

November 2013

Patsy Hand



Billy and Mary Flowers, Patsy's parents, were high school sweethearts from Allendale, SC. They raised three daughters and one son in Beaufort; their church home was the Baptist Church of Beaufort (where Patsy was baptized). Patsy was especially close to her father who, like her, loved to sing. Not only did he sing at her wedding but many other significant ceremonies – including the wedding of former members Becky and Neil Trask – until his untimely death at age 49.

About the time Patsy turned 18, she and a friend double-dated to see the movie *Cleopatra*, the epic drama starring Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. In those days, seeing a movie meant a trip to Savannah. The name of Patsy's date may have been forgotten, but the young man with her friend was a USCB student named Owen Hand. Owen's laughter during the movie captivated Patsy (even though she didn't necessarily find anything funny in the film). It wasn't long before Owen called to ask her out. Now, 50 years later, his laughter and easy manner continue to charm Patsy.

While dating Owen, Patsy started attending First Pres with him and his father, Stan Hand. She immediately loved the warm, cozy atmosphere and joined the church before they were married here in 1968. When their children, Leslie and Kenny, were small, the Hands moved to the balcony – but once the children were older they moved back to 'their' pew where they sit every Sunday they're in town.

One of the things Patsy especially likes about our church is the congregational singing. She observed that many congregations simply read or murmur along with the choir, but members of First Pres love to "make a joyful noise!" Though she sang first soprano in college, Patsy prefers to sing alongside her loved one(s) instead of joining the choir.

Patsy also appreciates our congregation for staying the course through some difficult times. She admires those who never think they know all the answers. Her philosophy: "Once you think you know it all, you stop learning – and that's when you stop living."

Patsy earned her undergraduate (Elementary Education) and graduate (Early Childhood Education) degrees from USCB. She taught pre-Kindergarten through Fourth Grade for 35 years, initially at Mossy Oaks Elementary and eventually at Beaufort Academy where she also served as Head of the Lower School for a number of years.

Patsy has served First Pres in many capacities including being an elder; deacon; moderator of Presbyterian Women; Sunday school superintendent and teacher; bulletin board specialist; and member of several committees. Her current church-affiliated duties include being a Trustee (Secretary/Treasurer) of the Stony (no 'e') Creek Foundation; coordinator of volunteers for Beaufort Elementary School's Little Neighbors program; co-chair of the TNT Circle; and a member of the Presbyterian Women Coordinating Team.

In addition, Patsy chairs the Beaufort County Library Board of Trustees, developing and implementing the policies that govern library services. She also volunteers with Friends

of Caroline Hospice as a child bereavement specialist, assisting, counseling, comforting and educating children following the death of a loved one. Finally, through Senior Services, she delivers weekly meals to seniors in Port Royal.

How Patsy has time for any more activity is a mystery to all but she is passionate about family (especially two young grandsons in Connecticut) and reading (she keeps a book going in every room). She walks three miles almost every day with neighbor Bonnie Buchanan (where issues they discuss become "road kill", i.e., what's said on the road dies on the road). She also makes time for Pilates twice a week.

While it's a fact Patsy doesn't like the lime-light, we are especially pleased that she agreed to share her story and be recognized as a Servant of the Heart. Verse 8 from her favorite scripture (Philippians 4:4-9) seems especially fitting:

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things.

Her quiet contributions prove that one doesn't need to 'raise the volume' to have a voice. The church is grateful for Patsy's continued devotion to callings that profoundly touch the lives of others.