

PERSISTENT INVITATION

Having grown up in smaller churches in Alabama, I attended with parents and grandparents, but I never joined any of them, much less made any kind of public profession of faith. I had never been baptized. I was divorced and living with my 7-year-old son Sammy in Birmingham in 1970. At my job, I met George Holmes. He happened to be living near me. We were married in 1970 and had 44 years together before he died in 2013.



Peggy Holmes

In 1971 we bought a home on Mountain Park Drive. Before long, Mountain Brook Baptist Church spotted us, and the “Monday Night Visitation” began. Church members apparently met at church on Monday night and mapped out people to visit and invite to church. Royce Bryant drew the assignment of the Holmes house. He was a very nice gentleman who took his job seriously.

We had just sat down to dinner one Monday night, when the doorbell rang. It was Mr. Bryant, inviting us to attend Mountain Brook Baptist Church. Dinner was getting cold on the table. Then he came again the following Monday—and the next, and the next. He came every Monday for nearly three months, always at dinnertime. Finally, I said: “Mr. Bryant, if you will quit coming here at dinnertime every Monday, we will visit your church.”

And we did. It was at Mountain Brook Baptist Church that I made my profession of faith, was baptized in the Sanctuary, and even became a member of the church staff for several years. It became MY church. Now I wish I could say, “So sorry that I was rude to you, Mr. Bryant.” I think God knew all along what I needed.

Peggy Holmes

Note: Royce Bryant was an active Baptist layman who was laid off from his regular job. He asked Dr. Dotson Nelson for advice about employment. Dr. Nelson hired him on the spot in a part-time job as “church visitor.” He was an expert at tracking newcomers to the community and finding people who needed to know Jesus. It was said by pastors that Royce Bryant contributed enormously to the growth of Mountain Brook Baptist Church but also to the growth of other churches in the community.



AUGUST 25, 2019

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

THIS IS MY CHURCH

My family moved from Decatur, Alabama to Birmingham when I was in the ninth grade, and we started attending Mountain Brook Baptist Church where the worship services were held at that time in the Chapel. I continued attending Mountain Brook Baptist Church as I went through Shades Valley High School, Samford University, and UAB Medical School. The church had excellent leadership and Sunday School teachers and was well supported by solid members who were very kind and helpful. After graduating from medical school, I moved to San Diego for my internship and residency training in general psychiatry. I met and married Judy in San Diego, and we moved to Honolulu for my training in child psychiatry. We started our family in Honolulu and later moved to Birmingham where we attended Mountain Brook Baptist Church. I am very proud to say that both of my children, Emily and David, were baptized at the church and now have married and are wonderful parents and citizens. I will always be appreciative of how much the church members have supported my family and have guided my children to be the quality people they are. Mountain Brook Baptist Church always has and continues to do God's work.

Dr. Clarence (Mackey) McDanal



The McDanal family at Emily Casey McDanal's wedding: David McDanal holding daughter Corina, David's wife Manuela holding daughter Lola, Matt and Dr. Emily Casey, the late Dr. Judy McDanal, and Dr. Clarence McDanal.

WELCOME

My husband, Dell, took a job in Birmingham in 2009, and he moved here ahead of the family in August of that year. Shortly after he began work, he was contacted by several co-workers who were members of Mountain Brook Baptist Church, including Carol Collinsworth and Marty Lloyd, and he was invited to Wednesday night Bible study and dinner. On one of the first Wednesdays at Mountain Brook Baptist Church he met and talked with the children's minister, Sharon Howard. The next day, Sharon reached out to me and connected me via email with Aimee Turner, a Mountain Brook Baptist Church member with whom Sharon thought I would have a lot in common.

Aimee and I corresponded a few times and have since become close friends. Then, in November when our family moved into our new house, Sharon picked up our son Turner, who was then in fifth grade, and took him with a couple of other Mountain Brook Baptist Church boys his age to get ice cream. Carol invited Turner to visit and join the Boy Scout troop where her boys were members. Turner did join Troop 86, and has since become an Eagle Scout.

Because of how warmly our family was welcomed and cared for, we never even visited any other churches. Mountain Brook Baptist Church has been our church home from the very beginning.

Sherrie Futch



Dell and Sherrie Futch

MY STORY AT MOUNTAIN BROOK BAPTIST CHURCH

When I moved to Birmingham to assume a position with national Woman's Missionary Union in 1967, I joined First Baptist Church. It was then located downtown.

The Civil Rights Movement may have had officially come to a close, but there continued to be racial tensions in the city. After about four years, these tensions hit First Baptist Church. One beautiful fall Sunday morning, I was faced with an immediate decision as to whether I would walk out of the Sanctuary at First Baptist Church and become a part of a new congregation, or if I would remain a member of First Baptist.

My choice was not to support either side but to follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit and find another church in which to serve. Realizing that I would be criticized for my stand, I determined this would be the best decision for me.

I visited several churches in the weeks that followed. Each church seemed to have its own personality and in most cases that was easily detected.

Mountain Brook Baptist Church was on my list to visit only because I knew the Nelson family by reputation. Dr. Dotson M. Nelson Sr. had been president of Mississippi College when I was a student at Blue Mountain College, a sister Mississippi Baptist College. Mrs. Grace Nelson was an alumna of Blue Mountain College. Dr. Dotson M. Nelson Jr., pastor of Mountain Brook Baptist Church, was active in Southern Baptist circles and our paths crossed frequently in the work of the denomination.

In the spring of 1972, Dr. Nelson came to my office at WMU. I was well aware of what prompted the visit. Shortly into the conversation, I knew that I must be forthright and tell him that I had no intention of becoming a member of Mountain Brook Baptist Church, but I appreciated this time to visit with him.

I was poised with my speech. I began by giving Dr. Nelson my impressions of the church. Everyone in the congregation was wealthy; the church was made up of too many socially prominent people; members were "uppity" and "snooty," and there were too many cliques in the church. I told Dr. Nelson there was no way that I would fit in with that kind of crowd. I thought I had delivered a convincing speech.

Dr. Nelson rared back in his chair and with his slow, deep Southern drawl began to refute all my impressions about Mountain Brook Baptist Church, and once he got that out of the way, he began to relate all the positives of Mountain Brook Baptist Church. Our conversation ended, and ... I have been an active member of Mountain Brook Baptist Church for 46 years.

June Whitlow



June Whitlow