

SUNDAY SCHOOL QUILT

Courtney Allsbrook Reed and I became friends in the youth group at Mountain Brook Baptist Church. She persuaded me that we should teach preteen girls Sunday School. I didn't think I could do it, but I replied: "You can teach and I'll do the craft or activity." She agreed, and the church staff said we could redecorate our classroom.

We decided we would paint the room to make a more inviting place for Bible study. We had a grand idea to have a girls' lock-in where we could paint the room together—bright yellow. We had 35 girls sign up. We split them into four groups and rotated into different activities. One was to paint accent pieces of furniture for the room; another was to create a Scripture graffiti wall. Writing a verse on the wall became a rite of passage when a girl entered the preteen department. Another activity was to make a quilt as artwork for our walls and another activity was to create a dance routine.

The quilt was my favorite activity. Each girl designed her own square, and then we sewed them together into one big quilt that we hung on the wall. To me, the quilt represents our church body. Each square represents an individual with different talents and skills. Together, they represent one body working together for the good of the church.

I learned a lot over the many years of preteen ministry. At the time, I didn't realize the impact it would have on me and how I could serve the church. It has been such a blessing getting to know so many students, plus their parents and other volunteers throughout the years. Courtney now lives in Lexington, Kentucky, but we stay in touch. I will always be grateful for her pushing me into ministry when I didn't think I could do it. In the end, the quilt tells a beautiful story.

Meredith Cale

Former Mountain Brook Baptist preteens with their quilt, from left to right: Francie Kenan, Carlisle McCullough, Elizabeth Hymer, Indigo Robinson, and Virginia Jordan.



AUGUST 11, 2019

WE'VE A STORY TO TELL
75th Anniversary Memories of Mountain Brook Baptist Church

THE PILOTS

It was hard to establish a men's Sunday School class in the early days of the church. There wasn't a large enough place for adult classes in the original church house across from Crestline School. When the chapel was built on Montevallo Road, a men's classroom was designated in the basement. To kick-start the men's class, the pastor enlisted the venerable Dean of Howard College, Percy Pratt Burns, to come over from Southside Baptist Church as a guest teacher. In October 1952, an amazing teacher was called to join Mountain Brook Baptist Church.

Judge George Lewis Bailes had been a Life Deacon at First Baptist Church of Birmingham. He had nearly 30 years' experience as a Sunday School teacher. His class was broadcast on WBRC radio. He was 66 years old and still the active circuit judge of Jefferson County. He took command of the lectern in the basement of Mountain Brook Baptist Church, and men flocked to the class. He wrote a weekly lesson commentary for publication in the Shades Valley Sun newspaper, which was owned by Mountain Brook Baptist Church member Arthur Cook.

Judge Bailes' class soon adopted the name "Pilot Class." We don't know the origin of the name, but we know that it is the oldest continuous Bible study class at Mountain Brook Baptist Church today.

In 1964, someone drew a cartoon showing Judge Bailes piloting a ship's wheel, while Jesus stood behind him as guide. The drawing has hung in the class meeting room until this day. In 1974, at age 90, the judge was named teacher emeritus, and other distinguished teachers stepped up. They included Dr. Perry Morton, head of the physics department at Samford, then Jack Pfrimmer (an engineer who was temporarily transferred out of town), then Gen. Tom Merrill, a military man and management consultant, Gov. Albert Brewer, and Dr. Joe Lewis, retired provost at Samford.

It was this class that Dr. Dotson M. Nelson Jr. joined when he retired as pastor and became a Sunday School member. Dr. James D. Moebes did the same, as did Hoyt Wilson when he retired as minister of education. After Dr. Nelson's death, the class renamed itself the "Pilot/Dotson M. Nelson Jr." class.

Only in the last couple of years did the class decide to shorten its name as the Dr. Dotson M. Nelson Jr. Class. The class today is taught by Doral Atkins, Hoyt Wilson, and Mary Splawn.

John A. Taylor compiled and distributed a thorough history of the class in 2014. He included a roster of class members for some years. The class kept enrollment of approximately 50 members for close to 50 years.



George Lewis Bailes

Judge George Lewis Bailes, who led the Pilot class from 1952-1974.



This photo of the class was taken on November 8, 1997. Pictured are: First row, left to right: Buck Weaver, Don Brabston, Jack Pickell, Dr. Dotson M. Nelson Jr., Tom Merrill, Bud Johnson, Dave Carder. Second row, left to right: Doral Atkins, Jack Bolt, David Bates, Lonnie Munger, Howard Jackson, John Paul Martin, Jim Fletcher, Marvin Prude, Bob Hodgkins, Harold Williams. Third row, left to right: Robert Faircloth, Walter Phillips. Fourth row, left to right: Jerry Edwards, Jack Guyton, Jack Pfrimmer, Bob Sherer, Bill Cheatham, Bill Johnson, T.L. Cloar, Coy Collinsworth, John McCarley, Jim Adams, Bill Austin. Fifth row, left to right: Bubber Foster, Bob Compher, Pat Tatom, Joe Cassese, Bill Manly, Cliff Dotson, George Bates, Atley Kitchings Jr., Julian Brown, Boyd Walton, and Tom Kennemer.

Right: The Pilot emblem, which continues to hang on the outside wall of the Dotson M. Nelson Jr. Bible Class.

