A trip to the Truett Memorial Library is a stimulating experience. One can select a book and sit in a comfortable chair where there is a unique lamp giving the reader perfect lighting. Coffee is served!

Now, if you bring your grandchild, there are countless books ready for a child of every age. And there is a nook--actually a hide-a-way--for the younger readers. They can curl up and read a book! I guarantee they will give up their I Pads!

Now, if you're coming to research any part of the history of First Baptist, Dallas, it's all there--books, albums, tapes, pictures, records, programs. This is where I became very involved with the library.

Ruthe Turner, director of this heavenly place, has performed a wondrous creation in the basement, under the old/original sanctuary, of First Baptist Church. I call it the Eden of libraries.

The library is special, but so is Ruthe Turner. She has this to say. “When I became the Director of Truett Memorial Library, I knew I inherited a rich legacy of the marvelous books, DVDs and CDs. It is a joy to share them with our membership and beyond. We have a vital ministry for all ages, and we are the “Mothership” church to ever offer ebooks anywhere.” Ruthe is computer wise, and that is essential in today’s world. She claims that being the librarian, as well as having access to the archives, is like being given the “Keys to the Kingdom.”

“We offer all kinds of services. We hosted a birthday party, have glued shoe soles back on, even did a glue job on an oboe. We call ourselves a “full service library.”

“Can you believe, I even clipped nails for one who was in need of a manicure!”

“In the summer time, we have the Summer Saints Bible Study for all the kids in the day care center.”

The library once served as a shelter from one of those frightful tornados that often steam through Dallas. This tornado came when Oasis Bible Study was letting out, and the safe place for moms and children was the library. “There were countless kids and moms crammed into the library for quite some time. This is when I created a play nook in a closet.”

Ruthe lived a young life of “extremes.” She was born in Little Falls, Minnesota, where the average snow fall is 47 inches. Her father was a traveling pianist for crusades and revivals. Then the family moved to North Dakota, where the snow fall is only 45 inches.

Then it was off to Seymour, Texas, where her father served as pastor of First Christian Church. Seymour, Texas, holds the record of being the hottest place in Texas ever! In 1936, the thermometer registered 120 degrees. I told you she lived a life of extremes.

The family moved to Graham, Texas, long enough for Ruthe to graduate from high school. Then she was off to Texas Wesleyan College, Fort Worth, where she “snagged her tall Texan, Jerry Turner!”

It’s Jerry who volunteers full time, makes the coffee, checks out books, entertains the children, and keeps order in the library. Before this most rewarding position, Jerry was a system analyst working with big, big computer programs in the finance industry.

The Turners have five children, one girl and four boys. Ruthe says the girl can do no wrong. As far as the boys go... “No comment.”

Ruthe hastily adds, “All five are Christians married to Christians. They have given us eleven grandchildren and one great-granddaughter.” What a fine family!
I have always been involved in theatre and in communication, but actually I had another wish. I always wanted to be one of those big animals that walked around at fairs and shook hands with kids. I thought that would be so much fun to do.

So, when I joined the staff at FBC, I had a big mouse suit made for myself. I was going to be the Church Mouse who would come out and greet the kids at Vacation Bible School. I thought it was a great idea!

And it got even greater when I bought a puppet that was the exact copy of the big mouse. I had an act. The puppet would come out and greet the kids and tell them that if they closed their eyes, the puppet would grow. I knew the children would love it!

Here is what happened.

First, I greeted the toddlers. They loved the puppet. I told them to close their eyes and I would grow! I rushed out into the hall way where Lillian Snapp helped me put on the mouse suit.

I returned as a big mouse and the toddlers went into hysterics seeing the giant mouse. I had to leave in a hurry. That poor teacher had to deal with that scene.

I went to the primaries. They loved the puppet. I rushed out into the hall once again and returned as the big mouse. They looked askance, but cautiously accepted me. I left, but the teacher came out into the hallway and told me I had to come back as the puppet. The children didn’t want to go out into the hall with a big mouse on the loose. I had to be small.

I went to the Juniors. They were bored with the puppet and when I returned as a big mouse, they pulled my tail and shook my hand violently. No fear whatsoever.

Anyone like to borrow mouse suit? I still have it!

Nan and I just returned from the Georgia coast. We have vacationed on St. Simons Island for the past seventeen years. This is my first day back in the office and I am not yet accustomed to wearing shoes and long pants!

I am really looking forward to the program being presented by Rose-Mary Rumbley and Ruthe Turner at our next Widows Fellowship Luncheon. This should be very interesting and great fun! When Rose-Mary talks, I listen…and I always learn something.

On August 6-8 we will have a church-wide Old Fashioned Revival with Dr. Anthony George preaching and Southern Gospel Trio, Greater Vision as our music guests. Anthony is the Senior Associate Pastor for Dr. Charles Stanley and First Baptist Atlanta. They will be with us for both morning services on the 6th in the Worship Center and on the evenings of the 6th – 8th in the Historic Sanctuary. I hope you will join with us in prayer for these special services.
A GIFTED TEACHER
A story about Dr. Eugene Merrill

By Ruth Quinn

Adding to our list of talented and prestigious Bible teachers, I introduce DR. EUGENE MERRILL, founder and continuing teacher of the Pathfinders Class. He was born in Anson, a small village in Maine. His Canadian mother and Yankee father began their family of five children during the 30’s in the Great Depression. He described the home as religious with a strict moralism, but knowing nothing of the saving Gospel. With the outbreak of WWII, Dr. Merrill’s father, who was ineligible for military service, moved the family to the shipbuilding city of Bath, Maine, where he worked building destroyers for the Navy. The family lived in substandard housing until the war ended. To resume his trade as a printer, his father moved the family to New Hampshire, where Dr. Merrill’s life changed under the tutelage of a loving, young pastor. At a camp in Vermont Dr. Merrill claimed Jesus Christ as his Savior. Eventually the entire family came to faith.

God’s providence led Dr. Merrill to Bob Jones University in South Carolina from which he received a BA in Bible and speech in 1957. After a brief stint as a youth pastor in Portsmouth, NH, he returned to Bob Jones where he earned an MA and PhD in Old Testament. Most important, he met his future wife, Janet. He said it was love at first sight from his standpoint, but it took some convincing for Janet, a beautiful and impressively intelligent young woman, to become his wife. After much pleading, they were married in 1960. They were both hooked on academics. Janet received an MA from Notre Dame and a PhD from Columbia. Meanwhile his interest in Biblical backgrounds and Semitic languages led him to pursue an MA at NYU and a PhD from Columbia in 1984.

God gave them the precious gift of a daughter, Sonya, who went to First Baptist Academy for eleven years, graduating as valedictorian and earning a scholarship to Wellesley College. She received a PhD in philosophy from the University of London and an MD from Harvard. Sonya currently is at Presbyterian Hospital where she is Associate Director of the residency program in Internal Medicine and has a private practice in sleep disorders. After leaving Massachusetts, Dr. Merrill was directed to Dallas Theological Seminary where he served for 38 years, rising to the rank of Distinguished Professor of Old Testament Studies. During this time, Janet took a position at SMU and then completed her professional academic career at Dallas Baptist University.

For several years Gene and Janet spent summers in Israel in archaeological pursuits, searching especially for the location of the important site of Ai, mentioned prominently in Joshua 7 and 8. “We found it!” he says. Gene made his first trip to Israel in 1965 in a six-week program sponsored by the Unites States State Department and the government of Israel in an attempt to develop better relationship and mutual understanding. Since then, he has made a dozen or more trips, including several to Amman, Jordan, where he has lectured at the Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary.

The Merrill family joined First Baptist in 1976, and soon after Gene began his tenure as the founding and only teacher for nearly 40 years of the Pathfinders Class. He is a servant leader to the Class and has endeared himself to each member. They testify that he has a pastor’s heart and under his influence the class is one of ministry to its members. They give him a five star rating.

The Merrill’s enjoy travel to distant places. They visited Holland during Memorial Day, will tour the Amalfi Coast of Italy in early July, and will go to India and Sri Lanka by way of Oman (look it up) during Christmas and New Year’s. When asked what he would do if he were not teaching Bible, he said he would love to teach English literature.

Dr. Merrill’s humble nature and reluctance to share his honors led me to do some detective work to learn that he was a graduation speaker at his high school, was chosen president of his university senior class, and, in 2010-11, president of The Evangelical Theological Society, an organization of nearly 3,000 Bible and theology scholars. Dr. Merrill has published a number of books and articles on Hebrew and Ancient Near Eastern studies and the Old Testament. Leadership, scholarship, and ministry are only a few of the qualities that make him the beloved teacher of the Pathfinders Class.

We are blessed beyond measure for this extraordinary talent and for his service and example.
DEAR LADIES,

Hello Summer! Ah, the tastes of summer…watermelons, cantaloupes, and peaches! Summer, for me, is more time on the Golf Course! Lots of memories are made in the summertime besides barbecues, ice cold lemonades, and homemade ice-creams. Vacations are taken by many, and I say, “The only trip you will regret is the one you didn’t take!”

We’ll all be taking a trip down memory lane August 19th, with Rose-Mary Rumbley and Ruthe Turner. Just wait until you hear and view the memories of our Church to be presented. What would First Baptist Church do without these two faithful, caring ladies?

Grateful thanks go to another lady, Carol Cashman for taking the responsibility for a well presented Lighted Pathway. Please tell all three, Carol, Rose-Mary and Ruthe, how much you appreciate what they do.

Thanks also to those of you who have expressed your sympathy to us at the Homegoing of our daughter, Lisa. She fought a good fight for eight years, but her body was no longer suited for this world. We know she is in the presence of the Heavenly Father.

Make your reservation for the August 19 Fellowship luncheon by Monday, August 14th at 214.969.2466. If you need a ride, please make that request at the same time you make the reservation for the luncheon.

Blessings,

Jack

Jack Smith

“Honor widows who are widows indeed”
1 Timothy 5:3

PHOTOS FROM OUR LAST LUNCHEON
COMING SOON

DEACONS
DAY OF SERVICE

Including mowing lawns, planting flowers, painting, changing light bulbs, small repairs, etc.

Stay tuned for more details...

Widows Luncheon
Saturday, August 19 11:30am | CenterStage

Featuring
Rose-Mary Rumbley & Ruthe Turner

For reservations or transportation requests, call 214.969.2466 by Monday, August 14. Valet parking available.