



# THE LINK

## We Say Goodbye To Our Servant Leader, Kaye Shipley (1949 - 2009)



# Releasing and Responding

When I received word of the death of **Doris Jean Wilson Standerfer**, my mind immediately reflected on her "missions lifestyle" and how I would respond to her family. Doris Jean once served as "State YWA President" of Illinois WMU. After her marriage to Ernie she remained an active WMUer. A church they later served, First Baptist Church, Carterville, remains active with WMU. Daughter Sarah (Groves) became an effective National Acteen Director for WMU, SBC, planning a fantastic NAC (National Acteen Conference) in Louisville, Ky. Sarah continues to write for *Missions Mosaic*.

For such a woman, a wife, a mother like Doris Jean, what better way to show respect for her life of missions than to send a gift to Illinois TTT (Touch Tomorrow Today).

Soon to follow was the passing of **Ruth Landrus**, after only a brief known illness. Ruth had been a faithful, hard working member of our State WMU Lead Team as well as very active and appreciated in her church and association. Her "first loves" (after grandchildren!) seem to be guiding children in learning and doing missions, working with migrants, and serving on women's missions teams! She was committed to serving with women at Uptown Baptist Church and with women at Christian Activity Center, a ministry often shared with daughter, Rachael alongside her.

As Ruth approached her last days of life, Rachael kept us informed. She lived out the scripture "train up a child in the way they should go and when they are old (er) they will not depart from it." A few months before her death, Ruth had attended the National WMU Gathering in Louisville. She participated in a WMU Foundation conference and photo of her appeared in the Foundation's *Legacy in Mosaic*. With these demonstrations of commitment to WMU, it seemed sensible to me at her death to make a contribution to the WMU Foundation for the Illinois TTT fund.

It is not only the women of WMU whom

we can honor, but also the men of WMU who opened doors for us. **Lindsay Cobb** was one of those men. We shared a friendship and a working relationship among IBSA staff. As a catalytic missionary he had been extremely influential and effective in relating to internationals (a love of mine) and beginning language congregations. His memorial service verified this through many testimonies by ethnic leadership.

It was Lindsay who first invited and encouraged me to develop missions teams to serve at Uptown. This ministry continues as winter and summer women's teams continue to serve. From the beginning and continuing now, his wife Mindy Cobb, a faithful supporter of WMU, relates with these teams. Daughter Jessica won our hearts at a very early age saying "I love these WMU ladies!" Daughter Rebecca honored us when she received a college scholarship from the WMU Foundation. Mindy led out in one of the first Christian Women's Job Corps in the nation. In honorable memory of Lindsay and with loving appreciation for Mindy and the girls, I made a contribution to the Illinois TTT fund.



## Touch Today Tomorrow

The three deaths mentioned above happened in the fall of 2009, each following the death of **Kaye Shipley** who was serving as our State WMU President. Kaye, a personal friend as well as an officer, lived a life of service long before she had "the title." Kaye was the quieter type, always ready to giggle whether sitting on a bunk bed at Streator camp

or on the floor in Kazakhstan. Always an excellent team member, she never sought recognition for herself. I am blessed to have been touched by her life. Kaye was a great hostess and her husband, Mark, always a fantastic cook. Together they fed all the women's teams heading to Kazakhstan. Together they lived a life of service and ministry, loving everyone, everywhere. Together they loved and supported WMU leadership on state and national levels.

In recognition of Kaye, and with continuing appreciation of Mark, I encouraged others across Illinois to join me in making a contribution to the Illinois TTT fund. To date 138 people have contributed more than \$14,000. Obviously I was not alone in my deep appreciation of this quiet, unassuming, effective leader who walked among us, giving her life in missions ministry.

As I reflected on the fact that I made the same type contribution to TTT for four continuous months, September, October, November and December; I was left with an impression of "lives well lived."

Through the WMU Foundation, these gifts to Illinois TTT:

- Reflect my respect for each individual's love of God and service through WMU.
- Give me assurance their families would be notified of my expression.
- Provide financial resources for an "ongoing" Illinois and National WMU.

I cannot think of a better way to release and respond to the death of special ones in our lives. Flowers lose their petals; the leaves on plants turn brown. Each of you has been influenced by countless missions leaders. In honor of their impact on your life, consider gifting what you can TODAY to TOUCH lives TOMORROW. **Evelyn Tully**

# Reflections of Kaye

The thing I remember the most about Kaye was her servant's heart. My husband, Jack, and I became acquainted with Mark and Kaye several years ago. Mark and Jack both worked at Caterpillar, Inc. and had formed a friendship there. I met Kaye as we both served in Three Rivers Baptist Association. I saw Kaye as a pastor's wife supporter, WMU worker, and as a volunteer on mission trips to Christian Activity Center, East St. Louis. No matter what role she was in at the time, she had such a sweet, gentle spirit of serving others. No job was too small for her.

**Louise Newberry**



Simply put, my friend Kaye was truly special. She was! Period. That pretty much sums it up. Although I feel certain she would argue that fact, she indeed was one of a kind. I know others here will write about her love of missions, her many talents, her devout servant heart, her kind works, and indeed that all should be mentioned, but I want to share with you what I personally loved most about Kaye Shipley. Kaye Shipley loved to laugh! She could find humor in the most stressful of situations. I had the fortune of serving with Kaye on many international mission trips. And just like anything else, those trips take a lot out of you physically, mentally, and

emotionally. Just at the moment when you knew you couldn't do one more thing, or take one more step, or think one more thought, Kaye, in her quiet, subdued manner would throw a "zinger" your way and before you knew it your side was splitting from the force of the laughter. What a gift! What perfect timing!! What insight! What a woman! **Melanie Yearack**

Kaye and I shared many wonderful times together on a variety of mission teams. I totally agreed when she would remark, "It just doesn't get any better than this, does it?" She truly exemplified a servant attitude as she quietly worked alongside others.

WMU offered her an avenue to express her love and dedication to her Lord through missions. She was an example of what WMU is and who we ought to be; she led with sensitivity and purpose. I counted it a privilege to have called Kaye my friend. Her infectious laughter still rings in my ears and her encouraging words in my heart.

**Becky Arnett**



Do you think I can do this? I certainly do, just be yourself! The question was Kaye's. The response was mine. She was WMU President. I beamed each time she stepped to the microphone and was so "herself" ... soft spoken, twinkling eyes and a contagious smile, confident because she had always been a servant leader. She was the same on the platform as in the WMU trenches of ministry. Her life, her commitment brought honor to "the position." **Evelyn Tully**



It's so difficult to express in just a few words what it meant to know, love, and respect Kaye Shipley. Kaye was the ultimate example of a servant leader. She never sought positions of leadership, but through her dedicated service to others, her leadership abilities were recognized. I loved the smile on the faces of those to whom she was ministering - young and old alike. She had the ability to look at others through God's eyes and could always see their potential. People were drawn to Kaye because they saw the love of Jesus reflected in her life. I am so thankful for having had the blessing of calling her my friend.

**Judy Rinkenberger**

# When You Don't Know What to Do, Sing

IL WMU President Kaye Shipley and I were traveling late one night. We had already been in the van 16 hours together. After exhausting every potential topic such as children, WMU and household maintenance, we sat quietly in the darkness as fatigue wracked our bodies. We only had 50 miles to our final destination for the night, but it took every ounce of energy to keep us focused on the road.

Then in the stillness, Kaye began to softly sing a hymn in her quiet beautiful voice. I joined in even though my singing is anything but harmonious. Kaye did not seem to mind. When that song was finished, I started a hymn and she joined in. We must have sung our way through 25 hymns. When one could not remember a stanza, the other would recall the words. Sometimes we would simply hum to finish out a verse. I have to tell you that was one of the most sacred worship experiences I have ever had. And I have found her solution to keeping us awake during our late night endeavor to bring strength and comfort in other situations as well.

As I drove home from the Shipley house after Kaye's death, God

brought that precious memory to mind. I wondered if singing might assuage the current wave of grief that washed over me. I knew better than to begin with "It Is Well With My Soul," so I started to sing "Great is Thy Faithfulness." I could not get through the first verse. I tried the second verse ("Summer and winter..."), but could not get those words out either. Surely on the last verse ("Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth"), the song would break free, but it did not. I felt like I let

Kaye down. I drove on feeling defeated and even sadder. On that trip home, God brought other images of our sweet WMU leader to mind. I could see Kaye at Lake Sallateeska pushing boats off the dock as GAs giggled with delight. I saw her at Uptown feeding a meal to the homeless. I replayed in my mind watching her sort school supplies at our CAC back-to-school event and stuffing Lottie Moon Christmas Offering packets and setting up bookstores at countless events.

I remembered her playing with children in an orphanage in Peru and doing a devotion during a Thanksgiving service



in Bulgaria. I imagined her sweeping sidewalks for Muslim vendors in Paris and praying with women in Greece and Kazakhstan. She was pampering the band at events for our college women and swinging a hammer on our Habitat projects. I could see her leading conferences and committees always with a sweet disposition and kind words.

As the images kept coming to mind, suddenly I heard the words, "Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee."

It took me a moment to realize I was singing. There it was. Yes, God can give us a voice to sing even in the midst of such overwhelming loss.

To say that Kaye will be missed is the understatement of the millennium. I don't want to talk about just what we have lost, but about what we gained as well. We should be better disciples of Christ. Kaye led by example. She personified servant leadership. Her compassion had no bounds; her mercy had no limits. We should be people of courage willing to take on whatever tasks God gives us. Kaye never sought leadership. She preferred behind-the-scenes service. Yet leadership sought her with dogged intention. God knew she was the leader for our times. So relenting to her own will, she stepped out by faith for the path God chose for her.

Her small stature and quiet spirit belied the fact that she was a missions giant with a heart for the entire world. The life and faith lessons I have learned at her feet are countless. But sweetest among the memories will be that late night in the darkness when I traveled with her to the throne of grace.

Learn your own lessons from this faithful servant of God. When the road is long - sing. When you are exhausted and cannot take another step - sing. When the frustrations of life consume your spirit, sing. When you don't know which way to turn - stop and sing. When loss and grief paralyze you - sing. And when God calls you homeward to join Him, yes of course, sing.

**Sandy Wisdom Martin**  
IL WMU Director