



HONORING SACRED MEMORIES: THE PARABLE WINDOW

Mason Clifton Crow (1902-1973) became a Deacon and Sunday School superintendent in the 1960s, almost immediately after joining Mountain Brook Baptist Church in 1963. His wife Helen (1907-1998) was a children's Sunday School teacher. In 1926, he established Crow Real Estate and Insurance Co., with extensive developments east and south of Birmingham. He was succeeded as company president by his daughter, Helen Crow Mills Pittman, who also has been a leader in Mountain Brook Baptist Church. Mr. Crow was president of the board of Baptist Hospitals.

The Parable Window, presented to the glory of God by Mr. and Mrs. M. Cliff Crow.



MAY 12, 2019

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

THE STUDENT MINISTER WHO GREW UP

The connection between Dr. James D. Moebes and Mountain Brook Baptist Church has spanned 58 years, as of 2019. In 1961, at age 20, Jim Moebes got a part-time job as youth worker at Mountain Brook Baptist Church. He was a full-time student at Samford University and an All-American basketball player. He didn't have much time to practice being a minister. His job at Mountain Brook Baptist Church was to lead Bible studies, recreation, retreats, and camps, and to eat (church members, especially the Holcomb family with their restaurant business, supplied delicious suppers).

Mountain Brook Baptist Church members gave their youth minister every kind of encouragement. Many began to show up at his basketball games on Samford's campus. Perhaps some of them saw that game when Jim silently endured numerous fouls from a player on an opposing team. The referee refused to call the fouls. The next time it happened, Jim picked up his opponent and threw him bodily under the stands. It cost Jim a foul and bought him some satisfaction. "I never hit him though. Never hit anybody." Jim stood 6 feet, 4 1/2 inches.

His experience at Mountain Brook Baptist Church confirmed the sense of calling to ministry which he had experienced at age 15. He made lots of friends, and he basked in the coaching of Dr. Dotson M. Nelson Jr., the senior pastor. Jim was dating a lovely young lady, a fellow student at Samford. On August 25, 1962, Jim and Gail Kerr of Piedmont got married. Gail entered into the fun and responsibilities of youth ministry at Mountain Brook Baptist Church, and she learned a few things about being a minister's wife.

Among side benefits, the young couple got to take care of the home and children of John and Lillian Holcomb when they traveled. It was like a vacation for Jim and Gail. They could stay at the Holcomb house and take the children to dine at Britling Cafeteria, every day. Mary Holcomb would beat them at ping pong.

Mountain Brook Baptist Church gave the necessary authorization for Jim to be admitted to theology studies at Southern Seminary in Louisville. May 1963 was an especially busy month. On May 12, Mountain Brook Baptist Church hosted Jim's ordination for ministry. Dr. Nelson called together some of the most outstanding ministers of the area to be on Jim's ordination council. They all signed a certificate that Jim could show as evidence that he was an authorized minister of the gospel.



Above: Dr. Moebes with his wife, Gail Moebes, in the 2016 Church Directory.

Right: Brothers Mike (left) and Jim Moebes (right), with their mother Josephine.



Above: Dr. Moebes, pictured with organist Dr. Paul Mosteller and his wife, Darla. Left: While you might be accustomed to seeing Dr. Moebes in a suit and tie or in a robe as a fisher of men, Dr. Moebes also enjoys fishing at the lake for relaxation.



A photo taken of Dr. Moebes in 1978, during the time he served as executive minister of Mountain Brook Baptist Church.

Among the signers were Dr. Nelson; Robert E. Poerschke (Mountain Brook Baptist Church's minister of education and later a seminary professor of religious education); John D. Wiley Jr., a psychologist who was a member of Mountain Brook Baptist Church; Garnett Puckett, a local pastor and friend of Dr. Nelson; Gilbert L. Guffin, dean of chapel at Samford and a former interim minister at Mountain Brook Baptist Church; Mabry Lunceford, professor of religion at Samford and former long-time interim pastor at Mountain Brook Baptist Church; and W. T. Edwards Jr., professor of religion at Samford and Mountain Brook Baptist Church member. Jim said later, "I felt that they were a heavenly council."

At the end of the month, Jim graduated from Samford with his bachelor's degree. He and Gail moved to Louisville, where he received the master of divinity degree in 1966. During this time, their son was born.

Then the family was off to the University of Alabama, so Jim could get a master's degree and PhD in counseling and educational psychology. He stayed on to work on staff at the University of Alabama. In Tuscaloosa, their daughter was born, and Jim's final degree was awarded in 1970.

For five years, Dr. James D. Moebes advanced through the ranks of higher education administration. He seemed destined for a great career in a university setting. But he never got away from his call to church ministry. Dr. Nelson knew this, so the church of his heart, Mountain Brook Baptist, called him back. He became executive minister in 1975, and then in 1981 he succeeded Dr. Nelson as senior minister.

His great service as senior minister at Mountain Brook Baptist Church continued until he retired in 2011 at age 70. He gave 36 years as a full-time minister, all at Mountain Brook Baptist Church. The church's Endowment Trust was renamed in his honor. Now he and Gail continue as active church members, always on call to help.