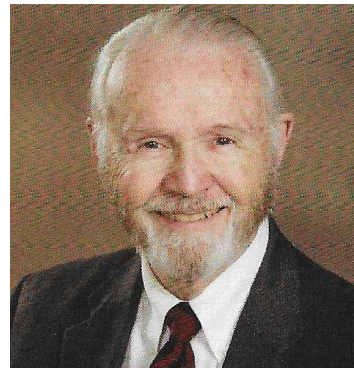


### Larry Long

Larry grew up in First Presbyterian Church as his family were members when he was born. He was born practically in FPC as he was born in the March Clinic! (this was the original name for building known as McNeer Apartments that was demolished in the 1990's – now the location of our Columbarium). Larry has early memories of the huge doors that were part of original "little white school" and separated the sanctuary from the Sunday School rooms. He also remembers visiting Dr. McCorkle in his small office located down Holston Street while the new church was being built. Actual joining the church happened for Larry when he was 16 in about 1948 but he had been baptized in the early 1930's. He recalls the youth group in the 1940's when the senior high students from the 4 Church Circle churches met together on alternating Sunday evenings at the various churches. He says they developed ecumenical insight into each of the various religions from these meetings. He also remembers our first choirmaster – Phillip Blackwood – leading a youth choir as well as the Chancel Choir. Blackwood gave Larry 6 months of lessons to enable him to join Chancel Choir – not telling him he had to give a concert prior to joining the Chancel Choir. Larry has continued to sing in our Chancel Choir for over 40 years. Another activity Larry remembers was a 5 year long project of teaching Scottish Dance to a group of 10 – 15 couples mostly from FPC on Sunday afternoons. The activity was social in nature with the dance and then dinner afterward. Many lifelong friendships developed from this FPC activity. He also recalls serving on Session several times; serving as disbursing treasurer; and teaching the new CLC curriculum for adults - The Men's Bible Class in the Chapel; the Women's Bible Class in the Johnson Parlor; and then trying to join the two classes. Larry has memories of all ministers in our church except for the very first one – Dr. King.



# Nonagenarian Members of First Pres

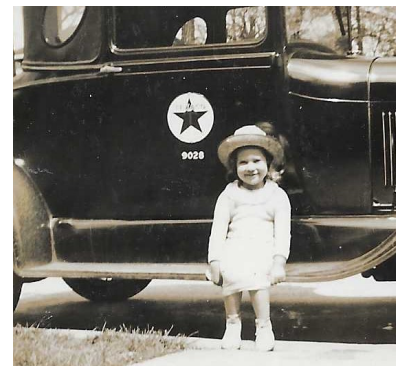


### Anna Bacon Gamble

Anna has been a part of the worship and music ministry at First Presbyterian for many years. She came to our church first as a friend of long-term organist Hazel Huntoon. She was guest organist, pianist, and vocalist on Sundays for several churches in Kingsport during the 1950's and going forward. Anna played piano for the Men's Bible Class in the Chapel when it was full to the brim with the men of our church in the 1940's through 1960's. She donated the Miller Organ that now resides in the Chapel to our church. Many of our long-term members remember fondly the beautiful solo's that Anna shared at weddings, funerals, and worship services through the years. Anna joined FPC in 1999. Anna still sings with the choir when able, and plays the piano for the Chapel service at The Blake where she now resides.

### Inez McBee

The McBee family came to First Presbyterian Church in 1988 during the time Gary Bullard was our senior minister. They had previously been members of Bethel Presbyterian here in Kingsport. She particularly remembers FPC receptionist and membership secretary, Pat Brose. She enjoyed and always looked forward to the Bible studies led by Sharon Amstutz.



*We had hoped to present childhood photos of each of the nonagenarians for you to match with the current member. However, we were not able to obtain childhood photos for all but here are a few for you to guess their identity! (Answers on the next to last page of the newsletter)*

There is a VIP group at First Pres that may not be well known to all. It is our nonagenarian members. If you are not familiar with this word - it refers to anyone between the age of 90 and 99. We are blessed with a number of people in this group who are recognized for their membership and time with our church in this article. Part of the group met for lunch last fall with Pastor Mike Shelton. Members of the History Committee gathered information from the group and are sharing it with you in this newsletter. Together these 9 members share 370 years of membership in FPC. Hat's off to our nonagenarians! Thanks for all your years of support to our church.

*Above photo, looking left to right – Chuck Bachelder, Carol Francisco, Mike Shelton, Rudy Greear, and Laura Jane Yantz*

# Nonagenarian Members of First Pres



## Laura Jane Yantz

Laura Jane moved to Kingsport with her husband in 1953. She and her husband were first members of Waverly Road Presbyterian Church and later she joined First Pres in 1996 when Danny Massie was our minister. She remembers Pat Brose was very nice and helpful as church secretary during some of her earlier years at First Pres. Soon after she joined the church the Fellowship Center and Child Care Center were added to our facilities. Laura Jane has many memories through her years at First Pres. She especially enjoyed the trips to Barter Theater, family night suppers, and the Senior and Women's Group Trips to the camp at Banner Elk. Due to some health issues during the past year Laura Jane has moved to The Blake where she enjoys the numerous activities provided there.

## Carol Francisco

Carol joined First Pres in the late 1960's and she remembers Kirk Allen and Davis Thomas as special ministers during her early years as a member. She says the history and the location first brought their family to our church. She grew up in First Presbyterian Church in Knoxville. One of her favorite memories during her time at First Pres was taking part in the PALS program. The program matched adults in the congregation with senior high students – many pairs developed special relationships during a year of activities like carving jack-o-lanterns together at Halloween. Carol wishes we were able to still have the PALS program. Past staff members that have been especially meaningful to her are Pat Brose, Beverly Crawford and Tita and Danny Massie. Carol moved to Asbury Place where she resided until her recent death.



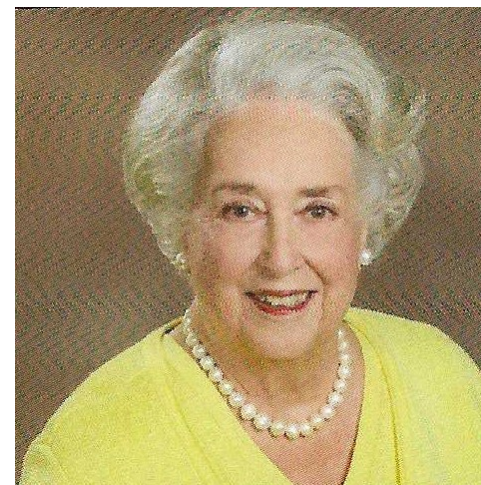
## Chuck Bachelder

Chuck lived in Kingsport for many years but was not a member of our church during his early years. When he and wife Celia returned to Kingsport in 1959 after his assignments in the US Navy, Celia convinced him to join First Pres where she had been a member for years. Kirk Allen was minister at that time. Chuck does; however, have memories of the earlier days at First Pres when we were located in the small white schoolhouse at our same location. He remembers Jeff Shivell serving as Santa Claus giving out candy at Christmas time. He says he was given a Bible by Dr. T. P. Johnston and he still has it. Chuck has served in many roles at FPC. One of his most memorable was serving as Chair of the Property Committee. Annie Hill was his staff partner and they worked together very well. In fact, he said David Cagle invited him to continue and he thinks he served as chair for 3 years. He remembers two significant projects

during his time in this job – first getting the new cork floor in the sanctuary. It took several years and assistance from Al Dryden, and of course contractors – but it was accomplished! The other project he is proud of completing was selling all the properties we owned but did not need. He said it took a lot of persistence, but he was glad to get it completed. Chuck has had a difficult last year health wise but thinks most of the issues are now behind him.

## Jo Ann Phlegar

Jo Ann has been a member of First Pres since 1947. She grew up in Kingsport as a member of Broad Street Methodist Church. Dr. T. P. Johnston was our minister when she and her husband joined the church. They had one child and were expecting their second child when they joined. Jo Ann remembers the large group of young couples beginning their families who took part in a very active Sunday School Class led by Bob Churchill, Don Shields, and Stuart Aitken. The group was both a Christian learning experience as well as a social group. Some friendships developed there, lasted for life. The Phlegar's lived on Woodside Drive in what is now Greenacres. With no car, due to lack of availability after WW2, they rode a bus that came right by their home to church on Sundays. She remembers the sanctuary being very new; and recalls the significant changes due to the church expansion (most of the education portion of church) during the time Kirk Allen was minister. Jo Ann took part in making the wonderful quilt that hangs in the foyer of the fellowship center. Jo Ann now lives in an assisted living facility in Charlotte NC to be near her daughter. During many of the last years she was in Kingsport she often filled in for church support staff. She was often found answering the phone, greeting visitors, and stuffing bulletins. We miss seeing Jo Ann but know her heart is still with First Pres as her church home. Jo Ann celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in November of 2022.



## Betsy Boyd

Betsy joined First Pres in 1953 when M O Sommers was minister. She had been a member of First Presbyterian in Asheville and since she had attended church there every Sunday since childhood – First Pres in Kingsport was a natural transition. She knew of Dr. Sommers because a classmate in UNC was engaged to his son. She recalls Mrs. W. W. Hufford as the first person to speak to her and make her feel welcome at First Pres. (*Mrs. Hufford was a Charter member of our church.*) Another early staff member she remembers fondly was Donna Rooney, DCE during Kirk Allen's tenure. Betsy has many memories of activities at FPC over the years. She and husband Lon enjoyed Wednesday night suppers and being advisors to Senior High youth. She recalls taking the Senior High group on a camping trip to Cosby. A new experience for Lon and Betsy was keeping the nursery one year. Having no children, changing diapers was a new learning experience for her! Betsy says one of the wonderful changes in recent years is the live-streaming of our

services. She comments she has trouble walking long distances, as well as standing and lots of getting up and down. Being able to watch and participate in the services from home is much more comfortable for her. She says it also is good practice for her using her new technology skills.

## Rudy Greear

Danny Massie was our minister when Rudy joined First Pres in 1986. Rudy has led a very interesting life. A native of the Fort Blackmore area in VA; he moved to Kingsport when he was 15. He graduated from Sullivan High School and joined the Navy serving in the Pacific during WW2. He saw action in the Philippines, Palau, Okinawa, and Japan. Returning to Kingsport after the war, he graduated from Tusculum College. He then enjoyed an extensive career at Eastman in plastic sales; he ended his career overseeing plastic sales in 5 states. A former member of Colonial Heights Presbyterian Church he settled into membership at First Pres. He currently enjoys talking golf with Mike Shelton. Rudy obviously enjoys his life currently living at Asbury Center.

