, when he was called to Central Presbyterian Church in Waco. From there he went to Lubbock, TX, where he served as the Executive Presbyter for Palo Duro Presbytery until his retirement. Paul Young died very unexpectedly on November 25, 2009, on a trip to Washington, DC to visit his daughter and her family. He was residing in Santa Fe, NM, where he had lived since his retirement. In recent years, members of the Trinity congregation had enjoyed renewed contact and friendship with Paul, while they worked at Ghost Ranch, Santa Fe, for at least a week each year as a mission project. Don Smith, a member who had joined Trinity during Paul's ministry in Denton, went to the memorial service in Santa



Fe and testified to experiences that had enriched the church during his ministry. Earlier in November, Paul had provided the following comments for the Anniversary Committee:

**Reflections on Trinity Church, Denton Texas, by Paul D. Young, Organizing Pastor**

*As the organizing pastor of Trinity Presbyterian Church, Denton, Texas, I will use several anecdotes to convey my recollections:*

*On the day the church was officially organized, the pastor of St. Andrew Presbyterian Church was the preacher. He stated that the members leaving St. Andrew to form Trinity were among the cream of the membership.*

*Roland Laney, a member of the church, offered his architectural services as a gift to the church. He designed an attractive first unit of 5,000 square feet; the turnkey bid was \$10 per square foot, or a total of \$50,000. After the contract was signed, the contractor approached me and suggested if I would remove the architectural supervision from the contract, he could give us a quicker and better outcome. I reminded him such supervision was included in the contract, and it would remain. When the slab was poured, there were numerous areas where within a small radius there was a variation up to one inch, either higher or lower than grade. Because the architect required the floor be leveled, after much grinding down and filling up, the contractor agreed to provide floor covering at no cost. The architect was vindicated!*

*As the church began its life, the session began to express its community concerns with faith speaking to power. When the School Board proudly announced the integration of Denton schools, but declared it could not provide bus transportation for black students because they had a school within two miles of their residence, the session confronted the School Board about the seriousness of their intent to have an integrated system, and bus transportation became a reality.*

*Trinity Church began to have a reputation in the community as a congregation which could effect change when it spoke. Our Unitarian friends began to confess their embarrassment that while they talked about issues, Trinity Church was effecting changes in justice and fairness issues. Some of our fellow Presbyterians in other Denton congregations disapproved of our social action, wishing we would "just stick to the Gospel." Our session believed the Gospel was our motivation for "meddling."*

*At the fiftieth anniversary of Trinity Church, there are charter members still providing leadership and participation in the growth and impact of the congregation in the Denton community. Surely a major factor in the vitality of the congregation has been the presence of families that included faculty and staff of the two universities in Denton. One particular contribution in the early days of the congregation was in the area of music; what a delight to have "commissioned" music for the choir to sing, or to have instrumentalists available for any occasion. The enrichment of worship through professional musicians was a great gift to worshippers.*

*It has been a source of humility and gratitude for me to be included in the pastoral leadership of Trinity Presbyterian Church, Denton, Texas. I still recall my awe at the realization of the presence of so many PhD's for whom I was trying to provide spiritual leadership.*

## Charter Members

Adkins, Roscoe, Dorothy, Rosca, and Sara  
Barnett, Ann  
Brock, Horace and Euline  
Check, Bill and Pat  
Dickey, Imogene  
Grant, Jim and Patti  
Gray, Fred and Maurine  
Hamilton, Sidney, Lucinda, and Pete  
Harran, Frank and Jessie  
Harrison, Doug, Clare, and Heide  
Haynie, John and Marilyn  
Hundley, Byron and Nancy  
Joyner, Bill and Ann  
Kjer, Dell, Alice, and Dan  
Knight, Lynn, Kirby, Sara, and Susan  
Kooker, Earl, Jean, and Lynn  
Kremer, Bill and Fayne  
Leak, Gerald and Kathleen  
Mase, John and Ann  
McCray, W.J. and Lee  
Nead, Virginia  
Nichols, Joe, Louise, Vickie, and Clark  
Normlie, Carol  
Place, Robert and Katherine  
Storrie, Alois  
Swain, Ruth  
Young, Ann and Gay

### Children of Charter Members:

Adkins, Judy and Tommy  
Barnett, Claire and David  
Brock, Alan and Mary Ann  
Haynie, Melinda and Mark  
Joyner, Tommy  
Kjer, Tim  
Kooker, Cheryl, Candace and Kirk  
Kremer, Karl and Sharon

### *Excerpts from Paul D. Young's Obituary*

The Rev. Paul D. Young, D. Min., died after a brief illness on Wednesday, November 25, 2009, in Washington DC. He is survived by daughter Gay Young and husband Karin Nashashibi and twin grandchildren Leila and Walid, all of Bethesda, MD; son William Andrew Young of Houston, TX; son Thomas H. Allen III of Wichita Falls, TX, and several great-grandchildren.

Young was born in Houston on January 13, 1926, graduated from John Reagan High School in 1942, worked in his father's woodworking business for one year, and then declared his intention to be a Presbyterian minister. He attended Trinity University for two years, graduated from Davidson College in 1950, and from Yale University Divinity School in 1955. He was ordained and installed on August 5, 1955, as pastor of the Webster Presbyterian Church, Webster, TX.

From 1946 to 1949, Young served as a volunteer-in-mission in Puerto Rico for the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church (USA), working primarily in construction and animal husbandry, and there became fluent in Spanish, his college major. In March 1949, he married co-worker Ann Mary Shaffer in Puerto Rico. Their daughter Gay was born in New Haven, CT in December 1950. In New Haven and Bridgeport, CT, Young organized two Puerto Rican worship communities and preached in Spanish each Sunday evening. He also served federal, district, and municipal courts as an interpreter for Spanish-speaking defendants.

In 1960 he was called to be the organizing pastor of Trinity Presbyterian Church, Denton, TX. In 1966, he was called as pastor of Central Presbyterian Church, Waco, TX, and in 1972 he was called as Executive Presbyter, Stated Clerk, and Treasurer of Palo Duro Presbytery, with offices in Lubbock, TX. In 1978, he earned the degree of Doctor of Ministry from McCormick Theological Seminary.

He retired in 1988, moved to Santa Fe in 1990, where he became a volunteer with the Santa Fe Opera.

*Don Smith, representing Trinity Presbyterian Church, gave the following comments at the memorial service at Lutheran Church of the Servant on December 5, 2009.*

#### *Tribute to Paul Young*

Every one of us, as we go through this life, leaves tracks. Sometimes the tracks are deep and clearly defined, sometimes they are shallow and wandering and hard to follow, or maybe not worth following.

Clearly, Paul Young was one of the former. His tracks were straight, easy to read, and clear. They were not always easy to follow, for they led us into areas that demanded a moral stance and the courage of our convictions. Sometimes they deviated from conventional wisdom or at least departed from the easy path of conformity. A pastor's leadership is measured not so much by what he or she accomplishes. Rather, it is measured by what they can cause the congregation to accomplish.

Paul came to Trinity Presbyterian Church in Denton in 1960. He was our founding pastor, and stayed only six years. But he set the course we follow to this day, 50 years later.

The Trinity congregation held Paul in high regard, and we invited him back to be a featured speaker when we dedicated a new sanctuary in 1980 and again on the occasion of our 40th anniversary in 2000. He was to have been, again, a featured speaker next spring when we celebrate our 50th year of service to the Lord God Almighty and to our fellow human beings. Dorothy Adkins asked him to write a page or two of his recollections of the time at Trinity for a publication we are putting together for the celebration. After several reminders, maybe even a little badgering, he finally sent it to her about two weeks ago. I will quote from it now.

"As the church began its life, the session began to express its community concerns with faith speaking to power. When the School Board proudly announced the integration of Denton schools, but declared it could not provide bus transportation for black students because they had a school within two miles of their residence, the session confronted the School Board about the seriousness of their intent to have an integrated system. Bus transportation became a reality.

"Trinity church began to have a reputation in the community as a congregation which could effect change when it spoke. . . Trinity church was effecting changes in justice and fairness issues. Some of our fellow Presbyterians in other Denton congregations disapproved of our social action, wishing we would just 'stick to the Gospel.' Our session believed the Gospel was our motivation for 'meddling.'"

And it was not just the session. Paul's leadership and inspiration permeated the entire congregation. We had a cadre of young, well-educated, energetic women (most women at that time didn't hold a paid job outside the home) who decided to do what they could to effect integration in Denton, especially in the school system. Their first meeting was in a Trinity home. At a later meeting, one of the women from southeast Denton invited the group to have their next meeting at her house, if it didn't rain. Someone piped up, "What do you mean, if it doesn't rain, we don't stop and wait for the rain." "You would if you lived in our part of town. It gets muddy and you can't drive." Everyone was stunned! Actually it was only the white women; the black women knew it all too well. Immediately a new project was started: the paving of the streets of SE Denton, while not backing off one bit on the first one.

Perhaps many of you don't know how paving is paid for in an established neighborhood. The city pays for 1/3 and the homeowners on each side of the street each pay a third. "The women" adopted the name of the Denton Christian Women's Interracial Fellowship, such a deceptively mild sounding name. But then, women are frequently deceptively packaged. They went door-to-door, two-by-two (one black and one white) in hose and high heels, sometimes in the mud, to convince the owners to buy into the project. All of them did. For absentee owners, they searched the city tax records. (Did I mention that they were an educated, skillful, and determined group?) They succeeded in getting all but five owners to pay their share of the paving. Trudy Foster was one of the researchers, and she decided to force the issue. She made a poster of photographs of the five homes and posted in on Sunday morning at the entrance to the sanctuary of a certain congregation in town (I'm pleased to note it wasn't ours) with a sign that read: "The owners of these five houses are the only ones in the city who refuse to pay their fair share of the paving in SE Denton. All five owners are members of this church." By Wednesday everything was paid.

By the way, these women later went into the work force and continued to be leaders in the church and in Denton, becoming session members, city council members (more than one mayor), school board members, and members of city boards and commissions.

Quoting Paul again, "*At the fiftieth anniversary of Trinity Church, there are charter members still providing leadership and participation in the growth and impact of the congregation in the Denton community.*"

We at Trinity were blessed and cursed to have to follow the deep and clear tracks of this wonderful man of God. Blessed with the love and leadership, and cursed with the requirement to get out of our comfort zone and effect change where it is needed, even when we think we can't do it. Paul Young kept the faith, persevered in the face of trial and tragedy, and led us to do more than we wanted to do, and even more than we thought we could do.

I'll end this with another talent exercised with skill and beauty by this many-faceted man. It will surprise most of you, maybe all of you. When he was called to lead Palo Duro Presbytery, he was faced with a large area to lead and minister to, hundreds of miles from side-to-side and top to bottom. Paul led from the front, hands on, but he couldn't do it by driving to the churches, and certainly not by telephones and letters. Remember, this was 1972, and desktop computers and e-mail hadn't even been thought of, much less invented. Paul bought a plane and learned to fly, became quite an accomplished pilot. He accumulated some 3000 hours of flying time in the ensuing 16 years.

We pilots have an expression about the final departure of a colleague from this earth. We render a final salute to a fellow airman "Gone West." (He then asked the congregation to stand with him and face west.)





## Denton Christian Women's Interracial Fellowship

1964—

*This section of the history of Trinity Presbyterian Church is based on several different sources, the most important being the memories of those surviving charter members of Trinity—Dorothy Adkins, Jean Kooker, Ann Barnett, Elaine Brock, Pat Cheek—plus Linnie McAdams, who joined the church later—who made the first efforts to reach out and create bonds of friendship that were truly transformational, in our lives and in our community. The depth of those bonds, formed in the 1960's and the early 1970's, were on display at Dorothy Adkins' 90th birthday party on December 27, 2009, when black women who were very active in the Fellowship decades ago joined other Trinity "pioneers" in celebrating the deep meaning of our friendship.*



Dorothy Adkins & Linnie McAdams

*Journalists and historians have been intrigued by this group and what it accomplished, and have over time produced several interviews and articles of interest:*

*"United they stood: How one group of women beat prejudice,"*

*Denton Record Chronicle, Feb. 16, 1994.*

*"Crossing the Tracks: Interracial Fellowship Overcame Barriers in Denton,"*

*Fort Worth Star-Telegram, Feb. 17, 2000.*



Dorothy Adkins and  
Catherine Bell

*"Interracial Cooperation in a Decade of Conflict: The Denton (Texas) Christian Women's Inter-racial Fellowship,"*

*Oral History Review, (Spring-Fall, 1991):31-53, by the late Dr. Richard W. Byrd.*

*"The Debt We Owe to Gertrude Foster,"*

*Denton Record Chronicle* editorial, Oct. 29, 2003

*On September 7, 1968, Channel 11 presented a program titled, "Women's Interracial Fellowship." Linnie McAdams took part in that discussion.*

*In the late 1980's, Dr. Ron Marcello's UNT graduate class in oral history chose to adopt the Fellowship as a class topic—one that would be of great interest to the students as they were learning the proper techniques of oral history interviewing. The class eventually interviewed nine black women and ten white women. Transcripts of these interviews have provided a rich source for preparing this history for Trinity's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. In the following paragraphs, quoted material from these transcripts will be followed by the name of the interviewee in parenthesis if the source is not made clear earlier in the passage.*

*After the celebration of Trinity's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary has ended, copies of the articles listed above will be in the church library, along with bound transcripts of the oral history interviews, for church members to read.*

When Trinity Presbyterian Church was organized in 1960, Denton's population of 26,686 seemed a pleasant, manageable size, in spite of the 25% increase since the census of 1950; few would have predicted that the decade of the '60's would bring a further 33% increase. Those who looked ahead to 2010, to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the church, might have had even more difficulty visualizing a Denton with a population of around 110,000. Certainly in 1960 there was little discussion, either in the press or in general conversation, of the fact that blacks made up less than 8% of the city's population.

What most people across the South (the eleven former Confederate states), black and white, were watching was the march of desegregation through the federal courts and onto college campuses and into public schools. Denton was no exception. In 1954, in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, the Supreme

Court struck down the “separate but equal” principle, which had never been observed anyway. Denton residents, with decidedly separate but woefully unequal facilities and programs for black students, knew that before long that system would have to change.

More immediate was the desegregation of UNT. In the summer of 1954, doctoral student Alfred Tennyson Miller became the first black student in the history of UNT, none of the so-called “colored” colleges in Texas offered doctoral programs. On February 3, 1956, pioneering undergraduate Autherine Lucy was driven from the University of Alabama campus by angry mobs, but few people noticed that on that very same day Irma Sephas became UNT’s first black undergraduate.

By the fall of 1959, just before the organization of Trinity Presbyterian Church, 247 of UNT’s 7,035 students were black. The best known of these students were Abner Haynes and Leon King, who in the fall of 1956 became UNT’s first black football players, a full decade before other traditionally white Texas colleges took such a step. *[In the church library can be found articles from the Denton Record Chronicle about the experiences of Haynes and King:*

“Forward Progress” and  
“How football helped redeem Dixie’s soul”]

Receiving much less attention from the press, the regents of Texas Woman’s University adopted desegregation on August 24, 1961.

These students were allowed to enroll for classes, but it would be several years before they could claim their rightful place at all university facilities and events, stay at campus dormitories, and eat in all campus cafeterias and snack bars. During this time, some Denton families in Southeast Denton opened their homes and created inpromptu boarding houses for the students. They also organized carpools to take the students to the UNT campus.

By trial and error, those pioneering students discovered what kinds of services and goods would be available to them.

In Denton, almost all public facilities were for whites only. Black students—like other blacks—could not eat in downtown restaurants. They were not welcome in many retail establishments. The most glaring restriction was that only white students (and other whites) could buy tickets at the local theaters. As a result, in the fall of 1961 Denton had its own version of “stand-ins”—lines of white and black students and sympathizers trying to buy blocks of tickets to distribute equally to black and white. To avoid the violence that could be seen on television daily in cities across the South, local merchants responded to the stand-ins by reluctantly agreeing to limited desegregation in theaters.

And as members of Trinity Church were planning, organizing, working, to create the appropriate organizational structures needed to be accepted as a fully functioning part of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., the national church was calling on local congregations and individual members to bring social justice to the forefront of their mission. For Paul Young and for many of Trinity’s members, that call to action inevitably meant working for racial justice. Paul sought out ministers of Denton’s black churches and learned a great deal about the struggles and frustrations of people who lived in “Southeast Denton.” He had soon built bonds of friendship based on faith and mutual trust with Reverend James Hawkins, Pastor of Mt. Pilgrim C.M.E. church (one of the first black men to graduate from Perkins Theological Seminary at SMU)—a relationship that would prove invaluable as the Denton School Board moved slowly and grudgingly toward desegregating Denton’s public schools.

In the early 1960’s two groups of women were unwittingly preparing to form an association, a “Fellowship,” that would help to transform not only the Denton community, but the lives of those women.

The black women who in 1964-68 became part of the Denton Christian Women’s Interracial Fellowship were natives of Denton, or at least native Texans. Their level of education was certainly atypical. At a time when few black women graduated from high school, most of the blacks who joined the Fellowship were high school graduates, and several had attended classes at either Prairie View A&M or Texas College in Tyler. Unquestionably, these women were over-educated for the jobs available for them—mainly house cleaning and similar jobs involving physical labor and low pay. Linnie McAdams, who would join Trinity church in 1967 and was active in the Fellowship from the very beginning, did not experience formal schooling until

she was ten years old, but at the age of sixteen she graduated from the highly regarded black high school in Fort Worth, I.M. Terrell, as valedictorian.)

And for these women, every day was filled with the restrictions that made up the fabric of black life in Denton: the "white" and "colored" signs above public fountains and on restroom doors, the narrow stairways that led to a small section of theater balconies, the "whites only" sign on the only laundry that was conveniently located. Black women could not try on garments for fit before they were purchased. Black families who wanted to attend the drive-in theater had to park in the last two rows—rows fourteen and fifteen—and could not go to the snack counter to get refreshments; strangely enough, the theater employees would come to the car to take the order and then deliver it. The very few restaurants that would serve blacks in any way required that the food be picked up at a back door. Among the black women who were interviewed for the UNT Oral History project in the late 1980's, the restriction mentioned most often was that black people could buy ice cream or other treats at the long, attractive "soda fountain" counter in Tobin's drugstore on the north side of the square—paying full price, of course—but they couldn't sit down to eat or drink the ice cream and other treats (Iinnie McAdams, Norvell Reed, Billie Mohair and others).

But in spite of all this and much more (Norvell Reed said that it was only when the Fred Moore choir went to perform at Denton High School that she realized the terrible disparity between the schools), almost all those black women who were interviewed in the oral history project still had positive things to say about their lives in Denton. Those who had lived elsewhere felt that things were not so bad in Denton, that white people were kinder and friendlier than elsewhere. They didn't feel seriously threatened by the prospect of racial conflict. Billie Mohair probably reflected the attitude of many black people when she described the way they managed to live their lives in Denton:

*... So these were some of the things that we experienced that were unpleasant, but, nonetheless, I guess to keep peace, we didn't object. We more or less tried to be happy within our own surroundings and kind of accepted the status quo, so to speak. . . . [This treatment] went on for many years [but] the times began to change, thank goodness, for the better in the Denton community in a lot of areas.*

At first glance, the group of white women who initially helped to create the Denton Christian Women's Interracial Fellowship might seem to have little in common with the black members. While the black women were natives of Denton or at least of Texas, not a single white member was from Denton, and several were from other states. Like their black friends, these women had a higher level of education than was common among their contemporaries; every one of them was a college graduate, several already had master's degrees, and others were working toward advanced degrees. None of them was employed; several had trained to be teachers and some had already taught (teacher, nurse, and secretary were just about the only jobs available to white women in the 1960's), but they were nevertheless expected to stay at home to care for their large families, to cook and clean and sew and scrub. Their husbands were professors or clergymen whose incomes would not provide for much babysitting or household help. And those who were planning to go back to public school teaching knew that they could never be a school principal or hold one of the other better-paid school positions, all of which were automatically reserved for men.

What these two groups of women unquestionably had in common was their devotion to their families and their desire that desegregation be a positive experience for their children and for the community. All of them hoped that eventually segregated school systems would fade into dim memory and be found hiding in history books.

And these women also shared a strong dedication to their Christian faith and to their churches. The black women belonged to Denton's historic black churches—Mt. Pilgrim C.M.E., St. James A.M.E., and Pleasant Grove Baptist, among others—and found much of their families' social life there. Some of the white women were from the large and historic First Methodist Church, but the core group came from the newly organized (1960) Trinity Presbyterian Church and felt strongly called to pursue social justice, which for them in the 1960's meant racial justice.

These Trinity women had several experiences in late 1963 and early 1964 that made them determined to take action, to try if at all possible to form an interracial group of women that would become friends, learn more about problems in the community and together seek solutions to those problems.

## Editorial

# The debt we owe to Gertrude Foster

One of the great books yet to be written about the American civil rights movement will be about the stalwart women who defied conventions about race and sex to work for justice and equality in quiet but absolutely fearless ways.

Denton had such a fighter. Her name was Gertrude Martin Foster, and she died in Denton Wednesday at the age of 78.

Trudy Foster was the daughter of Presbyterian missionaries, the wife of a college professor and the mother of a daughter and two sons. She was raised in Pakistan, where her parents served the church, and she came to Denton in 1953 with her husband, a teacher at what is now the University of North Texas.

In 1960, she returned to Pakistan with her husband, whose parents also had served there as missionaries.

The discrimination against Pakistani Christians she witnessed reminded Foster of the inequities suffered by black people in America, and when she and her family returned to Denton in 1963, she set about fighting those inequities in her own country.

She was active in the effort to have the streets paved in the predominantly black residential area known as Southeast Denton. She was instrumental in the formation of the Denton Christian Preschool, a social service agency that predated Operation Head Start, but offered many of the same essential services, preparing disadvantaged children to succeed in school.

She was also active in the Women's Interracial Fellowship of Denton, a multiracial group of women who worked for the peaceful desegregation of the city's schools. Paving the way for desegregation was not universally accepted as a proper activity for a Southern white woman in those days, nor was fraternization with those of another race in anything more than a master-servant relationship.

But women such as Trudy Foster and the other members of the Women's Interracial Fellowship were not daunted by the customs of the past. They, and brave women like them all over the South of the Old Confederacy, joined together in those dangerous, racially charged days to affirm that the old ways would not prevail, that bigotry and violence would not divide or intimidate them ever again.

Only they and those close to them know what these brave women risked, but all of us live in a better place because of their courage and idealism.

At a time when every city in the American South was struggling for its soul over the issue of race, Gertrude Foster appealed to the best that was in this good town, and helped it win its battle. Women like her — black, white and brown — were doing the same thing in every one of those cities, and all of us remain in their debt.

First, Ginny Nead had helped organize joint meetings of the Trinity youth group with the youth from Mt. Pilgrim Methodist Church. The two groups also worshipped in each other's churches and had joint social activities. A social in the Neads' home in northeast Denton brought complaints and rock-throwing from neighbors, who also called police. Involved adults began to think of moving toward some broader action. In 1988, Pat Cheek would look back at that event (which she remembered as occurring in 1965):

*That's when I decided to join the Fellowship. That made me mad. I didn't care how busy I was.*

The Denton school district made a tentative step toward desegregation in the fall of 1963 by opening Denton High School to black students who wanted to "volunteer" to transfer (referred to as "freedom of choice"). Not surprisingly, only six of them did. Reverend Hawkins told Paul Young that tutoring would be needed to help some of those students meet the standards of Denton High's classes. Linnie McAdams and Euline Brock began to work with the students at the McAdams' home, but soon moved the tutoring to nearby Mt. Pilgrim Church. Trinity Church had a young adults' Sunday school class, mostly comprised of graduate students, who were eager to promote desegregation by tutoring those young pioneers. Certainly the tutoring project gave the Trinity women—and Trinity Church in general—some credibility with the black community and helped to attract Southeast Denton women to the new interracial group.

In addition, four Trinity women attended a "Presbyterial" meeting in Wichita Falls which focused on interracial relations among women. The program featured a dialogue between a white woman and a black woman. The presentation was not very effective, but the Trinity women thought the script itself could be useful in the right context and might perhaps stimulate truly meaningful interaction between the races. They were convinced, nevertheless, that the national church's call for a "Day of Reconciliation" would accomplish little good in Denton, and they began to think in terms of an ongoing organization—one that would seek lasting friendships and perhaps later focus on solving serious community problems.

So it was that the first meeting was planned for an evening in March, 1964, at Jean Kooker's house. Considerable effort went into inviting black women with some connection other than being the white woman's maid. Linnie McAdams came and brought others. Paul Young told Reverend Hawkins about the planned gathering, so Mrs. Hawkins was ready to accept when she was invited. Jean Kooker had worked to bring white and black girl scout groups together, so she had contacts there. Euline Brock had frequently worked with Irene Williams, a senior who had transferred to Denton High School, so Irene's mother, Norvell (Williams) Reed readily accepted Euline's invitation and also invited her mother, Othella Hill, and her daughter, Gloria Denmon [Gloria's little girl Debbie grew up to be a major news personality on Channel 8]. Paul Young convinced Catherine Bell, who worked for the Young family, that she too should attend.

From the perspective of the year 2010, it seems strange and perhaps even ludicrous that the women were so ill at ease at that meeting. For most of them, this was the very first time they had ever, ever been in an integrated meeting of that sort, designed to interact on a completely equal basis. So that first meeting was devoted to getting acquainted, to getting a little more comfortable with each other. The white hostesses bustled about serving refreshments, while others were trying to be sure that everyone had someone to talk to. All of the women had a major topic of interest—their children. By the time the evening was over, everyone was ready to plan for a second meeting. As Ann Barnett would remember in late 1987,

*... for some of us it was the first time we had met any of the black women and the first time they had met any of us. But it seemed that when the meeting was over, we had established an unusual trust and a desire to continue. . . .*

The second meeting, one month later, was at the Barnett's house, on Maid Marian, and it was a very different sort of meeting. The women who went to Wichita Falls had managed to get a copy of the black/white dialogue from the national church. Betty Kimble and Ann read the parts very effectively, and the dialogue did indeed spark a lively, meaningful conversation. As Ann remembered in 1987:

*... [the dialogue] was very honest, and it made a real impression on everybody. It had to do with a black woman expressing her feelings at the way she was treated in a store where the clerk would continually ignore her and wait on white ladies even though she had come up to the counter before and ahead of the white ladies. It was that kind of thing—the prejudice subtle and not so subtle—that they met every day of their life. . . . It was wonderful that they [black members of the group] felt enough trust in the group that they would speak up and say these things, especially at just the second meeting, because they would have had every right to feel mistrustful of white people.*

In 1987 Eunine Brock also reported the discussion that arose from the dialogue:

*... I remember Betty Kimble saying that she was waiting her turn in the Singer Sewing Shop, and a woman came in and started, as most white southern women traditionally did, just to shove on ahead because there was nobody waiting if there was only a black woman waiting. Betty said she stepped right up and said, "I believe I was here first," or "It's my turn," or something similar. I remember everyone's marveling and thinking that that took quite a lot of courage for her to do that. That's the sort of meeting we were having by the second meeting.*

At that point, the women felt free to create an organizational structure, and make at least some general plans for the future. They decided to meet monthly, and to alternate meeting in a black home, then a white home. They chose co-chairs, a black woman and a white woman. Everyone agreed that it would be best to have a roughly equal numbers of black and white women in the membership. [There were white women banging at the doors, wanting to attend the meetings and get involved.] They decided to get husbands involved, at least superficially. They had Christmas parties with the husbands as guests, and they had picnics in the summer that involved all the family members.

When the schools were totally desegregated in the fall of 1964 [black citizens were shocked and dismayed that Fred Moore School was shut down], the Fellowship worked to resolve some of the obvious and not so obvious problems. Under the leadership of Jean Kooker, a large tutoring program for younger children was set up at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, and students were welcome to come for help at any time during the twice-weekly sessions. The Interracial women helped in the tutoring, but they also trained the college students, who mostly attended Trinity Church and were eager to participate.

As relatively small problems occurred in the desegregated classes, black mothers generally felt empowered to deal with them, but they knew that white mothers were ready to help. A major problem was that children were assigned to formerly all-white schools, at some distance from their Southeast Denton homes, and at first no transportation was provided. Many of the white women got involved in driving these children to school—sometimes when their own children were walking, since their homes were closer to school.

Catherine Bell remembered that a small problem arose with her son, Larry, and a white teacher. She and her husband, Harry, felt able to deal with the problem by talking openly with the principal and the teacher, without having to call on white friends for help.

To encourage general desegregation in the community, the Interracial women felt they should reassure merchants that they would not lose business by serving everyone equally. They went to church together, and they went to eat together. But Betty Kimble remembered a more subtle part of the strategy—two black women going to the Holiday Inn to eat. "This was part of the plan..." for blacks to be served without white friends. She reported that "we had perfect service—no trouble."

**As Your Customer  
I would be happy to see you  
Employ Qualified Persons  
Regardless of race, color or creed.**

The group had some stickers made that they put on checks and on bills. They also surveyed different residential areas, trying to persuade homeowners to sign the "Good Neighbor Pledge," which they hoped would encourage open housing. Even though the Fellowship was organized fairly early in 1964, they quickly began to be involved in political action. The group worked on voter registration, going door-to-door, setting up at the American Legion Hall on Lakey Street, and even going to the mall. By the fall of 1964, one of the most dramatic presidential elections in the twentieth century became the focus of some of the Fellowship members. Civil rights, voter rights, and racial equality were at the forefront, with Republican Barry Goldwater opposing federal legislation to promote these rights and southern white Democrat Lyndon Johnson supporting civil rights on every level. Alonzo Jamison, chair of the Denton County Democrats, invited Othella Hill to be on the county campaign committee, where she very soon became an officer. She gave a lovely tea at her home on a Sunday afternoon in support of the Democratic ticket. Precinct One largely encompassed Southeast Denton, and to no one's surprise, on election day, voters in that area voted overwhelmingly for Lyndon Johnson.

The most dramatic project undertaken by the Interracial Fellowship grew out of a failed "Urban Renewal" election. It was obvious to everyone, and reinforced by a study done by the League of Women Voters, that the greatest need in Southeast Denton was to have paved streets, curbs and gutters and drainage, sidewalks and house numbers. Many of the white members of the Fellowship had discovered those unpaved streets for the first time when they began to attend meetings at their black friends' houses. This was a hugely expensive undertaking, and quite a few people in Denton thought funding through urban renewal would be a good solution. A sizable majority of the white members of the Fellowship supported urban renewal, because they feared that the projects could not be financed any other way. Black residents in general, including black Fellowship members, opposed

# United they stood

## How one group of women beat prejudice

By Holly Becka

I had a group of women friends with the spirit of the 1960s. Our racial attitudes were different, but we were coming from a similar place. One of the women, Betty Kimble, said, "I don't want to be friends," and Betty Kimble said, "I don't want to be friends."

At first, Betty Kimble was angry because we were asking her to be friends. "We know we were asking you to be friends," she said. "We know we were asking you to be friends."

But when we realized during the Fellowship's decade of existence that we were not only related in the city, a school system, the breakfast

of the Crowe-era tradition in which they would be part of such a group. The neighbors said the relationship partners were not the same. Sometimes the thing was different, and the negative feelings and hatred gradually eroded. Betty Kimble said, "I don't want to be friends," and Betty Kimble said, "I don't want to be friends."

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**The Good Neighbor Pledge**

I believe that every person has the moral and legal right to rent, buy, or build a home anywhere without restriction based on race, religion, or national origin. Equality of opportunity is basic to the American society and our religious beliefs.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, will welcome persons into my neighborhood without regard to race, religion, or national origin, and I will work with them to build, to improve, and to maintain a community which is good for all.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Survey conducted by  
CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S  
INTER-RACIAL FELLOWSHIP

The group circulated "The Good Neighbor Pledge" which asked people to sign a form indicating they would welcome anyone into their neighborhood without restriction.

CALENDAR of events for Black History Month '82

urban renewal because they were afraid they would lose their homes. Fellowship members decided not to take an official stand as a group, because they didn't want to threaten the unity of the organization. Urban renewal was voted down by a 4 to 1 margin.

Trudy Foster died in October 2003, but she's still referred to in Southeast Denton as "the one who got the streets paved." Mayor Zeke Martin had opposed Urban Renewal by saying, "We don't need federal money, the city of Denton can take care of its own problems." When Urban Renewal failed, Trudy took him up on that claim. She asked him how to get it done, how much it would cost, how the city would participate. This is when Fellowship members (and some of their husbands) went

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Therefore, I will welcome persons into my neighborhood without regard to race, religion, or national origin, and I will work with them to build, to improve, and to maintain a community which is good for all.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Survey conducted by  
CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S  
INTER-RACIAL FELLOWSHIP

door-to-door to every single household, finding owners and renters, getting people to sign over (a "quit claim") their one third of the street right-of-way. Some additional members of Trinity participated in this survey—Bill Check and Gene Finlay, for example. In 1968 citizens were amazed to see pairs of ladies, black and white, dressed up in their stockings and pumps, trudging through the dust and mud. They were even more surprised to see the husbands joining the crew on weekends; some of the black men had become notaries so that they could get the signatures, and this helped to allay the fears of some of the residents. Dorothy Adkins remembered the project this way:

*...it did involve locating and writing to and communicating with, or getting the city to communicate with, these absentee landlords in order to get permission and get them to pay for their part of the paving. It also took a great deal of persuasion of the city council itself.*

But Trudy got all the statistics together, studied all the ordinances, made charts, took pictures, put pressure wherever it was needed, and eventually became "the one who got the streets paved." Before it was all over, the city's outlay on the project was an astounding \$606,000—an amount included in the city budget! Perhaps as important, the streets were symbolic: there was an everyday message that people cared—and that women could achieve major change, could take on a reluctant officialdom and win.

Once the streets were improved, it became obvious that the codes were not being enforced in Southeast Denton. So the Fellowship, having learned how to deal with the city, devoted themselves to Code Enforcement. They had the help of Trinity's "Church and Society" committee, chaired by Don Smith. After Code Enforcement was applied to most of Southeast Denton, Don's committee organized a group called "Denton Neighbors" to help the Interracial women with some ongoing cleanup and general beautification efforts. They also began to pressure city officials and others to improve conditions at what was Denton's only public housing, the Phoenix Apartments.

All along, the Fellowship was interested in fairness in hiring and in finding jobs for those who were qualified, but they also organized programs on how to apply for jobs, and how to find job openings. In the late 1960's and early 1970's, personnel directors from several large employers came to Fellowship meetings to give information about types of jobs available, qualifications required, etc.

But back in 1964, Fellowship members were particularly interested in Linnie McAdams' job search. She was determined to prove to young people that a qualified black person could be hired in the private sector, not just in a government position. And she did become the very first black to be hired in an "office-type" job at Moore Business Forms—one for which she was vastly over-qualified, but before that she had been cleaning house and ironing for other people! When she applied at Moore, she listed Euline Brock as a reference. Hard as it may be to believe in 2010, the Vice President for Human Resources at that large international corporation, Wynn Murrell (who was a member of St. Andrew Presbyterian), called Euline—about an applicant for a low-level clerical job! But Mr. Murrell needs to be given credit—for in those times he was taking a risk in hiring a black woman, and he truly wanted everything to work. He asked Euline if she knew Linnie because Linnie was her maid. The answer was no; they actually had met while working in the Kennedy campaign in 1960 and had become good friends, but those details were not provided to Mr. Murrell. It's a very good reflection of the times that people assumed—and in most cases rightly so—that the only way a black woman could know a white woman would be through working as her maid.

Even though the job at Moore paid considerably less than similar jobs at the Federal Center, Linnie stayed at Moore for a while to prove her point. Then she went on to work at the Federal Center, and later at the Social Security office.

One of the Fellowship meetings that everyone remembers was at the President's home at UNT—the wife of President John Kammerick was a member! The program was a style show, with members

Y O U   A R E   I N V I T E D

25th Anniversary Reunion

WOMEN'S INTERRACIAL FELLOWSHIP

1964-1989

Martin Luther King Recreation Center  
1300 Wilson St.  
Denton, Texas

Thursday, April 13, 1989

7:00 - 9:00 P.m.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU!

modeling clothes from Penney's. That meeting indicated that the Fellowship was very different from what it had been in early 1964. And there was a general feeling that the Fellowship may have served its purpose. In 1987 and 1988, the oral history interviewers kept asking, "Why did it end?" The answer might be that it didn't—because for most members, the real purpose was lasting friendship. In 1970, Fellowship women were back in school or going on to better jobs. "Black Power" was coming to the fore; that philosophy would reject the idea that blacks should seek white assistance to improve their lives. Vietnam had replaced civil rights as the focus for protesters. And in many ways there was a feeling that the need wasn't there, that individuals had the tools and the confidence to solve problems on their own. But there was also a conviction that if and when the need reappeared, the friends could quickly come together to attack whatever challenge faced them.

While Paul Young was still at Trinity, he had sought out John Howard Griffin, of Mansfield, Texas, author of what would become an extremely successful book, *Black Like Me*. Griffin came to Denton, to Trinity Church, to speak of the experiences he had had in blackening his skin and then traveling across the southern states as a black man. Members of the Interracial Fellowship were invited to be guests, and the evening was an amazing experience for everyone.

Later, on April 15, 1974, Trinity celebrated the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Women's Interracial Fellowship by hosting a reception and poetry reading by B.F. Maiz, a black poet who had been in prison but was at that time a guest professor at UNT. Again, the evening was a special treat. The twenty-fifth anniversary was celebrated at Martin Luther King Center, on April 13, 1989. And the Denton Record Chronicle brought the group together in 1994 to show how racial problems had been solved by one group of women. (See "United They Stood," *Denton Record Chronicle* February 16, 1994.)

Perhaps some members and friends of the Fellowship have failed to notice its most enduring legacy—the empowerment of a large and diverse group of women, and some men, too. They learned to seek solutions for problems in their own lives and those of their families, but they also learned to challenge public bodies—either as individuals or as groups. And in the 1990's Catherine Bell successfully ran for President of the Denton County Branch NAACP, and has repeatedly been reelected.

CELEBRATE  
 10 Years Together  
 Help us April 15 - Circle Your calendar  
 B.F. Maiz Poet  
 special guest speaker

1964 - 1974  
 Women's Interracial Fellowship

All members are urged to be there  
 Present for this very special meeting  
 Bring your family and friends - guests  
 are welcome.

Where: Trinity Wesleyan Church  
 2200 Bell Ave.

When: April 15, 1974  
 8:00 - Reception  
 8:30 - Program

spread the word! See you there!



That empowerment and activism among Trinity church members and Fellowship members has made a modest-size church and its friends a real force in the Denton community. Dorothy Adkins ran for the State Education Board and then served on the DISD board for many years. Pat Cheek ran for City Council at the same time Ann Barnett ran for school board. Two Trinity members—Alex Finlay and Euline Brock—served as council member and mayor. While Linnie McAdams was not the first black person elected to the city council (Rev. Mark Chew was elected to the District One seat in 1983), she was the first black person to be elected to a citywide at-large position (1984), and was re-elected twice.

Members of Trinity have served on the CIP Bond Committee, the Planning and Zoning Commission, Public Utilities Board, Parks and Recreation Board, Airport Advisory Board, Library Board, Human Services Advisory Committee, Tax Appraisal Appeals Board, Traffic Safety Commission, Downtown Advisory Committee, and Economic Development Partnership Board.



# Fort Worth Star-Telegram

RY 27, 2000

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Where The West Begins

YEARS LATER, WOMEN REMEMBER



Former fellowship members, from left, Mae Shephard, Trudy Foster and Dorothy Adkins.

## CROSSING the TRACKS

### Interracial fellowship overcame barriers in Denton

By Carol Lewis  
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

**D**ENTON — Railroad tracks cut off the southeast portion of Denton, separating a predominantly black community from the rest of the city. But the tracks are not the barrier they were decades ago when a group of white women and black women dared to cross.

At the height of the civil rights movement in 1964, when national news was



dominated by scenes of angry Southerners using dogs and water hoses to attack activists, a group of white homemakers bonded with black women from what then was called "colored town."

They mingled as the Denton Christian Women's Interracial Fellowship and worked quietly to integrate businesses, to

upgrade living conditions for blacks and to ensure that black children integrating the predominantly white schools had friends.

"It's hard to understand now how daring it all was," said founding member

Euline Brock, 68. "It was unprecedented."

The women's bonds endured long after the integration of the city in the 1960s and the group's demise in the early 1970s.

Some of the women still worship together. Some work for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People or serve together on urban boards. Many annually march down

(More on FRONT on Page 27A)



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And quoting the anniversary proclamation issued by the mayor in 2000, “Trinity has made a significant contribution to the quality of life of the City of Denton through its work for justice, peace, and the welfare of all its citizens, and sees its mission as continuing to serve all the people of Denton.”

In 2010, it’s important for younger, newer members of Trinity Presbyterian Church to know that the church was not nearly as unified as the preceding account might indicate. When some black individuals and families began to attend Trinity regularly, some white members left for good.

From its very first organized meetings, the Session of Trinity Church was being bombarded with messages from Presbyterian Church USA about how to support desegregation. One of those messages instructed the Session to create a plan for what they would do if a black person or group appeared at the church door at worship time on Sunday morning. One Session member said whoever was greeting that day should say, “What is your purpose in coming here?” Others suggested that approach would be acceptable if the same question greeted every person appearing at the door. Sadly, that man was not interested in discussion aimed at seeking a Christian solution, and before long he and his family left the church—and the Session never did create a special plan for greeting black people!

Paul Young, ever the seeker, invited a well-known preacher/civil rights leader to come to Trinity. Paul wanted the man to preach at the Sunday morning service. A Session member, a very prominent person at UNT and in the community, stated unequivocally that such an arrangement would not be appropriate and would give Trinity a “bad reputation.” So the speaker was invited to speak to the young adults [read: graduate students] Sunday School class. He did, and the “adult” class came pouring in to hear an excellent presentation for all the adults in the church, with lots of opportunity for discussion.

Despite these half-steps and missteps, in 2010 the message that Trinity seeks to proclaim to members and community alike is that we are a “welcoming” church. We are here to proclaim God’s love for all people, regardless of their age, race, color, birthplace, economic status, education, marital status, or sexual orientation. God has richly blessed this community of faith as it has proclaimed its message for 50 years. Looking forward to the future, we know we are in God’s hands.

— Euline Brock



“CELEBRATING OUR  
STORY: TRINITY’S  
CONTINUING JOURNEY  
WITH GOD”

This banner was designed and made by artist Sher Harnish, a member of Trinity Presbyterian Church, to celebrate the church’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It hangs on the main wall of the Sanctuary, and in the banner may be found words, symbols, and figures that trace the church’s history and mission.

*April 2010*