

IN MEMORIAM
1992-1997

149-153 OF THE BAHÁ'Í ERA

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FOREWORD

From its fourth volume (1930–1932), *The Bahá'í World*, the preparation of which was guided until his passing by Shoghi Effendi, has contained an "In Memoriam" section, providing readers with articles concerning the lives of believers who have rendered outstanding international service to the Faith and who had passed from this earthly plane during the time covered by the relevant volume. When it was decided to publish *The Bahá'í World* in an annual edition following 1992, it became necessary to restrict such information to short obituary notices.

This, then, is the first "In Memoriam" supplement to *The Bahá'í World*, offering inspirational background about some of the believers who have served in some significant manner during their brief lives. May their stories provide the reader with a glimpse of how they translated into deeds and acts their love for Bahá'u'lláh and His message for mankind.

IN MEMORIAM 1992-1997

MARY LOU MARTIN 1911-1992

MARY LOU MARTIN, PIONEER TO IRELAND IN THE NINE YEAR PLAN AND TO THE FALKLAND ISLANDS IN THE FIVE YEAR PLAN, HAS DIED FOLLOWING A LENGTHY STAY IN A NURSING HOME.

National Spiritual Assembly
of the Bahá'ís of the United States

On May 13, 1992, the Department of
the Secretariat wrote:

The Universal House of Justice was saddened to learn of the passing of Mrs. Mary Lou Martin, distinguished by her pioneering services to Ireland and the Falkland Islands. It has asked us to convey assurance of its prayers in the Holy Shrines for the progress of her radiant soul in the divine realms. Kindly so inform her bereaved children, care of her son, Mr. Dale Martin. You may also assure them of its prayers for the consolation of their hearts.

HABÍB HAZÁRÍ 1919-1992

GRIEVED PASSING FAITHFUL PROMOTER CAUSE GOD, HABIB HAZARI. HIS DEDICATED SERVICES TO THE FAITH, HIS READINESS TO ADVANCE THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE COMMUNITY, AND HIS GENUINE FRIENDSHIP IN SUPPORT OF HIS FELLOW-BELIEVERS ARE FONDLY REMEMBERED. ASSURE PRAYERS PROGRESS HIS RADIANT SOUL. CONVEY LOVING SYMPATHY HIS FAMILY.

Universal House of Justice
May 10, 1992

Habib Hazári was born in Qazvín, Iran, on November 27, 1919. He was the son of Ardashir and Firoozeh Hazári. His father was born into a Zoroastrian family in Yazd in 1885 and as a child witnessed the brutal martyrdom of one of the Seven Martyrs of Yazd in 1891. His parents soon recognized the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh and went on to become distinguished, devout Bahá'ís, active in the fields of teaching and pioneering.¹ (Indeed, his father who accepted the Faith at the tender age of

¹ See "In Memoriam," *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVIII, pp. 776-78.

twelve was the recipient of nine Tablets from 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He had the bounty of attaining the presence of the Master once and that of Shoghi Effendi on two occasions.)

Habíb completed his secondary education in Rasht, Iran, and graduated from Tíhrán University with a degree in electro-mechanical engineering. In 1945 he entered employment in the Ministry of Post and Telegraph.

In 1950 he went to England on a scholarship for postgraduate studies where he also studied management and journalism. Back in Iran his gifts for organization and management were greatly appreciated by the authorities, and he was seconded to government ministries and agencies such as Tíhrán University, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Work and Public Services, and finally the Center for the Management of the Ministry of Works and Employment for the entire country.

In 1974 the family went to England and settled in London in order to provide their son, Cyrus, and daughter, Mitra, with more opportunities for a better education.

One of Habíb's sterling qualities was friendship. He was the personification of his name, which means "friend." No matter who approached him for help and guidance, be it a friend of many years standing or a passing acquaintance, he would, to the best of his ability, respond immediately and positively in facilitating a solution to a problem or alleviating a difficulty.

He gave his time freely and was a very conscientious, orderly, and methodical person. Without fear of contradiction this writer can testify that Habíb was always punctual for an appointment; he was either a little early or exactly on time.

In London, apart from meeting friends and former colleagues and visiting those in hospital, he devoted considerable time



Habíb Hazá'ri

in perusing newspapers and periodicals, particularly those in Persian, and whenever there was an item that referred to the Bahá'í Faith, he would immediately send it to the World Centre. He had a great gift for gathering and collating information about the Faith from many sources.

Habíb was an untiring letter writer. He allocated a portion of every day to deal with his correspondence. He never left a letter unanswered, and his mail was quite voluminous.

He was well versed in the Persian language, and his knowledge of the Bahá'í writings was very profound. He knew many prayers and Tablets by heart and would often recite them. His assistance to the late Hand of the Cause Mr. Hasan Balyúzi and the renowned Bahá'í scholar Mr. Eshraq-Khavari in their research has been acknowledged by both of them.

One of Habíb's cherished wishes, which he was unable to achieve before his passing, was to facilitate the acquisition of a suitable premise to house and give

access to the Afnan Library that contains rare manuscripts and original scholarly works. This library was established by Mr. Hasan Balyúzi in memory of his brother Abdu'llah.²

Habíb's wife, Muluk, relates that the day before Habíb passed away, two of the nurses in the hospital, knowing that his death was near, had been comforting him. During their conversation they had asked him whether he feared death. Habíb, with firmness and without hesitation, replied that throughout his life he had endeavored to be a helpful friend to everyone, and thus he had no fear of death.

He passed away peacefully on May 10, 1992, with a lingering smile on his face and is buried in the Great Northern London Cemetery.

Farhang Afnan with the assistance of Muluk Hazá'ri

ISOBEL SABRI 1924-1992

HEARTS PROFOUNDLY SADDENED
LOSS GREATLY LOVED OUTSTANDING
PROMOTER CAUSE GOD, MEMBER
INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTRE
ISOBEL SABRI. HER STERLING
INDEFATIGABLE PIONEERING AND
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES OVER
SEVERAL DECADES FIRST BRITISH
ISLES AND THEN AFRICA CROWNED
BY UNFORGETTABLE HIGHLY
VALUED CONTRIBUTIONS WORLD
CENTRE SINCE 1983. INTEGRITY
HER EXEMPLARY LIFE POWERFULLY
REINFORCED HER

FEARLESS VALIANT UNFLAGGING
EFFORTS CHAMPION TRUTHS AND
DEFEND INTERESTS FAITH SHE
DEARLY CHERISHED. PRAYING
HOLY SHRINES CONTINUED
PROGRESS HER LUMINOUS SOUL
ABHÁ KINGDOM WHERE RICH
REWARD ASSUREDLY AWAITS
HER. ADVISE HOLD MEMORIAL
SERVICES HER HONOUR HOUSES
OF WORSHIP AND COMMUNITIES
THROUGHOUT BAHÁ'Í WORLD.

Universal House of Justice
June 18, 1992

Isobel Sabri (née Locke) was born in Fresno, California, on July 19, 1924. She passed away early in the morning of June 18, 1992, after forty-seven years of service to Bahá'u'lláh.

Isobel spent her youth in Burlingame and San Mateo and studied at Stanford University, graduating in International Relations and Journalism in the class of 1946. However, she remembered her time at Stanford for a far more vital acquisition of knowledge—that of Bahá'u'lláh. She changed majors many times searching for truth, and she was blessed in meeting Farrukh Ioas, from whom she contracted a rapturous love of Bahá'u'lláh. She embraced the Faith at the Geyserville Summer School on July 8, 1945. She wrote of the event, "The meaning of spiritual rebirth was a clear and shining reality to me."³

In 1946 Isobel pioneered to the United Kingdom, arriving in Edinburgh in the harsh winter at the end of that year. She was the first pioneer to Scotland and served on Edinburgh's first Local Spiritual Assembly in 1948. She pioneered to other towns in

² In 2002 the Afnan Library Trust jointly purchased with the National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom a large property at Bridge House, Tonbridge, Kent, to house the library.

³ Isobel described her search and her discovery of the Faith in an article entitled "An Agnostic's Quest for Truth."

the British Isles during that astonishing Six Year Plan.

In 1951 Isobel and Hassan Sabri were married, and they pioneered to Africa to assist with the goals of the newly inaugurated Two Year Plan. Isobel had, since childhood, been determined to go to Africa. She had heard much about it from her father who was the son of a missionary in Port Said. Her wish was fulfilled in service to the Faith; she and Hassan settled first in Dar es Salaam in the Tanganyika Protectorate (Tanzania), and later during the Ten Year Crusade they went to Uganda where they served until 1973. From 1973 to 1983 they lived in Kenya.

During her years in Africa Isobel served on the Local Assemblies of Dar es Salaam, Kampala, Masaka, and Kyambogo; and for four years she was a member of the Regional National Spiritual Assembly of Central and East Africa, two of these as chairman. For periods when 'Alí Nakhjavání was out of Uganda, Isobel assisted the Hand of the Cause of God Músá Banání and traveled energetically on behalf of the Faith throughout the country. In 1965 the Hands of the Cause of God in Africa appointed her to the Auxiliary Board, and in 1968 the Universal House of Justice appointed her to the Continental Board of Counsellors, for which she corresponded until her appointment to the International Teaching Centre in 1983. She served on that body until her passing.

She was fortunate to be present at many of the landmarks of the second and third Epochs of the Formative Age: the first Intercontinental Bahá'í Conference in Kampala, followed by the second conference in Chicago in 1953; the dedications of the American and African Temples; the first International Convention and World Congress in 1963; and the Centenary of the arrival of Bahá'u'lláh in the Holy Land

in 1968, to name a few. But it was not in attending these great expressions of collective achievement that Isobel's merit as a servant of Bahá'u'lláh will be measured or remembered.

Isobel will be remembered for her unremitting dedication to the Faith and her unstinting efforts to serve in ways that met her own high expectations of herself. Her life was characterized and blessed by meticulous daily toil for the Cause of God. Her understanding of the writings was deep and ever deepening. As a speaker she spoke from the heart and was accurate, logical, and compelling. She was fiercely loyal to the beloved Guardian and the Universal House of Justice.

The love she had for Bahá'u'lláh extended beyond the immediate domain of the Bahá'í world to find expression in the raising of her children, Marion and Keith. For her there was no duality; the Bahá'í teachings informed every aspect of her life. After spending a day game-spotting or relaxing on a beach with her, one sometimes had a sense that she was worshipping. Her often girlish delight in the beauty of the world was one of her most endearing characteristics. On one occasion, on a one-lane mountain road in Zaire (Democratic Republic of the Congo), she persuaded a fellow pioneer to pull over so that she could look more closely at some flowers. A minute or so later a convoy of army trucks came past at great speed from the opposite direction. On another occasion in Uganda a similar whim took her and her companions on a detour into a game reserve for a night, during which a retreating army swept along their route looting and pillaging. It seems that her enthusiasm and delight in the beauty of nature had saved her life and prolonged her service to the Faith.

Some of the greatest sources of pleasure for Isobel were the victories of the Bahá'ís

she encountered in her travels for the Continental Board of Counsellors in Africa and later for the International Teaching Centre. She spoke warmly with delight and admiration for the depths of their faith and the examples of their radiant acquiescence, sacrifice, and ingenuity. It must have given her great satisfaction to have died in the saddle as it were. Her last service was in her beloved Africa, where she attended conferences of Auxiliary Board members in Nairobi, Lusaka, and Johannesburg in January 1992.

Perhaps the most startling aspect of Isobel's service to the Faith is that all of it was performed in uncertain health. From the age of nineteen she had defied the best advice of the medical profession. Forty-eight years of chronic intestinal illness and intermittent asthma she treated as simply obstacles to overcome. She was occasionally concerned that her fellow Bahá'ís might, out of worry for her condition, deprive her of opportunities to serve. Few people knew the extent of her illnesses.

Isobel Sabri will be remembered for her services to the Faith of God, but the challenge she faced is one common to us all. She once wrote:

Over the years I have come to an ever-clearer realization that we must trust and listen to the voice that is within us. In the Holy Writings Bahá'u'lláh says, "We are closer to man than his own life vein." I have gradually learned with ever-increasing certainty that God is accessible at all times and that the means for sifting our human imaginings from His divine promptings are also there within us, closely related to the degree to which we lay ourselves aside and place ourselves wholly in His hands, desiring only what He desires. Life then becomes a ceaseless and stimulating challenge to

find and cling to His Will for us, which is constantly changing and evolving as we mature in spiritual understanding and experience. How often we falter; how impossible progress seems! But how Merciful, how Compassionate is He.

Hassan and Keith Sabri

LÉA NYS 1910-1992

"We profoundly lament the passing of dearly loved Léa Nys, valiant handmaiden Bahá'u'lláh, outstanding promoter His Faith." These were the opening words addressed to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Belgium by the Universal House of Justice after the passing of Léa Nys on July 28, 1992.

This "valiant handmaiden of Bahá'u'lláh" was born Léa Maria Decelle on December 27, 1910, in Brussels, Belgium. Her parents, Antoine Decelle and Marie Spanoghe, opened her heart to the notion



Léa Nys

of human brotherhood. They were ardent socialists willing to stand up and defend the weak and the oppressed. They were also artists who taught her beauty.

In addition to the general education that she received at the Lycée Fernand Cocq, Léa went to the École des Beaux-Arts where she studied painting, drawing, interior design, and advertisement. She also learned music at different academies. In all of her studies there had been no place for religion, and it was with her encounter with the revelation of Bahá'u'lláh that Léa's aspirations found their first real meaning.

In September 1928 Léa married Jean Eugene Nys. The couple shared many ideas that prepared them for the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. With their two children, Frédéric and Francine, they formed a united family, which could have lived a cozy life if in 1946 the second Seven Year Plan launched by Shoghi Effendi had not brought American Bahá'í pioneers⁴ to settle in Brussels.

What attracted Léa was the spirit of sacrifice of these pioneers, their simplicity, their availability, their hospitality, in spite of the little means they had. Their ideal was hers. What she did not understand was the religious character of this ideal because God was, for her, a name that did not have much meaning. When she heard that her pioneer friends had not obtained a renewal of their residency permit, her generous heart and her natural impetuosity made her rush to the offices of the Foreign Affairs Minister. Suddenly realizing where she was and the strange reason for her coming, the thought came to her mind, "My God, make this work." Unconsciously perhaps, she had invoked God in whom she did not believe.

And her actions succeeded; the permit was renewed for a year. When she returned to her home, she had a vision that she was not the one who had accomplished the feat, that she had only been an instrument of a force in which she started to believe with full energy and toward which she was going to turn her whole life. She rushed to her friends and asked them, "Do you think you can accept me as I am?"

Until that time the Bahá'í community had not been established in Belgium. The few Belgians who had knowledge of the Faith had had little or no contact with each other between the two world wars. Léa Nys was the first to declare during the Plan; she was the beginning of the Belgian community. As the Universal House of Justice noted, she was "the first to accept the Message of Bahá'u'lláh on the soil of Belgium." She accepted the Message with a fervor that nothing could fluster on September 30, 1947.

From that date teaching the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh was her first concern. She attended every meeting and all activities, giving her unrestricted support to the pioneers. The activities bore fruit; between January and April 1948 seven Belgian citizens declared, and the first Local Assembly was elected in Brussels in April. Later that year seven other Belgians declared, so that the Bahá'í community numbered fifteen at the end of 1948, in addition to the pioneers.

In 1949 Léa experienced the greatest joy. Her husband, Jean Nys, accepted the Faith in January, and her two children declared at the second Bahá'í European Conference that was held in Brussels in August.

These annual Bahá'í conferences were for Léa events of first importance. She represented Belgium at the first conference in Geneva in 1948, and she attended those in Copenhagen and The Hague. Returning from the Third Intercontinental Teaching

⁴ It is likely that the pioneers were John and Eunice Shurcliff (March 12, 1947), with whom Léa had contact.

Conference in Stockholm in 1953, she and her husband and daughter, Francine, suffered a terrible automobile accident from which they miraculously escaped.

Bahá'í literature in French was lacking at that time—a serious handicap for teaching. Léa dedicated much of her energy to the translation of the Sacred Texts, such as prayers, into French. When the European Teaching Committee created a committee for the publication and distribution of Bahá'í literature in French, Léa and her husband served on it, and the exemplary contribution of all the members enabled Brussels to be chosen by the Guardian as the seat of Maison d'éditions bahá'ies—the Bahá'í Publishing Trust of Belgium.

In 1950 a closer collaboration was established between the three Benelux countries.⁵ First a committee was created to which Léa was called to serve. In 1957 the Regional Spiritual Assembly of the Benelux countries was formed, on which she served, often as its secretary, until 1962 when the first National Spiritual Assembly of Belgium was elected. As a member and secretary of that institution, she went to Haifa in 1963 to participate in the election of the first Universal House of Justice. During that same year a special privilege was given to her. With another Belgian believer, Elsa De Koninck, she was given permission to go on pilgrimage to Iran, visiting Tīhrán, Iṣfahán, and Shīráz.

Jean passed away in 1962, and Léa's children were now living their own lives. She had but few ties, and the whole world seemed to be calling her. She was appointed an Auxiliary Board member in 1965 but later wished to serve beyond the borders of Belgium. In 1968 she was released from this service so that she could dedicate more time to teaching trips. The list of countries

she visited is long and includes more than sixty francophone islands scattered across the globe. Everywhere that she went, she would radiate a natural ease in meeting with the poorest and the richest and in proclaiming the Faith through the media. She would leave behind many people who would declare their Faith in Bahá'u'lláh. Nothing would stop her, neither fear, nor precarious situations in remote villages. She was happy with simple comforts and would share life with the most humble of people, and she was equally at home in more sophisticated environments. She met with mayors and ministers, tribal heads and heads of state, including His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II of Western Samoa, King Baudouin of Belgium, General Gnassingbé Eyadema, President of Togo, President Mathieu Kerekou of Benin, and President Manham of the Seychelles.

A more detailed biography of Léa Nys will, no doubt, be written to more adequately render the scope of her services for the Cause. Her life had a befitting coronation—a reward offered by Bahá'u'lláh. When the Belgian delegation was constituted to attend the commemoration of the Centenary of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh in May 1992, it was inconceivable that Léa Nys not be a part of it. This was a feast for her. With each step she took in the gardens of Haifa, she was recognized and celebrated. Many delegations had one or two people who had met her during one of her many trips. Léa was very tired, but each day she was very alert and enthusiastic. She came back from Haifa with many plans in mind, but a few months later she was hospitalized and did not survive long after an operation.⁶ She was eighty-one. Her memory will remain linked for evermore to the history of the Bahá'í Faith in Belgium and to the history of the many countries she visited. On July 30, 1992, a befitting

⁵ Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg.

tribute and call to remembrance was offered by the Universal House of Justice:

We profoundly lament the passing of dearly loved Lea Nys, valiant handmaiden Bahá'u'lláh, outstanding promoter His Faith. The first to accept the Message of Bahá'u'lláh on the soil of Belgium, she, from that moment in September 1947, unstintingly devoted her highly meritorious endeavours to the promotion of that Message and the upbuilding of the Bahá'í community. Whether as member of the first Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Brussels, as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly, as a participant in the first election of the Universal House of Justice, as a member of the Auxiliary Board, as official representative of the Bahá'í International Community, as a translator of Bahá'í literature into French, as a victorious travelling teacher to innumerable countries in North and South America and the Antilles, to the islands of the Pacific and Indian Ocean, to east and west Africa, she has conveyed the divine summons to high and low alike, and raised aloft the banner of the oneness of mankind. The record of her services is an imperishable adornment of the annals of the Belgian Bahá'í community. We request you convey our warmest sympathy to the members of her family, and to hold memorial meetings in her honour throughout Belgium. We shall pray at the Sacred Threshold for the progress of her radiant soul in the Abhá Kingdom.

Adapted from a translation of a tribute composed in French by Louis Hénuzet

ALFRED E. OSBORNE SR.
1907–1992

Alfred Elderfield Osborne Sr. was born in St. John's, Antigua, in the British West Indies, on May 23, 1907. He immigrated with his family to the Republic of Panama, where he lived until his departure to Chicago, Illinois, in 1923. Alfred attended Hyde Park High School there and went on to the University of Chicago, graduating with a bachelor's degree in philosophy in 1931. By this time he had become a naturalized American citizen. He later returned to the United States to complete a master of arts degree at Columbia University in 1946.

In 1943 he married Ditta Barnett Shirley of Colón, Panama—a union that produced four children, Alfred Jr., Sheila, Miguel, and Melva.

Alfred was dedicated to education and to the opportunities it afforded his students to contribute to humanity. His establishment of the first Normal School in La



Alfred E. Osborne Sr.

Boca, Canal Zone (1932–34), was a tangible and long-lasting contribution to education, especially for people of color, and it marked the beginning of his distinguished career as teacher, principal, supervisor of instruction, and eventually assistant superintendent in charge of Latin American schools in the Canal Zone. On the occasion of his retirement in 1969, the governor of the Canal Zone presented him with a “Master Key to the Panama Canal Award,” citing him as educator emeritus.

According to his own account he first encountered the Bahá'í Faith in 1939. The American pioneer Mathew Koszab⁶ was in an audience attending a talk Alfred gave on immortality. The talk was from a humanistic point of view and challenged traditional religious concepts; Mr. Koszab approached Alfred afterward and asked if he really believed in what he had said. Alfred answered, “no” and explained that his remarks were intended to provoke thought. Alfred was later introduced to the Bahá'í pioneers Louise Caswell⁷ and Cora Oliver, whom he later credited as being his “spiritual mothers.” They had nurtured him through his acceptance of Bahá'u'lláh in 1941. He became the second Bahá'í in Panama—a fruit of the first Seven Year Plan of the Guardian.

Alfred served the Faith as teacher, speaker, promoter, administrator, and Counsellor. He traveled with Cora Oliver to the All-America Centennial Convention in Chicago in 1944, where he was a principal speaker. His experience was particularly moving since it was held in the Stevens Hotel, which had been segregated when he had worked there during his school

years. Now he was on the dais, a principal speaker and guest, addressing an interracial audience. It was both a testimony to the Bahá'í principle of the unity of the human race and to the power of Bahá'u'lláh to effect change. He stayed in Wilmette after the conference to assist with the planning of the future expansion of the Faith in Latin America.

As a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Panama, he participated in the election of the first Universal House of Justice in Haifa and attended the first World Congress in London in 1963. He was privileged to assist Mr. H. Borrah Kavelin⁸ in the pressing work of securing the site for the Panama Temple. In a first of its kind, exchange of greetings by telephone among six intercontinental Bahá'í conferences held in 1967, he spoke on behalf of the Bahá'ís gathered in Panama.

Alfred was appointed to the first Board of Counsellors in Central America in 1968, and he served as Trustee for the Continental Fund based in Panama. This period of his life was particularly fruitful as he was able to focus completely on service to the Faith following his retirement from the Canal Zone schools. He traveled often to remote parts of Central America and the Caribbean, encouraging the friends and assisting the pioneers. The Osborne home and generous hospitality were always available to the many pioneers and other distinguished visitors who traveled to Panama to serve the Faith.

He maintained a warm relationship with the National Assembly of Panama. It called upon him often for his loving and wise counsel. Leota Lockman, a former secretary of the National Assembly, recalled

⁶ See “In Memoriam,” *The Bahá'í World*, vol. IX, pp. 614–16.

⁷ See “In Memoriam,” *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XX, pp. 867–68.

⁸ See “In Memoriam,” *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XX, pp. 821–25.

a meeting that had been planned with the new ambassador of Israel to Panama along with the Assembly chairman, Raquel de Constante, and Alfred. There was some doubt that the meeting would take place, since it happened to have been scheduled the morning after the assassination of Israeli athletes at the Olympic Games in Germany. Alfred decided that the Bahá'ís would be present so that the ambassador would find a welcome, should he decide to come. The ambassador arrived promptly, saying that he had spent a restless night and had canceled all his appointments for the week, except the meeting with the Bahá'ís. He knew the Bahá'ís were his friends and shared his grief. Alfred spoke for the Bahá'ís in a gentle voice and loving manner, expressing their sympathy to the ambassador and to all the people of Israel. The visit lasted about an hour after which the ambassador thanked them and said he had been comforted.

Alfred and Ditta moved to Irvine, California, in 1982, to be closer to their children and grandchildren. Alfred continued to serve the Faith as his health allowed; he was a member of the Local Assembly of Irvine, a supporter of Interfaith Council activities, and an articulate speaker on the Bahá'í Faith. He continued to serve as an assistant to Auxiliary Board members Edward Diliberto and Miguel Osborne, his son. Alfred passed away at home August 14, 1992. He is warmly remembered as husband, father, grandfather, educator, friend, teacher, administrator, and Counsellor—as a person dedicated to the Faith, thoughtful, accomplished, and steadfast—a person with a warm sense of humor. On August 25 the Universal House of Justice remembered him:

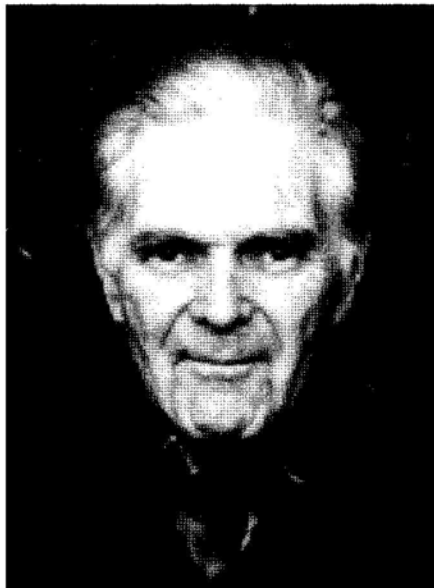
SADDENED LEARN PASSING OUT-
STANDING RESOLUTE PROMOTER

FAITH GOD ALFRED OSBORNE.
RECORD HIS DISTINGUISHED
SERVICES, ESPECIALLY AS CONTI-
NENTAL COUNSELLOR CENTRAL
AMERICA, IMPERISHABLE. PRAYING
FERVENTLY HOLY THRESHOLD
ADVANCEMENT HIS NOBLE SOUL
IN KINGDOM ON HIGH. KINDLY
EXTEND OUR HEARTFELT SYMPA-
THY AND CONDOLENCES MEM-
BERS HIS DISTINGUISHED FAMILY.
ADVISING NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
PANAMA ARRANGE BEFITTING
MEMORIAL MEETING HIS MEMORY
MOTHER TEMPLE LATIN AMERICA.

*Miguel H. Osborne
with contributors Ditta B. Osborne,
Cora Oliver, and Leota Lockman*

JAMES HEGGIE 1915–1992

Jim Heggie was born in Newarthill, Scotland, on July 20, 1915, and migrated to Canada with his parents in 1921. Jim



James Heggie

started school in Toronto. The family moved from city to city before settling in 1932 in Eau Claire, Ontario, where Jim spent his time hunting, fishing, swimming, skiing, and doing a variety of jobs. Relatives in Australia invited him to visit them in Sydney in 1935; he accepted and stayed there several years.

In 1937 he was led, seemingly by chance, to the door of a new world. In his own words he related his experience:

In a world not yet out of the Great Depression and very soon to enter a second great war and with an agnostic outlook, it now seems fortuitous that in 1937 I found myself spiritually bankrupt and open to many temptations in what I now recognize as an unconscious search for some sort of answer to the problems of life. I had actually attended a meeting or two of some weird nature, and was associated with a Christian Scientist, when in July I found myself in need of the service of an optometrist as I'd hurt my eyes through working conditions. Luckily for me Australia's first believer was an optometrist and not a brain surgeon or a psychiatrist; and so by chance I called in to the George Street Shop of Alex Hale, to find Mr. Oswald Whitaker⁹ who not only prescribed the necessary spectacles but also attracted me so that I'd always call on him to say "hello" and talk a little (though it meant waiting an hour or so). After a few weeks I was invited to a youth meeting at Mr. Whitaker's home where I first heard the word "Bahá'í". The following weekend when I visited the Optician Rooms in George Street I told Mr. Whitaker I was

not interested in religion; he said that it didn't matter and that we'd talk of other things. From then on I visited his home twice a week and we'd talk of "science," for he was wonderfully informative so that I soon came to realize that my skepticism in religious matters was due to the inadequate church doctrines.

Jim became a confirmed Bahá'í long before he met any members of the Sydney community, then numbering about fifteen. (Australia and New Zealand then counted fewer than a hundred active believers.) In 1938 he met Mother and Father Dunn.

Jim returned to the United States where he studied chiropractic in Davenport, Iowa, and after graduating visited his family in Ontario. While in the United States he visited the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette and attended the 1940 National Convention. He was privileged to meet many of the outstanding believers, including Gertrude Struven who introduced him to the study of Islam that became for him a labor of love persisting to the end of his life; in 1946 he produced a study index of the Qur'án.

In April 1941 he returned to Australia. Realizing that he would be drafted into the armed forces, he volunteered for non-combatant service and spent five years in the Medical Corps. As a volunteer he was given a choice of units. One was being sent to Malaysia, so with his sights set on meeting the Guardian, he enlisted in the other, which was destined for the Middle East. While stationed in Palestine he applied for leave to visit Haifa and received the inestimable privilege of meeting the Guardian and Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum. He was inspired by the interviews with Shoghi Effendi, and his dedication and commitment to the Faith were set on a solid foundation.

⁹ See "In Memoriam," *The Bahá'í World*, vol. IX, pp. 606–7.

He visited Haifa once more before being posted to Buna in New Guinea. He taught the Faith whenever possible, and a declaration resulted there in 1943. Jim wrote, "In fact it was my presence in New Guinea for two and a half years and that of Jim Chittleborough in Milne Bay that allowed the Guardian in *God Passes By* to refer to the opening up of these areas to the Faith."

In 1947 he married Merle Brooks of Adelaide. In that same year Jim was elected to the National Assembly and became its secretary. The Heggies moved to Brisbane in 1948 to help establish a Local Spiritual Assembly there, it being a goal of the country's Six Year Plan to achieve Assemblies in the remaining capital cities. They moved again to establish and maintain Hunters Hill Local Spiritual Assembly. Jim served on the National Teaching Committee and on numerous other committees, and he was frequently a speaker at firesides and public meetings.

In the 1940s Jim learned braille and commenced producing Bahá'í books for the blind. He had a penetrating knowledge of the Bahá'í writings and in later years produced a number of concordances and indexes to assist in their study. They included *An Index of Quotations from the Sacred Writings* and *Bahá'í References to Judaism, Christianity and Islam*.

Soon after the launch of the Ten Year Crusade, Jim was reelected to the National Assembly and voted its secretary. In 1955 he received a letter from Shoghi Effendi asking the National Assembly to commence plans, in the strictest confidence, for the construction of a *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* in Sydney. The Guardian had called it "The Mother Temple of the Antipodes, and indeed of the whole Pacific area."

For nearly two years Jim and his fellow members of the National Assembly labored

on these plans in secret, as Shoghi Effendi did not want the community to be disappointed should they have to be postponed. Detailed investigations into the design and the costing of construction had to be undertaken before they were announced to the community in the Guardian's 1957 convention message. Jim was closely involved in the construction work, and for three decades following the dedication of the Temple in 1961 both Jim and Merle devoted themselves to its support. For a decade and more Jim printed the programs for the Sunday services.

Jim pursued his profession of chiropractic for fifty-one years, following in the footsteps of his teacher, Oswald Whitaker. He was not especially ambitious to achieve material wealth, but he was a very supportive husband and father and constantly encouraged and deepened his family.

Jim passed to the Abhá Kingdom on August 31, 1992, in Sydney. Learning of his death the Universal House of Justice that day cabled the National Assembly of Australia:

DEEPLY DISTRESSED LEARN PASSING JAMES HEGGIE WHO RENDERED OUTSTANDING SERVICES CAUSE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH IN ANTIPODES OVER FIVE DECADES. HIS DEVOTED ENDEAVOURS MANY YEARS MEMBER NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY AUSTRALIA INCLUDING LENGTHY PERIOD SECRETARY CONTRIBUTED ESTABLISHMENT SOUND ADMINISTRATIVE FOUNDATION NATIONAL COMMUNITY.

LOVINGLY RECALL HIS CONSTANT DEDICATION TEACHING CAUSE, HIS ENTHUSIASM STUDY WRITINGS FAITH, HIS SCHOLARLY WORKS VARIOUS ASPECTS TEACHINGS. KINDLY CONVEY MEMBERS

FAMILY LOVING SYMPATHY ASSURANCE PRAYERS PROGRESS HIS LUMINOUS SOUL ABHÁ KINGDOM.

*Merle O. Heggie and
The National Spiritual Assembly
of the Bahá'ís of Australia*

GUY RAZAKA 1925-1992

Guy was born March 31, 1925, in Miadana Ambohitrimanjaka, Antananarivo, Madagascar. After completing his secondary education he obtained a diploma in civil administration from the



Guy Razaka

Institut des Hautes Études d'Outremer (Overseas Institute of Higher Education) in Paris, France.

In his professional life he was called to posts of responsibility within ministries of the national government—those of Finance, Agriculture and Land Reform, and the National Forestry Commission.

He also worked for SODEMO (Société de Développement de la Plaine de Morondava—Society for the Development of the Plain of Morondava) on a water supply project in the southwest of the country.

In 1963 Guy Razaka was appointed by the national Ministère de l'Economie, des Finances et du Budget (Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Budget) to represent Madagascar at a meeting of the European Economic Community in Belgium. He met the Bahá'í friends there including Mrs. Léa Nys, Mrs. Guyonne David, and the Shamy family. He attended several firesides and marveled at the love and unity prevailing among the friends. During his stay in Belgium he embraced the Faith.

Guy married and fathered nine children, seven girls and two boys. His first son died in 1959 at the age of nine months. His second son, Elie Razaka, died of a cerebral hemorrhage at the age of thirty-four while living in Belgium.

Before the acquisition of the National Centre in Mandrosa Ambohitavovo, the Razaka family put their house at the disposal of the Bahá'í community of Antananarivo, and it was used as the local center for all Bahá'í activities. Later he and his wife pioneered to Morondava in western Madagascar.

Guy participated in institutes, schools, and teaching campaigns. He accompanied his wife for one week of teaching and consolidation work in the region of Farafangana, and he came to admire her courage and spiritual strength, as she never complained when confronted by the difficulties and tests before them. They walked for many kilometers, climbing mountains and crossing rivers on foot. Throughout the days they listened to the problems of the friends and responded to them in voices inflamed with the love of Bahá'u'lláh.

Guy served for several years on the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Madagascar, from the time it was established in 1972. He also served on several national committees and took part in the International Convention of 1973 in Haifa electing the Universal House of Justice.

Guy gave the last twenty-five years of his life to the translation of Bahá'í literature into Malagasy. After meeting his professional obligations he worked at least three hours a day at the translations, sometimes late into the night. After his retirement he dedicated himself full time to this work. Among his many translations are *The Hidden Words*, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, *Synopsis of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, *God Passes By*, and *Thief in the Night*. A few days before his death he officially handed his translations to the National Spiritual Assembly.

He was sixty-six years old when he was diagnosed as having lung cancer. His health had deteriorated, especially after the shock of the death of his second son. Having appreciated and recognized the greatness of this Day, Guy Razaka left this earthly world with dignity and spirituality. Of all the friends who visited him during his last days, he would ask them to forgive him and to pray for him. His children and his grandchildren each received his precious and loving counsels, and at each opportunity he would encourage the members of the family, as well as the Bahá'í friends, to arise and serve the Faith and to remain firm in the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

On the morning of his death he asked his wife to move him to the veranda so that he could take in the fresh morning air. Once outside, as his eyes were turned to the rising sun, a violent wind started to blow, a phenomenon the family was unable to explain. He was straightaway carried

inside to his room. He asked his wife to pray intensely for him, to let him go to the Abhá Kingdom. In a much weakened condition, his voice no longer clear, he managed miraculously to raise both his hands, palms upward, and express himself in a strong voice uttering: "Andriamanitra ô! raiso ny fanahiko, raiso e!" (O my God, take my soul, take it, I beg of Thee.) These words, with the same gestures, he pronounced three times at an interval of twenty minutes. His voice was quieted into the greatest silence on September 2, 1992, at 7:15 AM. He was lucid to the last second of his life. The Universal House of Justice was informed, and the following telegram was received from it by his family on September 7, 1992:

DEEPLY SADDENED PASSING GUY RAZAKA. HIS LONG RECORD SERVICES MADACASCAR COMMUNITY INCLUDING HIS TRANSLATIONS OF BAHÁ'Í WRITINGS WILL ALWAYS BE LOVINGLY REMEMBERED. ASSURE PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES HIS SOUL ABHÁ KINGDOM. WITH HEART-FELT CONDOLENCES MEMBERS BEREAVED FAMILY.

In spite of the 148 kilometers separating the capital from his home and place of burial in Antanetibe Mahandraza, the members of his family, the Bahá'í friends, his colleagues, and acquaintances came in great number to render him a vibrant tribute at his funeral two days later.

TAHEREH SABET 'ALÁ'Í
Knight of Bahá'u'lláh
1906-1992

GRIEVED NEWS PASSING KNIGHT
OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH TAHEREH SABET
'ALÁ'Í. ASSURE RELATIVES FRIENDS
ARDENT PRAYERS PROGRESS SOUL
ABHÁ KINGDOM.

Universal House of Justice
October 1, 1992

Tahereh Sabet was born in Tīhrán, Iran, on May 6, 1906. Her father, 'Abdu'lláh, had accepted the Bahá'í Faith in his youth, and her mother, Kishvar, was from the Arjumand family that had become Bahá'í two generations before. Her only brother, Ḥabīb, received the title of Násiri'd-Dín (Helper of the Faith) from Shoghi Effendi.

Her childhood was spent in Tīhrán, where she attended the Tarbíyat School for Girls. Much of her education was provided by her mother who was well versed in the

teachings of the Bahá'í Faith and in Persian literature. In 1923, at the age of seventeen, she and her brother traveled to Haifa and had the bounty of meeting the Guardian and the Greatest Holy Leaf. When she was twenty-six, she married 'Aynu'd-Dín 'Alá'í, who was working for the Ministry of Finance in the government of Reza Sháh the Great.

Tahereh made her last pilgrimage to Haifa and 'Akká in 1952, and it was then that she learned of the Guardian's wish for Bahá'ís to pioneer to Africa. The following year, she and her husband attended the Kampala Conference¹⁰ and decided to stay in Africa to further the aims of the Ten Year Crusade. With much difficulty, the 'Alá'ís secured visas for Mozambique, but unfortunately the terms of their authorization expired and were not renewed. The 'Alá'ís then went to Southern Rhodesia (presently Zimbabwe), and while there the title of Knight of Bahá'u'lláh was bestowed upon them both.

Once again their visas were not renewed, and so they went to Nairobi, Kenya, where Mr. 'Azíz Yazdí helped them to obtain residence permits. Soon thereafter Tahereh was elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of Kenya along with seven Africans and one American.

Many teaching trips were undertaken, and Tahereh would often drive the African teachers two to three hundred kilometers to distant towns and villages. They were successful in teaching the Faith to large numbers of secondary school students. They encouraged them to ask questions and helped many to enroll in the Faith.



Tahereh Sabet 'Alá'í

¹⁰ The first of four Intercontinental Teaching Conferences called by the Guardian as part of the Great Jubilee festivities of the Holy Year 1953. The other conferences were subsequently held in Wilmette, Stockholm, and New Dehli.

While in Nairobi, Tahereh and several members of the National Assembly were invited to the palace of President Jomo Kenyatta to whom they presented a copy of the *Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh to the Kings and Leaders of the World*. After the presentation, members of the National Assembly were often invited to official state functions.

With funds provided by Tahereh and her family, many local Bahá'í centers were established in Kenya, where teaching seminars and children's classes were organized and hosted. In a letter to her brother and sister-in-law, Tahereh wrote:

I believe that the most important considerations in becoming successful are to love pioneering and to serve. In that undertaking, patience and humility are very important. Furthermore, one has to have love and understanding for the people of her new home. Then one can go out and proclaim the message of Bahá'u'lláh. He will lead the way and crown your efforts with victory.

In February 1972, after eighteen years in Africa, the 'Alá'ís went back to Tíhrán where they continued to have firesides and to teach.

They left Iran in 1979 and settled in Le Cannet, a small town on the French Riviera. Again they found that within a short time there were enough Bahá'ís to form a Local Spiritual Assembly, to which Tahereh was elected.

Unfortunately, in September 1982, Mr. 'Alá'í was struck by an automobile, and several days later he passed away. Tahereh was alone, but she carried on to serve the Faith by opening her home for meetings and firesides and attracting many souls with her radiant smile and warm hospitality.

It has been said that she would never complain about her health. Tahereh would say, "Why worry about material things

when you have the blessings of Bahá'u'lláh?" pointing out that the spirit must be maintained in good condition.

About 1986 her knees began to trouble her, and she needed crutches to get around. Tahereh was determined to visit the Holy Land once more, and in January 1989, with the help of Marie-Therese Levoy, she traveled to Haifa and 'Akká. Regrettably her health deteriorated, and she was unable to return to the World Centre to join the other Knights of Bahá'u'lláh for the 1992 Holy Year centennial observances.

She continued to smile and to show her love for mankind, offering her apartment to the friends for Bahá'í activities until the last month of her life. In the weeks before her passing, she spoke often of her pioneering years, of her privilege of having seen the Greatest Holy Leaf, and of having pleased the Guardian by participating in the Ten Year Crusade. During the night of September 26, 1992, Tahereh passed on to the Abhá Kingdom in complete serenity and with a smile on her face.

EMMA "EMITA" CABEZAS GARCIA 1895-1992

On Sunday, October 4th, our beloved handmaiden, Emma Cabezas, passed on quietly from this earthly existence at the age of 97. Ever since declaring her belief in the Blessed Beauty in the year 1947, she has been a stalwart defender and worker for the Cause. She was elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Chile in the year 1961 (at the age of 66!), and up until her passing always remained active as much as her health would permit. Her loss will be especially felt by the community of Viña del Mar, since

they were as her family, not having left behind any living relatives.

National Spiritual Assembly
of the Bahá'ís of Chile to
The Universal House of Justice

SADDENED LEARN PASSING FAITHFUL
STALWART MAIDSERVANT
OF THE FAITH EMMA CABEZAS.
ASSURE PRAYERS HOLY THRESHOLD
PROGRESS HER SOUL KINGDOM
ON HIGH.

Universal House of Justice
October 8, 1992

At the age of ninety-seven, in the city of Viña del Mar, Chile, our dear friend Emita Cabezas Garcia passed away. Her funeral was held the following day on October 5, 1992, after a Bahá'í ceremony.

Who was Emita Cabezas? Working more than fifty years in the field of education, she was a teacher of many generations. She taught English at the Liceo de Niñas of Temuco when the celebrated Nobel Prize-winning poetess, Gabriela Mistral, was its director (1920). Service and education



Emma "Emita" Cabezas Garcia

were synonymous to Emita, and for that reason she had no difficulty in enrolling in the Bahá'í community when she was a secondary school teacher in La Serena.

One of Chile's early Bahá'ís, she related to us how she heard about the Faith:

[On] one of my trips [to Santiago]¹¹ my friend, who was the owner of the hotel [where I was staying], spoke to me a great deal which made me wonder if I had found something which gave my spirit greater satisfaction. I heard something new. My family were all Catholics and I was brought up under Catholic principles, but for some unexplainable reason I was reticent to take on a religious position . . . This led me to speak with my friend in more detail, as well as with the other persons who attended the meeting at that time. I read the few pieces of literature that were available at the time with great interest and I felt that the Bahá'í teachings agreed with my way of being. I can say that this was the fulfillment of my spiritual ideals.

Emita was a member of the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Chile and was reelected for several years, serving at times as its chairman. She was also a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Viña del Mar, and she took part in one of the early meetings of the Association of Non-Governmental Organizations of the United Nations in Santiago.

Emita Cabezas has not died; she lives in the memory of her friends and takes a place of honor in the history of the Bahá'í community of Chile.

From an article by Sergio Aparicio C.

¹¹ The Local Spiritual Assembly of Santiago was established in 1941.

SVERRE HOLMSEN
1906–1992

The Universal House of Justice is saddened at the passing of stalwart believer Sverre Holmsen. His contributions to the Faith, especially through his writing, will long be remembered. Kindly convey to Lena and Reidar Holmsen the House of Justice's loving condolences and assurance of its prayers in the Holy Shrines for the progress of the soul of their dear father in all the worlds of God.

Department of the Secretariat
October 15, 1992

Sverre Holmsen was born on March 4, 1906, in Transvaal, South Africa, of Norwegian parents, Sverre Ryen Holmsen and Sylvia Frölich. The family moved to Gytorp, Sweden, in 1907–8, and in 1912 Sverre became a Swedish citizen.

Ten years of primary and secondary education failed to keep the restless Sverre in Sweden, nor did his father's prestigious position in the Bofors industries. In 1922 Sverre set out to see the world. Like many other Swedish travelers before him, he chose North America and worked as a logger in the Rocky Mountains of Canada and the United States. He returned to Sweden in 1926, and after military service he married Margit Holm, a classmate from secondary school.

As a very determined and hard-working man, he was able to save enough money for a voyage to Polynesia. He visited the Hawaiian Islands and worked in Japan shortly after the great earthquake of 1923. Sverre also worked aboard the *M/S Arator* that was wrecked during a storm off the coast of Japan. According to his book



Sverre Holmsen

Globen runt (Around the Globe), he must have been the sole survivor.

Sverre's goal was Polynesia. He and Margit reached Tahiti in January 1929, and for the first three years they lived and worked on Makatea Island. He was the custodian of a sport fishing outfit run by Zane Grey, the famous American writer. Sverre was unable to countenance the poor treatment of the workers, and he tried to bring about the betterment of their living and working conditions. His efforts resulted in his dismissal.

Sverre, Margit, and their two-year-old daughter Marja then settled in the remote wilderness of eastern Tahiti. They cleared a large piece of land and prepared it for cultivation. Little Marja collected eggs that the jungle hens laid outside the cottages.

The birth of their second daughter, Ragna, brought much joy to their lives. Some months later, a hurricane uprooted and destroyed all that they had established. Then Ragna died in an influenza epidemic. Margit collapsed under the weight of the

tragedies. She took Marja and left for Sweden. Sverre followed, but their separation seemed unavoidable.

Sverre later married Agda Göthlin, a writer and artist. They lived in the town of Nora, and their first child, Lena Reri, was born in 1945. Sverre continued writing and publishing his books and making preparations to return to Tahiti. He and his family set out from Sweden on the *M/S Virginia* in August of 1950. In March of the following year a hurricane left them shipwrecked. Of his four thousand books and manuscripts only fragments were salvaged. Sverre abandoned his hopes of returning to the Pacific, and he and his family spent a few months in Morocco.

Salvaged from the shipwreck was a page from a book in which the Bahá'í Faith was mentioned. Sverre saw this as providential, and he spent the next few months visiting libraries searching for more information.

In 1951 they moved to Tenerife in the Canary Islands. There Sverre found what he had been searching for. A letter from Doris Corbin, a pioneer in Sweden, directed him to the residence of George¹² and Margurite True. Their son Russel gave Sverre a copy of *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, a book Sverre described as being the key to a number of the Bahá'í writings. In 1953 he published *Morialand*, his sixth book, the first in which he mentioned the Faith.

Ten years later the family returned to Sweden, settling in a pleasant suburb of Sigtuna, halfway between Uppsala and Stockholm. Sverre had the opportunity of meeting regularly with members of the Bahá'í communities of both cities. On July 5, 1964, he declared his faith and attended his first Nineteen Day Feast, the Feast of Words, two days later.

¹² See "In Memoriam," *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XIX, pp. 634–36.

In the second edition of *Morialand* published in 1966, Sverre wrote:

Thirteen years have elapsed since my book MORIALAND was published. Three years later I came into possession of some revolutionary writings treating epochs of man's religions and civilization. I consider that these writings and documents, whose originals are kept in the International Bahá'í Archives on Mount Carmel, are of such importance that I feel strongly to dedicate most of my time studying them, and deepening my knowledge, in order to be able to disseminate this Cause. We may have eternity at our disposal, but as far as I am concerned, I cannot afford losing one single second.¹³

From then on he dedicated his time, knowledge, and fluent pen to the service of the Cause. Sverre's first article on the Faith, "Bahá'í, den globala erans värld-sreligion" ("Bahá'í, the world religion of the global era") was published in 1966 in *Sökaren (The Searcher)*, a well-known and widespread Swedish periodical and forum for art and ideas.

His next, and far more detailed and weighty contribution, was his last major work in Swedish, *De Upplysta Horisonterna (The Illumined Horizons)*, published in 1969. It was well received by the Swedish press. One newspaper wrote, "[O]f all the author's fifteen books, the recent one treats what appears to be closer to his heart,

¹³ Sverre Holmsen, *Morialand*, ABE-Tryck, Hålsingborg, Sweden, 1966. The limited knowledge Sverre had of the Faith in 1953 is reflected in the first edition. In the second edition he endeavored to correct the inaccuracies of the first and expanded the book to include a new chapter on the Bahá'í Faith in which he wrote of its history and principles and provided a bibliography of its Sacred Writings and literature.

namely the Bahá'í world religion, little known to us, which will eventually be more and more made known in our regions."¹⁴ Sverre sent copies to several people of prominence including Artur Lundkvist, renowned author and member of the Swedish Academy, and his wife, writer Maria Wine. They found *The Illumined Horizons* to be such a significant contribution to global democracy that they were inspired to present a copy to Olof Palme, the late Prime Minister of Sweden.

Sverre's last work, entitled *Inspiratörerna* (*The Inspirers*), was published as a mimeograph in 1977 by Swedish Bahá'í Publications.

After the passing of his wife, Sverre moved to Bjuv-Ekeby in the south of Sweden, where he continued to receive a stream of visitors, to many of whom he expounded the urgency of the teachings. One of his more memorable moments there was when the Hand of the Cause Dr. Ugo Giachery visited him.

Sverre was a man of linguistic accomplishment. His Swedish work is vibrant, articulate, effortlessly flowing, and sweet. The fact that his seventeen books have been translated into nine languages testifies to the merit of his appeal as an author and to the freshness of the themes he has given to readers worldwide. One reviewer wrote, "Homer's *Odyssey*, Melville's *Moby Dick*, and Sverre Holmsen's *Singing Coral* are the great sea novels of world literature."

Sverre wrote and spoke in English, French, Spanish, Polynesian, German, Esperanto, Danish, and Norwegian with ease and in Arabic to some extent. His translations from those languages into Swedish are fluent, clear, and coherent. To

read his translations of the Bahá'í writings from English into Swedish is pure joy.

Sverre Holmsen passed away on October 9, 1992, in Bjuv, Skåne. His resting place is in the Fredenstorp cemetery in the university city of Lund.

Adapted from an article by E. Djazayeri

HELEN BASSETT HORNBY

1917–1992

Helen Louise Bassett was born in 1917 in Geiger, Alabama, to Alfred Bassett, a mason, and Leila Kirkland, a professional cateress. She grew up in nearby Pritchard during an era of segregation and racial prejudice.

Helen was first introduced to the Faith by her insurance salesman, Mr. Leo Schultz. She had previously read an article about it by a Bahá'í author in the *Chicago Tribune*, but she had presumed it to be a diversion of the wealthy. On becoming a seeker she tried the patience of Ellsworth and Ruth Blackwell, attending meetings and harassing them with her doubts, questions, and teasings for eight years before enrolling. Helen was working as a secretary for the Social Security Administration in Chicago when she declared her faith.

About 1960 Helen discovered extensive files of copies of letters written by or on behalf of Shoghi Effendi in the Louhelen Bahá'í School library from which she made extracts for her own enrichment. Mrs. Helen Eggleston allowed Helen into her personal library as well, and this work was the beginning of her personal compilation that developed into the reference *Lights of Guidance*.

Early in her Bahá'í life Helen met Mr. Ervin Thomas who invited her to pioneer to Cartagena. She told him that she was not ready to go and that she was tired of

making new friends among the Bahá'ís only to have them leave as pioneers. Inspired by the Bahá'í winter school at Louhelen, she later announced to the staff at the National Center that she was pioneering to Cartagena, Spain. When asked why, she mentioned Erwin. When told that Erwin was in Cartagena, Colombia, she then said that that was where she would go.

Helen had been attending Roosevelt University in Chicago with a goal of obtaining a degree. She abandoned that goal, as well as a good job with lifetime security, a first class high-rise apartment, and a coterie of friends and family. She cashed in her pension and took off for an unknown future at an isolated pioneer post.

In Cartagena she quickly found a job as an English teacher at the Colombian-American Language Center. When the center closed, she was offered a similar position in Barranquilla, where she was taken into the home of pioneers Lou and Betty Toomes. Charles Hornby, a pioneer who had been teaching in Bogota, also secured a position in Barranquilla about this time. They met and eventually wed. Shortly afterward they attended the First World Congress in London.

A year later Charles became the director of a private bilingual school in Bucaramanga. He and his wife worked together, Helen teaching English to Colombian children. When the terms of their two-year contracts terminated, the National Assembly coincidentally asked them to go to the island of San Andrés.

They settled in the interior of the island among the descendants of slaves. The San Andrés post was ideally suited to Helen's personality; the islanders were attracted to her, and almost daily there were meetings



Helen Bassett Hornby

or firesides. Ionita Wright¹⁵ was the first San Andrés native to embrace the Faith, thanks to Helen's efforts. The Hornbys also started teaching on the island of Providencia. They stayed for three months before leaving for the National Convention in Wilmette, a pilgrimage to Haifa and Akká, and a tour of Iran in 1966.

At the time the pilgrim groups were small, and the attention they received was more personal. The day before their departure from Haifa, they were invited to tea with Rúhíyyih Khánum. While waiting for transportation Helen decided to pray at the resting place of the Greatest Holy Leaf and to ask for guidance concerning her question of whether or not they should return to San Andrés. She asked for "a sign," then rejoined the group, and attended the tea. When they were saying their "good-byes," Rúhíyyih Khánum turned to her and said,

¹⁴ Bo R. Ståhl, in "Falu Kuriren," 1969, quoted in the *Swedish Bahá'í News*, no. 18, February 2, 1970.

¹⁵ See her "In Memoriam" written by Helen in *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XV, pp. 434–35.

"When you go back to San Andrés, give the friends my love." This was Helen's "sign."

During their two years there, Spiritual Assemblies were elected on both San Andrés and Providencia Islands with more than a hundred enrollments on the former and over fifty on the latter. Helen and Charles had no intention of leaving, but when Charles was appointed an Auxiliary Board member, the Hand of the Cause Jalál Kházeḥ asked them to move to Quito, Ecuador.

In Quito Helen renewed her work on the compilation, calling the project her "Reference File." Counsellor Masu'd Khamsi suggested that she share the compilation with others, and a hundred copies of a preliminary version were home mimeographed. When the compilation reached a later stage of completion, Helen went to Ann Arbor, Michigan, where Mrs. Helen McClusky had rented several electric typewriters, had recruited university students as typists, and had turned her home into a workshop. A manuscript was hastily put together, photocopied, and sent to the Holy Land with a pilgrim.

Helen had a dream in which Shoghi Effendi was sitting in her kitchen, drinking coffee, and reviewing the compilation page by page. At one point he turned to her and with a gentle smile said that it needed editing. The pilgrim returned with the same advice from reviewers at the World Centre. The young typists had not been concerned with accuracy, and the professional reviewer Mrs. McClusky had retained had taken liberties in altering the Guardian's grammar. Helen had to begin again.

When the next draft was ready, she submitted the manuscript to George Ronald publishers. It was declined by them, and the Hand of the Cause Dr. Muḥájir suggested that she send it to the Publishing Trust of India, where it was accepted.

Before the first edition was off the press, Helen was gathering material for an expanded edition. She spent some time in Wilmette conducting research and also writing *Heroes of God*, a history of the Faith in Peru from 1940 to 1979. (Before her death she also completed a history of the Faith in Ecuador, which is, as yet, unpublished.) Later she was invited to the World Centre to further her work. She and Charles were overwhelmed by the volume of Shoghi Effendi's letters, and they returned with a package of photocopies tagged "overweight" by the airline agents.

In 1992 Helen and Charles were scheduled to attend the commemoration of the centenary of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh in the Holy Land. Helen, allowing for no diversions, worked anxiously to complete a revision of *Lights of Guidance* before departing, having discovered an embarrassing number of errors. En route to Israel she made a stopover in Ann Arbor for a medical examination. Ten years earlier she had suffered an aneurism that had been successfully treated. Now she required and underwent open-heart surgery, and complications ensued. Helen was in intensive care for more than five weeks before her passing on October 17, 1992.

Helen had said that if her death seemed imminent, to fly her back to Ecuador to enable her to die at her pioneer post. Because she was connected to life-support equipment, her desire could not be met.

The Universal House of Justice wrote to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States on October 20, 1992:

Our hearts are grieved by the news of the passing of Helen Hornby, steadfast, stalwart upholder of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. Her well nigh three decades of teaching

and pioneering have left indelible traces in the Americas; her success in preparing an extensive compilation on Bahá'í subjects was a crowning achievement. We pray in the Holy Shrines that her noble soul may be richly rewarded in the Abhá Kingdom. Kindly extend our sympathy to her dear family.

From articles by Charles D. Hornby

SANDO BERGER 1925–1992

The Universal House of Justice was saddened to learn . . . of the passing of pioneer to Mexico, Mr. Sando Berger of Puebla. The House of Justice asks that you extend its warm sympathy to the dear family of this devoted longtime servant of the Faith and assure them that it is offering prayers in the Holy Shrines for the progress of his radiant soul.

Department of the Secretariat
December 1, 1992

A new dialog on painting must reflect a simplicity and innocence that can only be produced through a detachment from this earthly plane that opens the way of the soul, thereby enabling a consideration, uninhibited and with absolute certitude, of the incorruptible great beyond where the light of the dawn of understanding dazzles us.

Sando Berger, "Reflexiones en torno a la pintura"

"While he was working in Laguna Beach, California, Sando Berger heard of the Faith through O. Z. Whitehead. I think this was in the early 50s. He

immediately responded and accepted the Faith. He then heard that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had said that if a true believer would walk across the country reciting the Greatest Name, the entire country would respond. He took that literally and actually walked through several western states reciting the Greatest Name." So writes Shirley Macias, a close friend of Sando. She continues:

I met him around 1953 (before I was a Bahá'í). He was then living in Laurel Canyon with Mickey. During that same period, my dear friends Seymour Malkin¹⁶ and Hooper Dunbar were also attending firesides, and apparently Sando was the individual who introduced them to the Faith. All three of us declared almost the same day. The day I met with the Los Angeles Assembly, February 26, 1956, Hooper went with me to "hold my hand" (he enrolled through the West Hollywood community about a week later), and Mickey (Sando's girlfriend with whom [he] had a child named Shawn) was sitting there with Seymour Malkin, who was also meeting with the Assembly . . . Afterward, I saw him, and he told me that he had decided to do the right thing and marry Mickey.

Mr. Dunbar remembers how, as a Bahá'í youth, Sando "arose like a flame to walk on foot across the States to proclaim the message" and explains that Sando "had to abandon his plans after falling ill in New Mexico on the way." Mr. Dunbar adds:

Indeed, Sando introduced me to the Faith in a very wise and spirited manner and remained a great encouragement to me in the first months of my Bahá'í

¹⁶ See "In Memoriam," *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVI, pp. 542–43.

life. He was a very talented sculptor and painter. We met through mutual friends and then became friends through art. He and his wife were very kind to me at a period of much spiritual turbulence. It was only after knowing me some weeks that he left a Bahá'í prayer book on a car seat where I would see it. And then the great adventure began.

Sando and Mickey's marriage did not last, and Sando went to Chicago. Mr. Dunbar pioneered to Honduras, and Seymour and Shirley also went to Honduras. Shirley continues, "I didn't hear much about him until I heard he had gone to Mexico and married this lovely woman in Puebla and had a beautiful daughter [Shomais]."

That lovely woman in Puebla was Margarita. She writes:

I met Sando in the summer of 1973 about the time I learned about the Faith. We became friends through Dr. Edris Rice-Wray,¹⁷ also a pioneer in Mexico, recently established in the State of Puebla. Sandro and I attended the summer school, and my first impression of Sando was that he was shy because of his lack of Spanish. The next month he settled here; and later he was appointed caretaker of the Amelia Collins Institute.

Later I discovered that Sando was a dynamic person, firm and decided, creative, with new ideas. We got married at the beginning of the summer of 1974 at the Institute. We lived there for about a month; then we moved to a house behind the Institute, which

belonged to some Bahá'í friends. We have lived there until now.

During our nineteen years together I have learned many things about his life. Sando left Prague in 1939 when he was fourteen years old. When I met him he was forty-eight years old.

Sando would remember the severe discipline of his father and the warmth of his mother. He had a brother five years younger whom he loved very much, and he loved his grandmothers, specially his mother's mother with whom he spent much time as a child and a youth. He never knew what happened to her. It seems that she went to France hoping to be joined by her family after the Second World War. Her husband (Sando's mother's father) did not want to leave the country and died in a concentration camp.

Later Sando and his parents went to France and Portugal and from there to New York. His father and mother eventually returned to Czechoslovakia, but Sando spent many years [in Greenwich Village] in New York City, dedicating himself to a vocation of painting. Without the support of his family, Sando worked as a waiter in restaurants to earn money with which to buy painting materials. He used to tell me that when he was young he preferred to spend his money on books rather than on a good meal. His dinner usually consisted of a chocolate bar and a baguette. This was when he was in his twenties. He made contacts with leading musicians, poets, writers and actors. Later . . . he moved to California.

Sando knew classical literature. He liked to question and investigate; perhaps that was the reason he later became a Bahá'í. A short time after he declared,

he pioneered. He told me he attended a talk that called for pioneers, and he felt it was a personal message, and so he decided to fulfill this goal. He crossed the desert of New Mexico with a deep love for Bahá'u'lláh and His Cause.

He visited the Navajo Nation. He admired the Navajo culture and shared with them the teachings of the Faith. Then he felt he had to go to Mexico. He felt a great attraction for the country, and the door was opened for him through an art exhibition in the city of Juarez, Chihuahua, at the end of the sixties.

Lisa Janti was the one who opened the door for him, putting together exhibitions of his work in Mexico and California. His work shows a strong influence of the Faith with titles such as "Gate to the Immortal Realm," "The Seven Valleys," and "The Hidden Words." His works were also influenced by the well-known Bahá'í artist Mark Tobey. Lisa met Sando early in his Bahá'í life and again in the 1960s when he was having a difficult time. Lisa noted:

Most of the paintings from this time were very small because Sando didn't have much money for paint and canvasses. I cherish these miniatures. I think I have some of the most exquisite from this period. Later, as he got healthier and had some income, he painted very large pieces. I have two that he gave me that are real treasures; one is of Mulla Husayn on a splendid horse. Sando loved horses.

His wife, Margarita, continues:

We were already married when we moved here [Puebla], and Sando became interested in the community

and the possibility of excavating a well in order to provide water to the region so as to cultivate year round. Unfortunately the neighbors were not yet prepared for Sando to start this new idea. Nevertheless Sando started. He cultivated alfalfa and raised rabbits. He also raised goats for milk and operated a small cheese industry for nearly seven years. It has continued to be a success for the friends who help us.

In addition to teaching at the language school, he was invited to teach visual and plastic arts at the Federal University of Puebla. Because of this, in 1987 Sando decided to dedicate [himself] full time to painting and to studying deeply the different schools of painting.

One of his qualities, which I admire, was his dedication and interest for anything that he did and his concern to live according to his beliefs.

His contribution to the university [Universidad Autónoma de Puebla¹⁸] was also significant. He wrote for a magazine, and later was appointed as international representative [for] culture of this university until he passed away on November 11, 1992.

From an article written in Spanish by Margarita Berger and contributions by Shirley Macias and Lisa Janti

¹⁷ See "In Memoriam," *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XX, pp. 958-60.

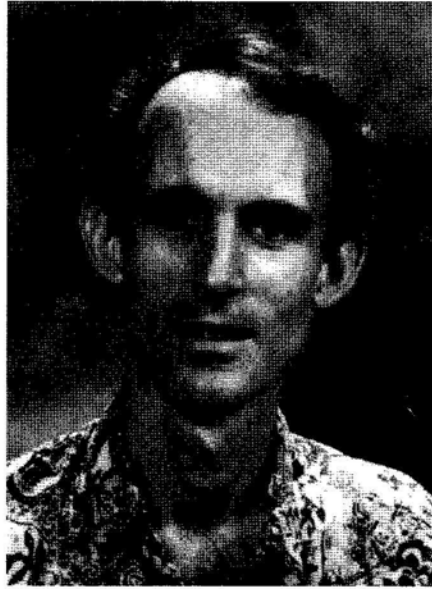
¹⁸ The University has had its name changed throughout its long history. During the life of Sando Berger it was known as the Universidad de Puebla (1937-1956), Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (1956-1987), and Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (1987 to the present).

WILLIAM H. ZUCKER
1943–1992

William H. Zucker, Bill as he was affectionately known to his friends, was born on May 3, 1943, the only child of Arthur and Dorothy Zucker. Growing up in a Jewish family in the Bronx, New York, he had his bar mitzvah when he was thirteen. In 1954 Bill's father made a trip to Chicago and returned to New York bringing with him the Bahá'í Faith. The Zucker family began to attend meetings at the Evergreen Cabin in West Englewood, New Jersey, as well as at the New York Bahá'í Center. Bill and his mother declared their belief in Bahá'u'lláh in 1957, and as a Bahá'í youth Bill attended Bahá'í youth classes taught by Nat Rutstein.

Bill was an excellent Bahá'í teacher. He invited everyone he came into contact with to firesides and Bahá'í meetings. While a student in college he organized Bahá'í club meetings. In later years he was instrumental in forming Bahá'í clubs at the institutions where he taught, such as the University of the South Pacific (Suva, Fiji) and the John F. Kennedy High School (Tumon, Guam). In 1988 Bill received the prestigious Presidential Award for Excellence in Science and Mathematics Teaching—the highest honor accorded by the United States, recognizing the contributions of teachers to their classrooms and to their profession. The award recognized Bill's work in Guam, a territory of the United States.

Bill loved teaching the masses. He sought out places where mass teaching efforts were focused and offered his services sacrificially. This was the reason he moved from New York to Chapel Hill, North Carolina, in 1970. His first experiences in teaching the masses were in the Carolinas during the latter years of the Nine Year Plan (1964–1973)—a period of unprecedented



William H. Zucker

expansion when African-Americans enrolled in the thousands. He was elected to the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Chapel Hill serving it from 1971 to 1975, at times its chairman or treasurer.

Bill left Chapel Hill in 1975 to pioneer to the Fiji Islands. He signed up for classes in the Fijian language and eventually was able to speak it fluently. He traveled extensively throughout the inhabited islands assisting in the teaching and consolidation work. Sometimes sleeping on grass mats in native huts in remote islands and traveling by boat from one island to another, he was well known to the indigenous Bahá'ís. He participated in a mass teaching campaign in the south and southwestern parts of Viti Levu. Bill served on the National Spiritual Assembly of Fiji and on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Nausori. As well as being an officer on both institutions, he served on the National Teaching Committee and the Prominent Individuals Committee. During this time he worked for the South Pacific Commission—a regional

intergovernmental organization for technical, professional, and scientific planning and development.

Bill loved attending Bahá'í conferences and events. In 1978 after attending the South East Asian Conference in Sarawak, Malaysia, he went to Singapore where he met and fell in love with Siew Lian Lim. They were married in Suva, Fiji, at the end of April 1979, just after the National Convention. His wedding, as he had wished, was a significant teaching event.

Together with his wife and father, Bill arrived in Guam in April 1982. One of his great joys was to travel teach to the islands of Tinian, Rota, and Saipan. He served on the National Teaching Committee, Newsletter Committee, Publications Committee, and on several Local Spiritual Assemblies.

In 1983 Bill and his wife pioneered to New Caledonia. He was able to secure a position of some responsibility with the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), which operated under the umbrella organization of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The SPREP grew out of a small program that was affiliated with the South Pacific Commission for which Bill had worked while he was in Fiji. During his two years in New Caledonia he was able to travel teach to Fiji, Cook Islands, Niue, Papua New Guinea, American and Western Samoa, Tahiti, Wallis Island, Nauru, Vanuatu, and the Loyalty Islands.

Bill and his wife returned to Guam in the fall of 1985. His father, Arthur, was in poor health and needed his son's care. Until Arthur's passing in 1991 Bill tended to him lovingly. He arranged his own affairs so as to make short teaching trips without disrupting Arthur's care. His teaching trips were mostly in Micronesia, to Palau, Yap,

Kiribati, and Chuuk. He also participated in teaching activities that resulted in a threefold increase in enrollments in Saipan.

From 1989 until his death Bill's desire was to teach in China. In the summers of 1989 and 1990 he travel taught extensively in Taiwan, spending a short time in Macau and mainland China. In the summer of 1992 he traveled to Beijing where he visited some of the friends who had become Bahá'ís in Guam.

About 1990 Bill went to Honolulu for a physical examination at the Queen's Medical Center. He was diagnosed as having a very rare type of cancer and was given six months to live. Undaunted he suffered the illness for almost two years. He continued to serve with determination and steadfastness until his last days. As well as being an assistant to an Auxiliary Board member, he gave of himself to the National Chinese Teaching Committee of the Mariana Islands, the Local Spiritual Assembly of Dededo, Guam, and the Bahá'í Club at the high school where he taught and where he was a youth advisor. He was an active participant in the National Teaching Conference held in Guam on October 25, 1992.

In May of that year Bill was grateful to be able to travel to the Holy Land to take part in the Centenary Commemoration of Bahá'u'lláh's Ascension. He came back to Guam spiritually radiant. Being an accomplished violinist he then began to prepare for his part in the New York World Congress Orchestra. As a Bahá'í youth he had attended the First World Congress, and he was now looking forward to attending the second. On November 16, 1992, two days before he was to fly to New York to practice with the orchestra, he passed away peacefully in his sleep. On that day the Universal House of Justice wrote:

... grieved news passing dearly-loved servant of the Faith, Dr. William H. Zucker. His professional accomplishments and Bahá'í services, particularly in the Pacific area, are unforgettable. Offering ardent prayers Holy Shrines for progress his soul. Kindly also assure his dear wife of our prayers on her behalf. May the services which she is rendering to the Faith bring her consolation.

ROXANNE TERREL 1943–1992

DEEPLY MOURN PASSING DEVOTED SELF-SACRIFICING MAIDSERVANT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH ROXANNE TERREL. HER FAITHFUL UNWAVERING SERVICES FAITH GOD, HER JOYFUL RADIANT SPIRIT WILL CONTINUE TO BE SOURCE INSPIRATION TO ALL WHO KNEW HER. HER MERITORIOUS EFFORTS IN IGNITING



Roxanne Terrel

FIRE LOVE OF GOD IN RECEPTIVE
HEARTS AMONG THE CHINESE
WILL ALWAYS BE REMEMBERED.
PRAYING PROGRESS HER LUMI-
NOUS SOUL ALL WORLDS GOD.
KINDLY CONVEY OUR LOVING
SYMPATHY MEMBERS HER DEAR
FAMILY AND HER FRIENDS.

Universal House of Justice
November 17, 1992

Roxanne Terrel was born Roseanne Hoyman on December 23, 1943. Baptized a Catholic her family lived in the small town of Massillon, Ohio, in the Midwest of the United States. She had a “little brother” David, three years her junior, with whom she was very close.

What brought about the transition from “Roseanne” to “Roxanne” is uncertain, but it may reflect the need for drastic changes she felt she had to make in her life. David remembers that growing up she was doted on by an aunt who gave her gifts and seemed to be ever-present and protective. In spite of this Roxanne had a difficult childhood. Her father, an alcoholic, was abusive. Roxanne told me of how she was torn, how she wanted everyone to love each other; she remembered feeling love for everyone, for dogs and kittens, and yet how she found her home life unbearable. She left home as a young teenager and moved to California. Later a priest helped her mother and brother to leave the situation in Massillon as well.

In the early 1970s Roxanne found the Bahá'í Faith while married and living in Arizona. A young couple, friends of Roxanne and her husband, were attending weekly firesides. It was not long before Roxanne saw that exposure to the Faith was transforming the couple. The story goes that Roxanne and her husband felt left out. “Why won't you invite us to your Bahá'í

meetings? Aren't we intellectual enough?” she asked her friend. Roxanne and her husband attended the next fireside and on that occasion accepted the Faith.

Roxanne was on fire with her new direction in life. She and the other new Bahá'ís seized every opportunity to make teaching trips to American Indian reservations in Arizona and Nevada. One of the friends who knew Roxanne then said of her:

Roxanne was a pusher in the Faith and a great promoter. She would organize teaching programs, firesides and deepenings without having to be asked to do any of these things. She once organized a Youth Conference in Las Vegas that five hundred youth attended. This was in 1971 or 1972. She would ask anyone and everyone to help her, whether they were Bahá'ís or not. She was very good at getting people to serve the Faith. Her only desire was to serve Bahá'u'lláh. She understood the Faith and could quote the Writings by memory, from the books, even to the page number and paragraph. She read the Holy Writings daily and could memorize with no trouble. She was always the first to volunteer for any program.

Roxanne then heard her first pioneer call and arose to go to Taiwan. Making her home there for close to ten years, she made traveling teaching trips to islands in the Pacific.

In 1984 she accepted a special assignment, traveling throughout the world to focus the attention of the friends on the importance of raising up teachers for the people of China. The goal was given to Taiwan, and the friends there deputized Roxanne to go.

Roxanne had a very deep love for the people of China; she had an innate understanding that the ultimate victory of

the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh could never be reached without the people of the country of the future. For nearly four years the world was her home. Her travels took her to Australia, Peru, the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Germany, and the South Pacific. She set no limits on her travel time; she had no deadlines. No longer married, she gave her life to the friends. When she arrived in a country, she would stay as long as she felt she could be of service. Nothing stood in her way of making personal heart-to-heart connections, especially with those who were in need. The goals and plans of the institutions were her highest priority, but she always had time to listen to the friends and to share with them her loving heart.

Roxanne did not make “presentations” of the Bahá'í Faith. She was an intellectual who made little show of her intellect, and she was a powerful speaker. When she spoke of the martyrs of Iran at a youth conference in Manchester, England, her stories galvanized the crowd. She told the story of Jinous Mahmoudi¹⁹ and of the challenges the young professional confronted in the last years of her life; the youth were spellbound. Then Roxanne asked them, “Where will *you* be in five years?” Without another word she left the podium. Many of those youth are now serving as pioneers in Africa, Mongolia, and Asia.

It was in 1987 that the Universal House of Justice asked Roxanne to settle in Hong Kong. She served the Faith there and in Macau with frequent and extended trips to China until her untimely death.

After making her pilgrimage in the summer of 1992, she stopped in England and Northern Ireland. In London her cancer was diagnosed. Her longing at the

¹⁹ See “In Memoriam,” Zhinus Ni'mat Mahmudi, *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVIII, pp. 781–84.

end of her life was to return to Macau and to China. Her happiness came from teaching the Cause of God, and her love for the people of China was unequalled and unabated.

During her last days I was asked to speak at a fireside in London. Roxanne insisted that I go. She said, "When you are teaching, I am teaching." Then she told me about a talk she had given to a group of prominent people at a ceremonial occasion. She said that she spoke about hope, and at the end of the talk several people were in tears. Then she advised me, "Remember, no talk on the Bahá'í Faith, no presentation, no matter how well prepared, is of any value unless it moves the heart of at least one person in the gathering, even to tears."

Roxanne died on November 17, 1992. At the time of her death, she was an Auxiliary Board member for Protection in Macau and Hong Kong, Secretary General of the Administrative Board of the Badi Foundation, and an administrator in the office of one of the Continental Counsellors in Asia.

She told me she could not return to Asia until she was well. From the Unseen Realms she has returned. Her direct energy continues to be felt wherever a friend opens his heart to Bahá'u'lláh. She was buried in Canford Cemetery, Bristol, England, under a huge shade tree. Interred with her, next to her heart, was a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's, written as a scroll in Chinese calligraphy by one of the friends in Hong Kong.

Roxanne lived with the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá: "Where there is love, nothing is too much trouble, and there is always time."²⁰ It was not a surprise to me to find

the quotation pasted in her wallet after her death.

Jene Bellows

DORIS MCKAY 1894–1992

Doris Henrietta Hill was born September 29, 1894. Her father, Henry, and his wife, Adeline Burr Hill, had an agreement about the upbringing of their daughter. Henry, a merchant in Lindley, New York, and superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church there, assumed responsibility for her religious education while Adeline, a choir teacher, would give her moral training. As a child Doris attended church twice a week and accompanied her parents to weekly prayer meetings. She described her upbringing as "strict."

When she was ten, her father's general store failed, and the family moved to Rochester, New York. When Doris was



Doris McKay

fifteen, Adeline told her that her moral apprenticeship was over and that Doris was free to make decisions for herself. Adeline said that, as a mother, she had done her best and that she did not think Doris would "go to the bad."

In Rochester, Doris attended the New York Normal School. Unlike many of the other girls graduating in 1917, Doris found work teaching in area schools. In the autumn of 1923 she was teaching in Geneva, New York, and in December she met Willard McKay who had a successful fruit farm there. They married at the end of June, and Doris's teaching career was suspended. (At that time married women were prohibited from teaching in public schools.)

Soon after the new year in 1925, Doris and Willard attended a fireside given by Howard and Mabel Ives and accepted the Message of Bahá'u'lláh. Doris describes her confirmation:

Yet, marveling at this new dimension of my understanding, I was miserable. The intonations of Howard's voice seemed still to ring out, "Mankind is one! All prejudices must be abandoned." How could I with my own two or three choice prejudices qualify as a Bahá'í? In the searchlight of these teachings, how ugly my faults were!

Were the doors closing? For a few hours I had thought that I belonged to "the new creation" mentioned by my teachers. Now I was a little less secure.

I arose and lit a candle, turned the pages of Howard's prayer book and prayed, almost with fear, that these hindrances might be removed.

My prayer was answered overnight. In the morning I awoke with a free, unsullied soul. This I knew through

the experience of faith—a positive knowledge of things divine.

Much of the McKays' early work in the Cause was devoted to the elimination of prejudice. While Willard and Louis Gregory were pioneering the promotion of racial unity through their tours together in the southern United States, Doris was fostering relationships with prominent members of the Urban League and the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People). She was organizing racial amity conferences in Harlem and Rochester, and despite threats from the Ku Klux Klan the McKays hosted interracial picnics on their farm.

In 1941 the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada asked Doris to go to "the Gateway to the South," Memphis, Tennessee, and resolve a crisis there. Her task was to unite the separate white and black Bahá'í communities into one administrative unit—a goal won with the first interracial Feast held there at Naw-Rúz and the formation of its first Local Assembly.

In 1929 she made her first traveling teaching trip to New York, Philadelphia, Washington DC, Baltimore, Boston, Portsmouth, and Montreal. In the mid- to late thirties she was a frequent teacher at Green Acre. Notable among her courses were "Fathoming the Most Great Ocean" and "Prayers and Meditations." In 1939 she returned to Canada to man the Bahá'í Booth at the Canadian National Exhibition and to visit the communities of Hamilton, Montreal, and Moncton.

Three years later the McKays pioneered to Moncton, New Brunswick, and in the fall of 1943 they moved to Prince Edward Island (PEI) to help win a goal of the Seven Year Plan—that of establishing a Local Assembly in the capital of that province. It

²⁰ "Nothing is too much trouble when one loves," He had been heard to say, "and there is always time." Howard Colby Ives, *Portals to Freedom*, p. 51.

was in PEI that her public school teaching career resumed with brilliance when she taught art to children and art instruction to teachers in over seventy-five classrooms throughout the province. She wrote "Art in the Schools" that was published by the provincial Department of Education. Its success saw three printings.

This was not the first of Doris's publications. As a member of the Outline Bureau of the National Teaching Committee in 1928, she helped develop "36 Lessons," some of the first deepening materials and study outlines for the American believers. In 1929 she wrote a letter to the editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* that, when published in the magazine, widely publicized the Faith—an achievement that was recognized at the Bahá'í National Convention that year. Over the years she wrote articles and poetry for *Star of the West* and later *The Bahá'í World*.

In 1983 Doris began to write what she called her "me-moires." She was particularly encouraged by the friends who wanted her to capture the spirit she breathed into oral accounts of her personal experiences with friends such as Dorothy Baker, Martha Root, and May Maxwell. Her book *Fires in Many Hearts* was published in 1991.

Doris dedicated the book to Howard Colby Ives—"A lighter of fires in many hearts: his spiritual sons and daughters, impregnated with the love of God, spread first over the eastern United States and Canada. His spiritual progeny have multiplied through the generations to become an army. I am one of his daughters and, to me, he will be always 'Daddy Howard'." As a pioneer Doris too was a lighter of fires in many hearts. Her spiritual family has spread to the far reaches of the planet. She wrote:

They have borne me along on their young, strong wings. They have taken me with them to their pioneer posts in Finland, Vanuatu, Madagascar, Haiti, Macau and French Guyana. They have said prayers for me on their pilgrimages, deepened with me in their search for Bahá'u'lláh. To these magnificent souls who are the lights of my life, I want to say that the bond between us, wherever we are, is charged with a redeeming power. If I had not stayed on Prince Edward Island I should have never known you; you are all iridescent motes in the atmosphere I breathe. I pray with you more than for you.

Doris died November 30, 1992, in Charlottetown, PEI. To many she will always be "Auntie Doris." On December 4 the Universal House of Justice wrote:

Her years of devoted service will long be remembered by the countless believers whose lives were touched by her manifold activities on behalf of the Cause. Her steadfastness and obedience to the beloved Guardian in remaining at her pioneer post will serve as a shining example of devotion for generations to come.

Kindly assure her many friends of our fervent supplications at the Sacred Threshold for the progress of her radiant soul throughout all the worlds of God.

Paul Vreeland

**RUTH SHOOK
ARMSTRONG FENDELL**
1908-1992

Ruth Fendell, early Bahá'í pioneer to Latin America, was born in 1908 in Tacoma, Washington, and grew up in Lima, Ohio.

She was zealous in her conviction of the oneness of mankind even before she learned of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings. For example, as a child in a Catholic school in the state of Washington, she was outraged by her teacher's refusal to permit Ruth's Native American playmate to participate in the school's "Invite a Friend to School Day." Later, when she was a soloist in a Baptist choir, Ruth walked out of a church service in protest when a black woman was not allowed to enter.

Ruth was operating her own photography studio in Lima, Ohio, when she met Dorothy Baker, later a Hand of the Cause of God. She studied the Faith with Dorothy and declared herself a believer in the early 1940s. Shortly thereafter Ruth set out to become one of the first pioneers to Colombia.

Ruth had been diagnosed with a pre-tubercular condition, and her doctor recommended a cold climate at a high altitude. She was offered employment as a teacher of x-ray technology in the Colombia hospital system. Owing to the demands of the war, air transport was limited, so Ruth traveled mostly by train and by car, meeting with the Bahá'ís in Mexico and Panama on her way. However, in the airport in Panama City she met Jacob "Jack" Davidson Fendell, a journalist living in Bogotá where Ruth was about to settle. They were married in 1942.

In Colombia, as in Panama and later in Costa Rica, Ruth was an active teacher of the Faith, and she was especially effective in



Ruth Shook Armstrong Fendell

her capacity as hostess to the many visiting people of prominence with whom Jack had contact. It was well known that Ruth was a Bahá'í as she was enthusiastic in sharing her beliefs. At her table many eminent persons came to know Bahá'u'lláh's teachings. She liked to include Bahá'í friends in her entertaining during the evenings of the Fast so that the new teachings would be especially noteworthy. Although Jack was not a Bahá'í, he was always very supportive of Ruth's teaching activities and was well loved by the Bahá'í community. Their home was often the guest house for visiting Bahá'í teachers and was also the site of large gatherings of the friends for Holy Day observances.

In 1948, following the revolution in Colombia, the Fendells moved to Panama. In 1952 they moved to Costa Rica with their two children, Jim and Elaine.

Ruth was well known in the town of San Miguel de Escazú for her perseverance and assistance with the formal education of the children of families working on her

coffee farm. She was very active as a Bahá'í traveling teacher to the port cities of Limón on the Atlantic coast and Puntarenas on the Pacific. She was also very prominent in local women's activities, serving as president of the Women's Club of Costa Rica and organizing fund-raising activities for the National Children's Hospital (Hospital Nacional de Niños). She was also a painter, giving art lessons to private students.

Ruth donated an attractive piece of property on a hillside overlooking the Central Valley to be the site of the future House of Worship in Costa Rica.

With several other pioneers she founded the Escuela Intercontinental—a Bahá'í primary school for children in kindergarten through grade three. The school was recognized by the Ministry of Education and its teachers included Alan Pringle, Emma Lawrence, Artemus Lamb, Valeria Lamb Nichols, and Theodore Cortazzi. The school operated from 1954 until 1957 when a polio epidemic swept through Costa Rica, and Ruth was stricken. It left her weak in her left side for the rest of her life. Fortunately she had always been ambidextrous and was able to continue with her painting and the teaching of her art students.

One of Ruth's most important artistic contributions to the Faith was her design and implementation of the gardens at the House of Worship in Panama. Raquel Constante, member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Panama at that time, recalls:

While the Temple was being constructed, Ruth designed and submitted her ideas for the gardens surrounding the Temple to the Universal House of Justice, who accepted her ideas, and she supervised the installation of the gardens. From time to time, she visited

the gardens, bringing plants, decorative rocks, and ideas for the beautification of the gardens on the Temple site. Although she was advanced in age and not too well, she worked long, hard hours in the hot sun to make the Bahá'í gardens as outstanding as possible to complement our beautiful Temple.

Elaine Fendell, Ruth's daughter, remembers that the fulfillment of her mother's creative designs for the Temple gardens was possible in large measure owing to the loving and respectful relationship between Ruth and Richard Mirkovich, who served as building and grounds supervisor during that time. He understood her vision and painstakingly nurtured the hundreds of seedlings that she brought from her greenhouse in Costa Rica. It was truly a labor of love, which resulted in the beautiful gardens enjoyed today.

Ruth Shook Fendell passed away on December 10, 1992,²¹ in Escazú, Costa Rica. The Universal House of Justice recognized her longevity as a pioneer in its condolence message of December 15.

Saddened passing capable veteran pioneer Faith Ruth Fendell. Her services over 50 years Latin American field unforgettable. Offering prayers Holy Shrines progress her soul realms on high.

*Adapted from an article by
Catherine E. Schmitz*

²¹ Before her passing Ruth had also contributed to the development of the Charles Wolcott Youth Institute in Santa Ana, Costa Rica.

GULAM HUSSEIN AMRELIWALA 1905–1992



Gulam Hussein Amreliwala

GRIEVED PASSING STALWART
SERVANT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH GULAM
HUSSEIN AMRELIWALA. HIS MERI-
TORIOUS SERVICES GENEROUS
CONTRIBUTIONS ADVANCEMENT
CAUSE INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT
LOVINGLY REMEMBERED. ASSURE
PRAYERS SACRED THRESHOLD
PROGRESS HIS RADIANT SOUL
ABHÁ KINGDOM.

Universal House of Justice
December 14, 1992

A staunch promoter of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, Gulam Amreliwala passed away to the Abhá Kingdom on December 12, 1992, in Bombay.

Mr. Amreliwala accepted the Faith in the late 1930s, becoming one of the first Bahá'ís from the Bohra community in India. During his early years as a Bahá'í, he had to face a lot of opposition from the

high priests, particularly when he was the only Bahá'í in the family. He persevered, braving the dangers of social boycott.

He served on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Bombay for twenty years and was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly in 1945–46, serving it until 1966–67.

Mr. Amreliwala was fortunate to attain the presence of the beloved Guardian twice, the first time in 1951–52 when the gates of pilgrimage were thrown open after World War II; he was in one of the first groups of pilgrims to reach the Holy Land, and he assisted the Guardian in clearing the site at Bahjí vacated by the Covenant-breakers.

His second pilgrimage was just before the Intercontinental Conference held in New Dehli in 1953. Both of these memorable spiritual experiences were a profound source of Mr. Amreliwala's great strength and complete self-surrender to the will and desire of the Guardian.

In early 1950, he along with two other members of the National Spiritual Assembly—Prof. Khianra and Mr. Hakimian—undertook an all-India tour by road to meet with the Bahá'ís in the different communities and to share with them the more important communications from the Guardian preparing them for the Ten Year Crusade.

Mr. Amreliwala's generous contributions and constant support of the Bahá'í Fund were most exemplary. Every time there was a financial crisis in the National Fund, the National Spiritual Assembly received the utmost cooperation from Mr. Amreliwala, particularly when it came to the purchase of national properties, such as the National Hazíratu'l-Quds, the New Era High School, and teaching institutes. He gave sacrificially.

His love for teaching the Faith and his deep involvement in mass teaching

activities in Madhya Pradesh and elsewhere would take him far and wide throughout India. He had a very rich and active Bahá'í life. One by one, he attracted all the members of his family to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh and encouraged them to be active supporters of the Cause of God.

*From an obituary appearing
in Bahá'í News—India*

JOHN BIRKS "DIZZY" GILLESPIE 1917–1993

We share your great sorrow at the passing of dearly loved, highly cherished John Birks Gillespie whose steadfastness in the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and constant promotion of its teachings added a luminous quality and enviable dimension to the far-reaching influence of his distinguished life. Our grateful memory of his Bahá'í services is ineradicable. We ardently pray at the Holy Threshold for the progress of his radiant soul throughout the divine worlds. Kindly convey our loving sympathy to his dear wife Lorraine.

Universal House of Justice
January 7, 1993

A musician sits on an airplane en route to Australia. In the seat beside him is a woman, a singer. They know each other; they have performed together. During the flight the man takes his prayer book and hands it to the woman. "I want you to have this," he says. We don't know what inspired him to seize that particular moment, and we don't know the conversation that led to the offer. The woman said, "If you give me your prayer book, how are you going to pray?"

When the man said that he knew the prayers by heart, she was incredulous, opened the book, and tested him. When he recited the prayer, she quizzed him again. "What religion is this?" she asked, and he began to explain.

The story is told by Flora Purim,²² the well-known Brazilian jazz vocalist who later accepted the gift of the Faith of the man sitting next to her, Dizzy Gillespie, the man who had said, "I want you to have this."

Pick up most any book about the history of American music or about the evolution of jazz, and you will find mention of Dizzy Gillespie, trumpeter, composer, and cofounder with Charlie "Bird" Parker of bebop, a movement that changed the course of music history. The magnitude of his influence and contributions were well recognized during his lifetime. In 1960 Dizzy was elected by *Down Beat* magazine's readership to the Jazz Hall of Fame. He performed at the White House on at least three occasions, including a televised appearance in 1978, during which he sang his composition "Salt Peanuts" with President Jimmy Carter. He was also a Grammy Award winner in 1975 and 1980.

But in no year was he honored as much as in 1989, when he seemed to be hitting his prime at the age of seventy-two. In that year he gave three hundred performances in twenty-seven countries and a hundred US cities. While in Nigeria he was installed as an honorary chief, "Baashere of Iperu"—an honor for which he was particularly proud. In that year President George Bush Sr. presented him with the National Medal of the Arts, and the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) gave him the Duke Award "for fifty years of achievement." The French gave him

²² Beatrice Richardson, *Jazz Review* interview with Flora Purim—Queen of Brazilian Jazz.



John Birks "Dizzy" Gillespie

its highest tribute to an artist—the medal of the *Commandeur dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres*. In 1989 Dizzy received his fourteenth honorary doctoral degree and was granted a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award. Other years were not without their kudos. The following year, for example, Dizzy received the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Honor, described as America's "quintessential reward for a lifetime's endeavor."

But Dizzy's greatest honor was that of being enabled in 1968 to recognize the Manifestation of God for this day. Alyn Shipton, author of *Groovin' High: The Life of Dizzy Gillespie*, writes:

He had reached his lowest point at the time of Martin Luther King's assassination in 1968, which happened on a day when, as luck would have it, Dizzy was back in South Carolina, revisiting Cheraw and Laurinburg, with all their associative memories of segregation and

the old South. His reaction to the news was to get spectacularly inebriated.

Two years earlier during the summer of 1966 Beth McKenty had introduced him to the Bahá'í Faith. Beth recalls:

While living in Milwaukee, one day I went into a bookstore where a book about Charlie Parker caught my eye. Although uninformed about jazz at that time, I found something appealing about the book and read it almost in one sitting. At the end, I thought, "What a pity Charlie Parker didn't meet a Bahá'í!" It seemed to me his search was a spiritual one, and his life would have been very different, had he met the Faith.

Toward the end of the book, I read Charlie Parker's words, "Dizzy Gillespie is the other half of my heartbeat!" When I read that, I wondered if it would someday be possible to bring the Bahá'í Faith to the attention of Dizzy Gillespie.

It was only a few months later that a notice appeared in the *Milwaukee Journal*, announcing a one-week visit by Dizzy Gillespie and his group. After calling many hotels, the one where he was staying was located, and I asked to speak to him. He later told me that he never answered the phone directly while out on the road. But that day he happened to.

After telling him how much the book about Charlie Parker had moved me, and my thought that there is a Faith in the world that could have helped him, I explained that my husband and I were Bahá'ís and asked if he would consider coming to our home for dinner and letting us tell him briefly about

it. Uncertain whether he would hear me out, I blurted all of this hurriedly. Then there was such a long silence, I thought he had hung up.

At last he said, "I've learned out on the road not to trust man, woman, child, or beast."

Assuring him that that was certainly understandable, I asked if my husband, Dr. Jack McKenty, and I attended the club and if Jack sent up his business card, could we meet? "If you look at us and don't wish to come to our table, it's all right," I assured him.

He said, "Of course," and hung up.

Jack was a surgeon and came home after a long day, a little late, but two other Bahá'í friends dropped in, and all four of us went to the club. We were able to get a table at the edge of the stage and the music started at 9:00 PM. When Dizzy Gillespie came out, Jack sent up his card and received an answering nod.

The music was wonderful! In between sets, Mr. Gillespie sat at many of the tables around us. By 1:30 AM, when he had not yet joined our table, I suggested that we leave. Jack said, "Are you crazy! We've been here all this time. I'm going to stay until the very last note!"

Then Dizzy came to the microphone and said, "I had a great drummer by the name of Chano Pozo. I'm now going to play a piece by him, 'Tin Tin Deo,' and I'm dedicating it to two new friends, Jack and Beth McKenty." At the end of the set, he came and joined us.

We learned that he was an ardent World Federalist, that he had toured Greece for the US State Department, and that his interests were broad. We went out for Chinese food and visited a long time. From the beginning, he

was interested in what we said about the Bahá'í Faith. He later came to our home for dinner and accepted a prayer book and *The Hidden Words*.

That first night in Milwaukee, he told us, "So many of my friends have already died, I've always thought I'll be dead by fifty." He was then forty-eight, and was fifty when he declared himself a Bahá'í.

Shipton adds, "Within a year or so . . . Dizzy forsook drink for good. It was just one of his undertakings when he decided to become a Bahá'í." In his autobiography, *To Be or Not to Bop* (1989), Dizzy explains:

Becoming a Bahá'í changed my life in every way and gave me a new concept of the relationship between God and man—between man and his fellow man—man and his family. I became more spiritually aware, and when you're spiritually aware, that will be reflected in what you do.

John Birks Gillespie was born on October 21, 1917, in Cheraw, South Carolina, the youngest of nine children born to James and Lottie Gillespie. His father, a bricklayer and part-time pianist, died when Gillespie was ten but not before he had instilled in his son a love for music, especially jazz. By age fifteen young Gillespie, an admirer of trumpeter Roy Eldridge, then a mainstay with the Teddy Hill band, had taught himself the rudiments of that instrument. He later replaced Eldridge in the Teddy Hill band.

Dizzy joined the Cab Calloway orchestra in 1939. His introduction to Calloway was provided by Lorraine Willis, a dancer at New York's Apollo Theatre. She and Gillespie were married on December 9, 1940. That same year, while touring with the Calloway orchestra in Kansas City,

Gillespie met and became friends with a man whose musical genius would soon coalesce with his own to change forever the way in which jazz was played: the saxophonist Charlie Parker, also known as "Yardbird" or simply "Bird."

The bebop revolution, beginning in the early 1940s, did not come easy. The music was not danceable, and some were offended by what they heard. Finding it too assertive, early club performances were described as an exchange of hostilities between the musicians and the audience. Jazz writer and biographer Stuart Nicholson wrote of it, "Bop knocked listeners out of their diatonic comfort zones. It demanded the active participation of its audience, which had to listen to understand what was going on. Jazz was consciously moving out of the realm of popular entertainment and demanding acceptance as a true art form in its own right."²³ It was the music's first avant-garde movement, and it transported jazz from its deep-seated Dixieland roots into the modern era of multilayered and multifaceted harmonies, rhythms, and improvisations. "Bebop changed the whole lyrical emphasis of jazz," the noted critic Ira Gitler later wrote. "It not only broke new ground harmonically, but it broke new ground rhythmically."

By the mid-1940s Gillespie, Parker, and a handful of other young innovators had virtually rewritten the canon of jazz, adding to the traditional melodies and harmonies of the swing era the more cerebral and deeply layered mode of bebop expression. They had garnered a devoted following, and the influence of bebop was spreading. It was also having an effect on the spoken word performances of beat generation poets, and Dizzy's beret, horn-rimmed glasses,

and goatee were widely adopted as popular dress icons of the beat uniform.

Were it not for Dizzy's talent for teaching, who knows what would have happened to bebop and the history of jazz. Nicholson noted, "But it was not just trumpet players who came under Gillespie's spell; his ideas, so fresh and dramatic in the 1940s, could be heard in the work of countless saxophonists, pianists, and guitarists." An ideal front man for the music, "he would quietly explain the theory behind what he was doing to anyone who would listen, often demonstrating at a piano keyboard how the extended melodies affected his note choices."²⁴

Gillespie and Parker were the new music's leading exponents, and Gillespie, besides earning a well-deserved reputation as a trumpeter without peer, made a further mark as a composer with such enduring jazz standards as "A Night in Tunisia," "Groovin' High," "Manteca," "Woody 'n You," "Con Alma," "Salt Peanuts," and "Birks' Works." Gillespie and Parker played for Earl "Fatha" Hines's band. When Billy Eckstine left Hines to form his own orchestra, Dizzy and Bird and Sarah Vaughn followed. Dizzy became the orchestra's music director.

Dizzy's thirst for innovation did not end with bebop. Drawn to the infectious rhythms of the music of Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean, he incorporated them into his own idiom to create a new and popular genre known as Afro-Cuban jazz. In 1947 he premiered at New York City's Carnegie Hall an extended work, "Cubano Be, Cubano Bop," and he is credited with recording, in the early 1950s, the first album of Brazilian bossa nova music in the United States.

²³ Stuart Nicholson, *Ella Fitzgerald: A Biography of the First Lady of Jazz*, Da Capo Press, 1993, p. 97.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

In 1953 so the story goes, someone accidentally stepped on Gillespie's trumpet during a concert, bending the horn upward at a forty-five degree angle. When he tried playing the misshapen instrument, Gillespie found that he could actually hear the sound more clearly, so he left it that way. Along with his enormously bulging cheeks, the upturned horn became his signature. In 1955-56 Gillespie toured the Middle East, Asia, and South America on behalf of the US State Department, leading the "World Statesman" band as a musical "goodwill ambassador," a role he continued to play in concerts around the world for more than three decades until illness forced him to discontinue his schedule in 1992.

For Dizzy, music and the practice of religion were one. Noted jazz journalist Nat Hentoff recalls:

A member of the serene Bahá'í faith, Dizzy once told me that his religion taught him "eventually, mankind will become unified, when there is world government and everybody belongs to it, and you don't need a passport. There'll be an international language taught in all schools. This should take another thousand or two thousand years. But on the way, we get little pinches of unification. Like the United Nations."

"And jazz?" I asked.

"Yeah, yeah," he said. "That really is a pinch of unification. It really makes me feel good to belong to jazz, to that part of society."²⁵

Dizzy promoted pinches of unification and in 1988 established his last big band, the United Nations Orchestra. Dizzy said, "The Bahá'ís believe in unity, but unity with diversity, to make it prettier . . . You

always think about what you can do to make it prettier." The United Nations Orchestra brought together some of the best jazz musicians from the United States and Latin America, at least three of whom were Bahá'í whose Faith was strengthened by their association with Gillespie.

His last scheduled appearance was to be a seventy-fifth birthday tribute at Carnegie Hall, held in conjunction with the 1992 Bahá'í World Congress. He was too ill to attend the November event, and the other featured performers—James Moody, Paquito D'Rivera, and Jon Faddis—paid tributes to his musicianship and to his spiritual legacy as a Bahá'í.

John Birks Gillespie died of pancreatic cancer on January 6, 1993, at Englewood Hospital in Englewood, New Jersey. A private Bahá'í service was held as well as a public funeral in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City—an all-star memorial performance attended by eight- to ten-thousand mourners. Dizzy is buried in Flushing Cemetery in Queens, New York.

Although he will be remembered as one of the most gifted and influential jazz musicians of the century, Gillespie closed his autobiography with the following self-assessment: "I would like to be remembered as a humanitarian, because it must be something besides music that has kept me here when all of my colleagues are dead. Maybe my role in music is just a stepping stone to a higher role. The highest role is the role in the service of humanity, and if I can make that, then I'll be happy. When I breathe the last time, it'll be a happy breath."

Adapted in part from an article by Jack Bowers and information provided by Beth McKenty

ANTONINA APOLLO 1909-1993

Hannes and his dear wife Raia Palu who, according to the records at the Bahá'í World Centre, were the first two inhabitants of Estonia to accept the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, rendered imperishable services to the Cause by keeping its banner hoisted through so many years before the doors to widespread teaching opened in those lands. Mrs. Antonina Apollo, who learned of the Faith from them in 1977, became a faithful and devoted believer, collaborating with them and with the successive visiting teachers and pioneers in building up the community of Tallinn.

The Universal House of Justice requests you to convey to Mrs. Raia Palu and to Mr. Valeri Apollo its loving sympathy in the loss that each of them has suffered. It will pray at the Sacred Threshold for the progress of the souls of these two dearly loved followers of Bahá'u'lláh, who have earned an immortal place in the annals of the Cause in the Baltic States.

Department of the Secretariat
August 5, 1993

Antonina Apollo, née Anissimova, was born in Tallinn, Estonia, on November 3, 1909. Her mother was of Estonian descent, and her father was Russian. She started her schooling in Finland and continued it in Tallinn until 1928, when her family moved to Novosibirsk, Russia's third largest city. She later enrolled as an extramural student at the Moscow Pedagogical Institute.

Antonina married Mr. Setskin and lived with him in Ivanovo, Russia. From that union one son, Valeri, was born in 1930. The marriage did not endure and ended in divorce.

Accused of being a spy for having lived outside of Russia and for being able to speak several foreign languages, Antonina was arrested in 1937 and given a five-year sentence to a labor camp in Arhangel'sk. She was not released until 1947. She returned to her native Estonia, and in 1950 she was arrested a second time and sent to a prison camp in the Krasnojarsk region of Siberia. There she met and married Albert Apollo, an Estonian journalist who was also imprisoned. In 1956 both were pardoned, and they returned to Estonia to build a small home near Tallinn.

Antonina worked as a bookkeeper and as a teacher of German. She was a gifted and prolific painter, an Esperantist, a writer, and a translator. She knew nine languages and wrote poetry in at least five of them, and she kept up a large correspondence



Antonina Apollo

²⁵ "Final Chorus," Nat Hentoff, *JazzTimes*, online.

with her many friends in different parts of the world.

She was introduced to Johannes (Hannes)²⁶ and Raia Palu, internationally known Esperantists and the first Estonians to bravely declare their belief in Bahá'u'lláh. Hannes and Raia were very active teachers of the Cause, spending much of their time traveling and promoting the Faith through participation in Esperanto events and visits to the friends and other Esperantists. With the support of his wife, Hannes translated *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* from Esperanto into Estonian. Through the efforts of Hannes and Raia and Ḥabíb'u'lláh Zabihian, a Bahá'í from Finland, Antonina became the third Estonian Bahá'í. She declared in 1977, shortly after her introduction to Hannes and Raia. In a letter dated February 15, the Universal House of Justice wrote:

The House of Justice will supplicate at the Sacred Threshold for divine confirmations to surround Mrs. Apollo and Mr. and Mrs. Palu so that her faith may be strengthened and so that the love and unity binding together these first three believers in Estonia may grow ever stronger and will produce great victories in the years to come. It will also pray to Bahá'u'lláh for the healing of Mr. Apollo.

Antonina's husband suffered a long and paralyzing illness that eventually claimed his life.

At Riḍván 1990, Antonina and Hannes Palu were elected to the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Tallinn, the fulfillment of an international goal of the Six Year Plan. Whenever her frail health permitted, Antonina attended Assembly meetings,

taking an active part in the consultations and in the work of the community.

During her last years, Antonina lived in a one-room apartment in Lasnamäe, in another part of Tallinn. On several occasions the believers enjoyed her warm and generous hospitality at Feasts and at other meetings she hosted in her beautiful, painting-filled apartment.

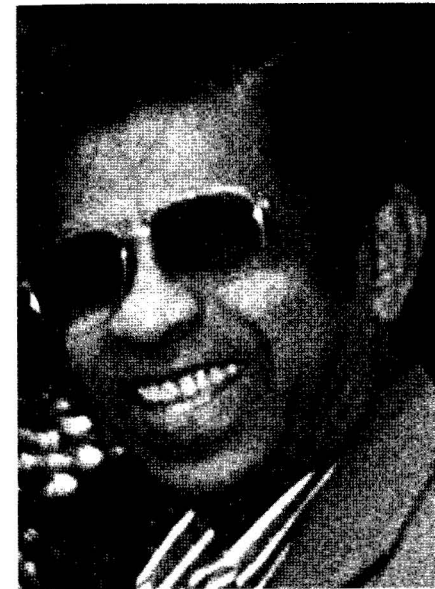
Antonina left this world on January 15, 1993, at the age of eighty-three. With a service that opened with a believer singing, "We All Come from God and to Him Shall We Return," Antonina's was the first Bahá'í funeral carried out in the Baltic States. Copies of a leaflet with prayers and words from the Bahá'í scriptures in Estonian, Russian, and Esperanto were given to family and friends. Antonina was buried at the Rahumägi Cemetery near Tallinn. She was survived by a son, Valeri, living in Moscow, and a brother in Ivanovo, Russia.

CHELLIE JOHN SUNDAM 1920-1993

Dr. Chellie John Sundram was born on December 11, 1920, in Singapore. His father, Mr. S. Meenakshi Sundram, was the first Asian headmaster of the Anglo-Chinese Primary School, a Christian mission school. His mother, Jessie Govindan, died during the birth of their third child when Chellie was a two-year-old toddler, and his elder brother, Monie, was four years old. His father remained a widower and cared for the three boys.

A brilliant student, Chellie excelled in his studies and in extracurricular activities. During weekends he attended Sunday classes at the Methodist Church where he met his future bride, Shantha Davies.

Upon completion of his secondary schooling he joined the King Edward VII Medical College majoring in dentistry. Just



Chellie John Sundram

as he was about to graduate, the Second World War started, and Singapore was invaded by the Japanese. During the war years Chellie and his colleagues served as doctors and dentists at local government hospitals. They continued to study as best they could, and at war's end they took their exams and secured their degrees.

It did not take long for the British authorities to discover the talents of this bright and hardworking dentist. In 1950 Dr. Sundram was selected by the Director of Dental Services to organize a dental training program for nurses, based on a New Zealand model. He traveled to New Zealand to study it, and upon his return he proposed to the government the establishment of a training school, not for nurses but for dental auxiliaries. He was strongly opposed by those who feared that under-qualified personnel would enter the profession. They also feared that their own status as dentists would be jeopardized if a new group of auxiliaries started performing their duties. Dr. Sundram impressed upon

his colleagues the need for auxiliaries and succeeded in convincing the authorities to establish the school, which was then left entirely in his hands to accomplish. The Dental School in Penang became the first such institution in the Asia-Pacific region and the second in the world. Training students from throughout the Pacific and Africa, the school not only pioneered the concept of dental auxiliaries but also the practice of a global outlook.

Dr. Sundram took upon himself the task of making dental visits less stressful for children. He filled his school walls with paintings and murals, many of which he painted himself after office hours. Dental nurses were taught to be more loving and sensitive to the needs of children, and their training included the making of hand puppets and toys for them. Graduates were sent to all parts of the country to work in government clinics as well as those set up in the schools. Through his efforts Malaysia and Singapore became the first countries after New Zealand to use school dental nurses in the public health services system. Thousands of children owed their dental health to Dr. Sundram.

In 1958 Mrs. Shantha Sundram showed keen interest in the Bahá'í Faith and inquired earnestly from visiting traveling teachers, Mrs. Margaret Bates and her daughter, Jeanne Frankels. These American pioneers were on their way to the Cocos Islands when they arrived in Penang and were forced to wait there for a ship. Shantha accepted Bahá'u'lláh, and Dr. Sundram followed. Through this simple act his life and that of this family were transformed. At the time the Bahá'í Faith was very new in Malaya (presently Peninsular Malaysia) with fledgling communities in Singapore, Seremban, and Malacca. Just days after their acceptance of the Faith, Dr. Sundram was elected chairman of the Local Spiritual

²⁶ See Hannes Palu, pp. 75-77.

Assembly of Penang Island, and Shantha was elected secretary.

The Sundrams went on a world tour when Dr. Sundram, who had been serving on the Expert Committee of the World Health Organization (WHO), was invited to present a paper at a WHO Dental Conference in Geneva. During the tour they met with many well-deepened Bahá'ís such as Mrs. Mildred Mottahadeh, and the Hands of the Cause Mr. Faizi and Mr. Ugo Giachery—people who helped them to strengthen their Faith. The Sundrams also visited the Holy Land, and after their return their large government house at 42 Peel Avenue became the focal point of Bahá'í activities in Penang, as well as a stopover for Bahá'í visitors from all corners of the earth.

In 1961 the Malaysian Government decorated Dr. Sundram with the royal AMN (Ahli Mangku Negara) award in recognition of his meritorious services to the country. He also received the JSM (Jasa Mangku Negara) award from the King of Malaysia.

Dr. Sundram brought the administrative expertise he had gained in government service to the Faith in Penang and later to the rest of the country when, in 1965, he was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Malaysia and served as its chairman.

The newly formed National Assembly was soon tested when the state government of Selangor proposed a bill to ban the Bahá'í Faith. The National Assembly quickly established a Bill Committee with Dr. Sundram as its chairman. Documents were gathered from around the world to prove the independent character of the Faith, and a lawyer was appointed to defend it. Consequently the proposed bill was not taken up for second reading by the government.

As Bahá'ís are obliged to obey civil law and must give consideration to the prevailing customs and traditions of their countries so that their actions will not reflect upon the Faith in an adverse way, they were strongly encouraged to refrain from teaching Muslims in the country where Islam is a state religion and apostasy laws are applicable. This decision, scrupulously followed by the Malaysian community, proved to be a protection when the Faith was confronted by similar threats.

In 1968 Dr. Sundram was among the first group of Continental Counsellors appointed by the Universal House of Justice to serve the South East Asian Zone. During the following four years he worked closely with the Malaysian National Assembly to ensure the triumphant completion of the Nine Year Plan.

Dr. Sundram was also a visual artist—a photographer and a painter. During the Intercontinental Oceanic Conference in Singapore in January of 1971, he mounted an exhibition on the Faith at the Victoria Memorial Hall.

Dr. Sundram decided to retire from government service in that year and joined the World Health Organization as a dental consultant covering thirty-two countries in the Asia-Pacific region, and for the next twelve years he traveled extensively.

Dr. Sundram had a strong sense of reverence for the Hands of the Cause of God. He fondly recalled a lesson in humility he learned from Dr. Raḥmatulláh Muhájir:

Dr. Muhájir used to frequently visit us in Singapore and Malaysia from 1962 onwards. One incident which happened in 1968 will always be foremost in my mind. When I heard that Dr. Muhájir was in Singapore for 3 days, en route to Thailand, I telephoned him from

Penang, and asked him if I should fly down to Singapore to meet him as he was not planning to visit Malaysia. He assured me that it was not necessary for me to do so.

From Thailand a few days later a cable was received from Dr. Muhájir for me to meet him in Bangkok immediately. I took leave from my government job for seven days, arranged for my visa, and caught the next day's flight to Bangkok. Dr. Muhájir was at the airport in Bangkok all smiles. He gave me a bear hug as usual and took me to the hotel where he had arranged for a room next to his. For six days he took me wherever he went, spoke to the Persian pioneers and listened to their problems in Farsi, then translated every word for me into English, embarrassing me with his intense courtesy. He informally chatted with me about the problems that the Faith faced and will face in time to come. On the night of the sixth day in Bangkok, I timorously mentioned to Dr. Muhájir that I was due to leave Bangkok the next day; was there anything urgent or important that he wanted me to do? "Yes," he said without a moment's hesitation, "we have accomplished together what I wanted." Seeing the puzzled look on my face, Dr. Muhájir added very softly with much tenderness in his voice, "The Guardian said that we must fully learn to draw on each other's love for strength and consolation in time of need. I am going to a country now on the instructions of the Supreme Body that requires all my strength and, more importantly, Divine assistance."

In the plane at 30,000 feet in the sky, returning to Penang, I felt humbled as I pondered over what the Hand of the Cause of God had said the night

before in Bangkok. Many times during the course of my duties as a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors, I have remembered Dr. Muhájir for his humility, for his deep understanding of the mysteries of the Faith and above all, for encouraging us to appreciate the necessity of learning to fully draw on each other's love for strength and consolation in time of need.

In April 1989 Dr. Chellie Sundram suffered a stroke, which deprived him of the use of much of his brain as well as the power of speech. It was a painful period for the friends to see him struggling to express himself. With extreme effort he learned enough words to communicate, and he began to paint again. On the night of February 22, 1993, following a short bout of pneumonia, he died suddenly and peacefully. The Universal House of Justice, hearing of his passing, sent the following message the next day:

Saddened learn passing Dr. Chellie Sundram, stalwart servant Bahá'u'lláh, whose loving nature, academic achievements and sincerity won for him recognition and opportunities render distinguished services through World Health Organization.

His indefatigable services Cause God, including two decades as member Continental Board of Counsellors in Asia, until ill health forced his retirement, lent lustre to the Faith and are lovingly remembered.

Convey his dear wife, members his family and friends, particularly the beloved Malaysian community, deepest love and sympathy,

assurance prayers Holy Shrines
progress his soul all worlds of God.

*Adapted from an article
by R. Ganesa Murthi*

ROWLAND ESTALL 1906–1993



Rowland Estall

The first time Rowland Estall heard the words of Bahá'u'lláh, he recognized their authority. That was in 1926 during a meeting of the Canadian Fellowship of Youth for Peace, when an attractive sixteen-year-old girl named Mary Maxwell encouraged the group to consider the aims of “a Persian philosopher of our times,” who, as recorded by Professor E. G. Browne, had said, “We desire but the good of the world and happiness of the nations.” Rowland studied the Faith during the months that followed and became a Bahá'í in 1927. He served the Faith for the next sixty-six years, with the adjective “first” frequently associated with his name.

Rowland was one of the founders of the first Bahá'í youth group in Canada; he served on the country's first Local Spiritual Assembly;²⁷ he and his wife were Canada's first homefront pioneers; he was deeply involved in the first Bahá'í radio broadcasts in Canada; he was the first resident Bahá'í of Winnipeg, Manitoba; he helped establish the first Canadian Bahá'í summer schools; he was on the first National Teaching Committee; he and two others published the first *Canadian Bahá'í News* bulletin; he was elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada; he was one of the first Auxiliary Board members appointed for Canada;²⁸ and he participated in the first election of the Universal House of Justice and attended the first Bahá'í World Congress.

Born in London, England, on April 27, 1906, of English and Huguenot ancestors, Rowland was the middle of five children. The Estalls were a religious family; his father was a lay reader in the Church of England. They lived in very modest circumstances, and in 1920 the family migrated to Canada, settling in Montreal.

When Rowland was eighteen years old, he got a job as a wireless operator in the merchant marine, and for the next two years he traveled up and down the coasts of the Americas. It was an important period of his life he later explained. He studied comparative religion, learned to meditate, and became a “true seeker.” “I used to climb up on the lifeboat covers at nighttime under the Caribbean stars and pray silently to whatever was out there to reveal something of the mystery of life, which I felt was available to me if I could find it.”

²⁷ Having formed in 1922, the first Local Assembly in Canada was in Montreal. Rowland was elected to it in 1928.

²⁸ Appointed with Peggy Ross in 1954.

Mary Maxwell, Rowland, and Emeric Sala (who entered the Faith shortly after Rowland) formed the original Montreal youth group. It wrote to Shoghi Effendi and was advised by him to study the Writings and not to rely unduly on the interpretations and representations of the older believers. They were greatly encouraged by Elizabeth Greenleaf, whom Shoghi Effendi had asked to go there to help with the teaching work. Rowland came to consider Elizabeth as his “spiritual mother.” Mary Maxwell had introduced him to the Faith, and her mother, May, had been his teacher, but it was Elizabeth who spent hour after hour teaching him to turn to the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh when he had questions.

Elizabeth arranged with the Local Assembly for the youth to use the Bahá'í center for “the independent investigation of truth.” They deepened their knowledge and invited other youth to study the new religion with them. This was unusual at the time, contrasting with the prevailing “Flapper Era” values of the youthful society. It was also unusual for the Bahá'í community. A Bahá'í youth group had been started in California in 1912, but the Montreal group was the first in North America to systematically study the teachings—an exercise that had a long-lasting influence on the development and growth of the Bahá'í community in Canada and elsewhere. Members of the group would later distinguish themselves as some of the best-known teachers, administrators, pioneers, and writers of the Bahá'í Faith.

On October 16, 1928, Rowland and Emeric were elected to the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Montreal. Both Rowland and Emeric married young women they had met through the youth group; Rowland married Stella Delanti,

an actress, and Emeric married Rosemary Gillies, a school teacher.

Rowland had wanted to be a journalist and had enrolled in Sir George Williams College in Montreal. However, the first-year arts program had seemed rather dull, and truth be told he needed a job. His younger brother was working for the Sun Life Assurance Company, and Rowland had the good fortune to be introduced to a man in charge of research into employee benefits—pensions and profit sharing and retirement plans. “I was fascinated by this,” Rowland claimed, “and it became my career purely by accident.” He would become an expert in the then-new field of group insurance and pensions, and his work would enable him to travel extensively for the Faith. He showed a remarkable ability to combine his daily life with Bahá'í activities.

Traveling teachers were the primary instruments for spreading the Faith, and Rowland joined May Maxwell, Elizabeth Greenleaf, and later Mabel Ives as highly effective teachers of the Cause in Canada. Rowland was a very attractive man, meticulous in his dress, and proper and dignified in all facets of his life. He was also an excellent and knowledgeable speaker. However, as Leroy Ioas explained:

It became clear also that the previous methods of extending the Faith into new areas by itinerant teachers, lecturers, and limited follow-up were not sufficiently effective, but that the only method whereby lasting results could be achieved was through the settlement plan.²⁹

Rowland and Stella were the first Bahá'ís in Canada to answer the call for homefront

²⁹ Leroy Ioas, *The Bahá'í World*, “Teaching in North America,” vol. IX, p. 202.

pioneers, moving to Saint-Lambert, a suburb of Montreal, in 1934. Early in 1935 Rowland was able to transfer within the Sun Life company to Vancouver, the only other Bahá'í community in Canada at that time.

Rowland, working with Doris Skinner, formed a Vancouver Bahá'í Youth Group, and by applying the same teaching method as he had in Montreal, he was successful in seeking out like-minded organizations and securing Bahá'í membership for their most active leaders and members. He was also instrumental in achieving the incorporation of the Vancouver Spiritual Assembly.

Rowland was deeply involved with the first formal use of radio programming to inform the Canadian public about the Faith. In 1937 a series of fifteen-minute broadcasts under the theme "The World at Home" was developed. The Bahá'ís would invite their friends into their homes for a discussion-hour based on the social principle introduced by the radio program to which all would listen. For others a Bahá'í would go to a listener's home as a discussion leader. At the conclusion of the series, the Bahá'ís set up study classes for forty-five people.

Rowland's marriage to Stella dissolved before he moved to Vancouver, so he felt free to pioneer. He corresponded with the Latin American Teaching Committee about moving to Guatemala City, but when he wrote to Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian recommended that he move to one of the unopened provinces of Canada. The first Seven Year Plan had been launched calling for, among other objectives, the formation of at least one Local Assembly in every province of Canada. Rowland gave up his excellent job as Sun Life's group manager for the West Coast and moved to Winnipeg, Manitoba, an area economically

and socially devastated by years of drought and the Great Depression.

Several days after he arrived in Winnipeg in 1939, Emeric Sala arrived to establish a branch of his business. Rowland worked for him until he could find a job in his own field. Meanwhile the two of them followed up on efforts made earlier by an American traveling teacher who had met Ernest Court, founder of an adult education group called the Phoenix Club. Ernest invited Rowland and Emeric to give a talk to his group about the Bahá'í Faith. Three years later, when the first Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Winnipeg was formed, five of its members had learned of the Faith through the Phoenix Club.

Rowland established another youth group in Winnipeg, which attracted a number of students at the university. Meanwhile Rowland found a job with Great West Life (insurance) and became its supervisor of group sales—a position that required him to travel throughout the prairies. He was appointed to the Regional Teaching Committee and again was able to combine his professional work with Bahá'í service. In his memoirs Rowland tells of the opening of the prairie provinces during the last years of the Seven Year Plan. The response of the local people was so limited that most of the members of the first Assemblies were Americans who had moved to Canada at the request of the National Teaching Committee of the United States and Canada. He remarked on "the deep and profound love which bound together those early pioneers."

The war years brought an unexpected development in the Bahá'í community in Canada. Government restrictions on foreign currency exchange reduced the attendance by Canadian Bahá'ís at the Green Acre and Geyserville summer schools in the United States. After the 1941 National

Convention Rowland was charged with the start-up of Bahá'í summer schools and conferences in Canada. With the financial help of Siegfried Schopflocher, the first such gathering took place in Montreal from late June to early July of that year. A month later the Ontario Bahá'ís hosted a summer school at Rice Lake, and a summer session took place in Vernon, British Columbia. From then on summer schools became a regular feature of Canadian Bahá'í life.

In 1946 Rowland met a young New Yorker named Yvonne "Penny" Frank who, as a social worker and research assistant for William E. Mann while he was working on his book *Sect, Cult and Church in Alberta*, had studied and had become attracted to the Faith. She declared, and in the autumn of 1947 she and Rowland were married. They had three children: Elizabeth, Judy, and Timothy.

Penny met and married Rowland in Winnipeg, a city she considered to be "the end of the earth." Rowland was not averse to the idea of leaving. There were now twenty-six Bahá'ís in the community, and after nine years as a pioneer, Rowland felt that they could leave. He wrote to the Guardian and received his consent, so the Estalls moved to Montreal early in 1948. Rowland found work as a consultant for a local brokerage firm, and Penny got a job as a social worker.

In April 1948 the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada was formed, the ninth pillar of the future Universal House of Justice. Rowland was elected one of its members.

Rowland's love and respect for the Bahá'í Administrative Order was perhaps the most memorable aspect of his life. His humility, his unflinching grasp of principle, and his reverence had a profound and enduring effect in shaping the development of the National Spiritual Assembly, which

he served for twenty-five years. He also served from 1954 to 1963³⁰ as an Auxiliary Board member for Canada. During the Ten Year Plan Rowland continued to serve on three or four national Bahá'í committees and on the Local Spiritual Assembly as well.

On April 21, 1963—the one hundredth anniversary of the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh—Rowland was among the delegates present in the House of the Master in Haifa voting for the first members of the Universal House of Justice. At the end of the three-day convention, he traveled to London, England, for the first Bahá'í World Congress. He had been asked by the Hands of the Cause of God to give a talk on the unfoldment of the Divine Plan and spoke on "The Vision of 'Abdu'l-Bahá."

In addition to his Bahá'í work Rowland maintained a busy professional life. In 1952 the oldest insurance brokerage firm in North America asked him to set up employment benefits departments for their four Canadian branches. He accepted and stayed with the firm for twenty years. By the time he retired in 1971 he was a vice president. He later said that all of his Bahá'í work and the traveling he did for his company "was all wrong for family life." He and Yvonne remained married for the sake of the children; but when he went to Reykjavik, Iceland, in September 1971 as general chairman for the North Atlantic Oceanic Conference, he went alone. His second marriage had ended.

Rowland spent the next six months on a tour of Central America and the Caribbean. At Rídván 1972 he attended the Convention held in Barbados for the election of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Windward Islands, and there he met

³⁰ In 1963 Auxiliary Board members who were also serving on National Spiritual Assemblies were asked to choose between the two fields of service.

Vivian Taylor, an American Bahá'í and pioneer, to whom he had been introduced at Green Acre in 1965. The two began to develop a relationship.

Rowland returned to Canada where the numerical expansion of young believers made the first concerted teaching activity in francophone Canada possible in 1972. The National Spiritual Assembly asked Jenabe Caldwell from Alaska to help with a mass teaching effort in Quebec, and a team of about thirty to forty Bahá'í youth was formed. Rowland, as liaison for the National Assembly, traveled with them.

The success of this project led the National Spiritual Assembly to sponsor another youth teaching team, this time four young men and women coordinated by Poova Murday of Mauritius. The team spent five weeks from December 1972 through January 1973 in Martinique and Guadeloupe, and through its efforts, nine new Local Assemblies were formed, and nearly a thousand new believers enrolled.

Rowland and Vivian married in December 1972 and offered to pioneer to the Caribbean. Asked to go to Martinique for "crisis consolidation," they arrived on January 31, 1973. Virtually every day for the next two and a half months they traveled from village to village calling on the people who had enrolled. Meetings were held, commitments were deepened, and at Ridván all six of the Martinican Assemblies were re-formed—a major achievement.

On June 5, 1973, the Bahá'í world was thrilled by the announcement from the Universal House of Justice of the establishment of the International Teaching Centre. Three days later Rowland was stunned to learn that he had been appointed as a Counsellor for Central America.

"I became busier than I had ever been in my life," he stated. During his seven years as a Counsellor, he helped to lay

the foundations for the formation of the National Assemblies of the French Antilles, the Leeward Islands, the Windward Islands, and Martinique and Guadeloupe and for the Anis Zunuzi School in Haiti. He and Vivian returned to Canada in 1981, advised by the Universal House of Justice to better attend to the needs of their health and economic future. They settled in the Toronto area where Vivian was treated for cancer before her passing in September 1985.

Rowland remained in their home until he needed care. During a hospitalization in 1989 he befriended his Irish nurse Joan Dunne and began to teach her the Faith. She declared late in 1991, and early in 1992 they married in Toronto. They spent three months in Barbados before moving to Duncan on Vancouver Island, British Columbia. Rowland passed away there on March 7, 1993.

Upon learning of his death the Universal House of Justice wrote on March 10, 1993:

We are distressed to learn of the passing of Rowland Estall who rendered distinguished services to the Faith for over six decades, including periods of service as Continental Counsellor, Auxiliary Board member, and as member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada for no less than 25 years. His highly meritorious contributions to the establishment of the Cause also included international pioneering to Martinique as well as homefront pioneering to a number of Canadian cities. He will long be remembered for the outstanding part he played in the initial growth of the Canadian Bahá'í community and in the development of its international role.

Prayers will be offered in the Holy Shrines for the progress of his soul. Kindly convey our condolences to his wife and children in this time of their bereavement.

From tributes written by Jameson Bond and Michael Rochester and research by Will van den Hoonard

KATHERINE McLAUGHLIN
1910-1993



Katherine McLaughlin

WE SHARE DEEP SENSE LOSS TO AMERICAN BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY IN PASSING DEARLY LOVED, WIDELY ADMIRERED KATHERINE McLAUGHLIN. HER DEVOTED, UNFLAGGING, DISTINGUISHED SERVICES OVER PERIOD SEVERAL DECADES IN TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE FIELDS WESTERN HEMISPHERE, PARTICULARLY AS MEMBER AUXILIARY BOARD, UNFORGETTABLE. ARDENTLY PRAYING IN HOLY

SHRINES FOR PROGRESS HER RADIANT SOUL THROUGHOUT DIVINE WORLDS. KINDLY CONVEY OUR LOVING SYMPATHY MEMBERS HER BEREAVED FAMILY.

Universal House of Justice
March 8, 1993

VALERA FISHER ALLEN
Knight of Bahá'u'lláh
1902-1993

Valera Fisher Allen was born in Prowers County, Colorado, on September 19, 1902, into an American pioneer family. She grew up in the timberlands of Idaho where her father farmed and transported timber down tortuous mountain roads. Nez Perce Indians visited the family for food and trading. When Val was ten years old, the family moved to Turlock, California.

After attending the College of the Pacific, Val went to the San Francisco Methodist Training School to prepare for work as a lay missionary. In 1925, while writing an essay on the superiority of Christianity, she discovered the Bahá'í Faith. She attended an evening talk given by Leroy Ioas. Afterwards she rushed back to her dormitory and awakened her best friend to give her the glad tidings that Christ had returned. Her thesis, "A Study in Comparative Religions," was published in *Star of the West* in June 1926.

She founded a Bahá'í family, teaching her mother; her best friend, Enola Allen; and Enola's brother, John, whom she later married.

After graduating from the Methodist training school, Val went to Hawaii to fulfill her responsibilities to the Methodist Church, and there she served as a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of the

Bahá'ís of Honolulu and had the bounty of meeting Agnes Alexander.

After returning to California, she married John Allen. They helped to form the first Bahá'í Assemblies in Burlingame and Millbrae, and they served for many years on the Geyserville Bahá'í Summer School Committee. In 1953 they were appointed to the Asia Pioneer Committee. That same year, at the All-America Bahá'í Intercontinental Teaching Conference in Chicago and the launching of the Ten Year Crusade, they, along with their sons, Dale, Ken, and Dwight; their daughter-in-law, Carole; and Val's mother, Maude Fisher, offered their services as pioneers.

Dwight and Carole went to Greece and became Knights of Bahá'u'lláh there. With the beloved Guardian's guidance, Swaziland was chosen for the rest of the family. Val and John flew to Mozambique, rented a small car, loaded it with camping gear, and headed for Swaziland, arriving at their pioneering post on April 19, 1954. For this effort they also became Knights of Bahá'u'lláh. Dale, Ken, and Maude joined them four months later.

Val and John served the Faith in Swaziland until the end of their lives. Val fondly talked about their early days, their service to the royal family, and how this led to an audience with His Majesty King Sobhuza II. After being introduced to the Faith, His Majesty found the teachings so reasonable and pleasing that, despite objections from some churches, he encouraged the Allens to teach the Faith in Swaziland. Later Bill Sears came from South Africa to put on a puppet show at the Matsapha National High School. The subsequent formation of the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Matsapha was a joyous occasion.

The acquisition of the Bahá'í properties and the building of the Ḥazíratu'l-Quds were special projects to which Val and



Valera Fisher Allen

John made major contributions. They even enlisted their grandchildren to help in the construction.

Val and John were elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of South and West Africa,³¹ and Val served for more than twenty-five years as its secretary. She and John crisscrossed Southern Africa tirelessly from Cape Town to Malawi, from Lesotho to Botswana, from Zambia to Zimbabwe. The Allens were renowned for their hospitality, for their devotion to their African brothers and sisters, and for the help they gave to new pioneers and traveling teachers. Their teaching efforts helped raise up a Bahá'í community which now numbers in the thousands.

Val's first trip out of Africa was to go on pilgrimage, where she had the bounty of

³¹ Established in 1956. As members of that Assembly, Valera and John attended the International Convention in Haifa in 1963, participating in the election of the first Universal House of Justice.

meeting the beloved Guardian. She recalled that one evening after dinner, the Guardian unrolled the beautiful Roll of Honour on which were written the names of the Knights of Bahá'u'lláh, including hers and John's. The Guardian told the pilgrims that in due time the Roll would be deposited at the threshold of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. How fitting it was that Val's last trip out of Africa was to attend the commemoration in May 1992 in Israel and to see that same Roll placed in the Shrine.

Val passed away on March 19, 1993, thirty-nine years after arriving in Swaziland. Her Swazi children insisted that she have a traditional Swazi funeral with an all-night vigil attended by many Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'í friends who came and paid tribute to "Gogo" (Grandmother) as she was fondly called. The funeral was attended by many dignitaries and more than three hundred friends. The King of Swaziland, Mswati III, sent a personal representative with a beautiful eulogy that concluded:

His Majesty, therefore, extends his special condolences to all members of the Allen family and advises that they must all take comfort in the knowledge that the loss of Gogo Allen is not only their personal loss, but is a loss to the whole country. This is because the contributions made by the late Mr. and Mrs. Allen towards the spiritual, social, and economic development of this country will always remain a living testimony of their love for this country and its people.

Among the many messages that were sent to her funeral was one from the National Spiritual Assembly of South Africa that said:

Grieved passing Mother of Swaziland, Valera Allen, who

served many years on our National Assembly until the formation of the National Assembly of Swaziland, Mozambique and Lesotho in 1967. Val's gentle touch was the cause of resolving many tense administrative moments in those early years and her loving secretarial letters were a source of inspiration throughout the Region.

Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánúm sent the following message:

The passing of dear Val, so exemplary and steadfast in service to our beloved Faith, who arose with her husband and family to serve and spread the healing message of Bahá'u'lláh in the early period of our global plans and to carry His teachings to that promising, great and much-loved continent of Africa, leaves a gap in the ranks of the faithful early pioneers to that vast area which none can fill. Her radiant spirit will surely provide a great inspiration not only to other pioneers but to the people of Africa, whom she loved so dearly and who responded to her love by taking her into their hearts and rising to follow her steadfast and joyous example. You may be sure in the holy shrines we will pray for her and that the Abhá blessings may encompass the dear African believers, whose services are steadily increasing and whom the Bahá'ís throughout the world love so much, and assist them to follow her valiant example in teaching the message of Bahá'u'lláh to their own people.

On April 12, 1993, the Universal House of Justice cabled its condolences:

SHARE YOUR ACUTE SENSE LOSS IN
PASSING KNIGHT OF BAHÁ'ULLÁH
VALERA FISHER ALLEN STALWART
INDEFATIGABLE TEACHER FAITH
FIRM RELIABLE UPHOLDER ADMIN-
ISTRATIVE ORDER

HER OUTSTANDING RECORD
DEVOTED SERVICES OVER PERIOD
SEVERAL DECADES IN NORTH
AMERICA AND MOSTLY IN SOUTH-
ERN AFRICA PARTICULARLY SWA-
ZILAND INDELIBLY INSCRIBED
ANNALS FAITH AND WILL REMAIN
AS INSPIRATION FOR GENERA-
TIONS TO COME

KINDLY CONVEY OUR LOVING
SYMPATHY MEMBERS HER DEAR
FAMILY PRAYING HOLY SHRINES
PROGRESS HER RADIANT SOUL
THROUGHOUT DIVINE WORLDS

ADVISE HOLD MEMORIAL GATHER-
INGS THROUGHOUT SWAZILAND
BEFITTING HER STATION.

Dale and Irma Allen

VERA AND JOHN LONG 1907-1992/1906-1993

John Victor Abel Long began his working life in 1922 as a secretary in the export department of Sexton, Son and Everard—a Norwich shoe manufacturing firm. There he met Vera Brewster, whom he married in 1931 in St. Peter Mancroft Church in Norwich.

It is difficult to write about John or Vera singularly. Married for sixty-one years, John and Vera were considered inseparable by all who knew them and who knew how much they gave to the Faith. Though John's services were of a higher profile and more widely recognized, Vera was much more than his constant supporter and a person

always in his shadow. She made her own distinctive contribution to the development of the Bahá'í community.

During their five years together in Norwich, John was active in local politics, eventually becoming a city councillor. In 1936 he obtained a post at the City of Leicester Colleges of Art and Technology, and at the outbreak of war he was promoted to the headship of the School of Boot and Shoe Manufacture. Having been put in charge of all Royal Air Force *ab initio* radio training and all army shoe repairing training, he was also responsible for feeding the service trainees under the colleges' care from 6 AM to 10 PM.

The outbreak of World War II brought greater responsibilities. All unemployed housewives were called up for war work. Vera went to Harrisons, the Leicester seed merchants, until she was required to return to Norwich to nurse her ailing mother. She arrived back in Norwich just in time for the German "Baedeker" air raid; she never forgot the appalling scenes she saw when dawn broke. Returning to Leicester she worked in the telegraph office at Bishop's Street Post Office until shortly after compulsory service ceased.

John had become a member of the executive of the Association of Teachers in Technical Institutions, which he served for sixteen years (one year as national president). He was also on the executive of the National Union of Teachers for thirteen years and the chair of more than one of its committees. Twice during these years John and Vera were invited to attend garden parties at Buckingham Palace.

At the height of his professional career John became president of the British Boot and Shoe Institution. From this post he was instrumental in establishing three-year apprenticeships in the industry, with, for the first time, verifiable national training



John Long



Vera Long

standards. This reform was so successful that the government used it as a model for new systems of apprenticeships in other industries.

The competence of his qualified pupils, plus his publications in the field, ensured that John's reputation as a teacher and a reformer of the industry was widely broadcast. One of his former Leicester students told the story of how he migrated to South Africa. There he met an Indian shoe manufacturer who had never been out of the country. When the newcomer said that he had qualified in Leicester, the Indian said, "Then you must know John Long!"

Perhaps the greatest single illustration of John's status in the industry came in 1964 when the College of Advanced Education in Mexico City, having decided to set up a department of boot and shoe manufacture, wrote to the British government requesting that John Long be sent to advise them. John was delighted to accept the offer and stayed a month in Mexico.

In the early 1950s John was a key member of several survey teams that toured European countries to advise and assist in the reconstruction of their national footwear industries. One of his professional colleagues on these tours was Mrs. Betty Reed. She introduced him to the Bahá'í Faith, and by 1955 John and Vera were deeply interested. Vera became a Bahá'í early in 1956, and John joined some months later. Both were founding members of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Leicester.

Vera had held Bahá'í meetings in her home before she had become a Bahá'í. After her declaration she insisted that they move to a larger home. For seven years they lived at 126 New Walk, their home becoming the virtual Bahá'í Center of Leicester. Meetings, often attended by over a hundred, were held there, and individuals arrived at all hours to inquire about the Faith. This put a heavy load on Vera, but she was delighted to be able to serve the Faith she loved so much.

The Longs provided shelter for the more vulnerable members of society, such as a West Indian gentleman who had been refused lodging elsewhere on account of his color. John and Vera also acted as guardians to a small number of young girls from distinguished Bahá'í families who were studying in England away from their parents.

They both made their first pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the spring of 1957 as guests of Shoghi Effendi. In that year John was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles, an institution he served continuously for the next twenty-three years. He held the office of treasurer for four years and chairman for seventeen. Indeed, for a time he served in both capacities simultaneously, a unique distinction in the Assembly's history.

Under John's management the international dimension of the treasury grew so quickly that it was made a department in its own right. Vera did most of the day-to-day work of the treasury, making out receipts and keeping up the books and correspondence. They continued this work until 1990, making thirty-three years of service that kept Vera in regular communication with Bahá'ís worldwide.

Vera was appointed to regional and national Bahá'í committees and is particularly remembered as being secretary of the National Bahá'í Summer School at Harlech for nine years. During the schools she counseled many young Bahá'ís while on long walks along the beach, occasions that she remembered fondly.

In December 1964 John and Vera moved to Oakham, the market town of Rutland. It was then a virgin territory for the Faith, and they settled there as pioneers. They also brought with them the Bahá'í Publishing Trust to which John had been appointed chairman earlier that year. He occupied

that post for the next nineteen years, with Vera handling most of the paperwork—processing incoming orders, corresponding with customers, and making friends all over the world. Her work was undoubtedly the reason why the Trust's sales consistently increased by fifty percent each year.

Between 1960 and 1985 Vera made many trips around the British Isles and beyond, visiting and assisting Bahá'í communities in such places as Norway, the Lofoten Islands, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, the Faeroe Islands, the Inner and Outer Hebrides, and Orkney. From 1985 onward failing health made such long-distance travel too strenuous for her, but as late as 1991 she traveled to Wales and to the northernmost tip of Scotland to visit isolated and housebound Bahá'ís. In 1988 John and Vera were able to make one last pilgrimage together to the Bahá'í World Centre.

When he retired from full-time professional life in 1971, John had risen to the position of dean of four faculties at Leicester Polytechnic, where he had been a staff member for thirty-five years. He continued to serve on several regional and national education committees, work that frequently brought him into contact with prominent figures. Until his final weeks John regularly served on interview panels for Voluntary Service Overseas, an international development charity.

When his services as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly came to an end in 1982, John found himself informally promoted to the rank of elder statesman of the British Bahá'í community. He took the opportunity of his new freedom to travel more with Vera.

Vera loved her Faith and her husband so dearly that when John was appointed one of the nineteen representatives of the Bahá'í community of the United Kingdom to attend the centenary commemoration of

Bahá'u'lláh's ascension in the Holy Land, she implored him to go, despite her poor health. John departed for Haifa, and they were never to see each other again. Vera passed away on June 2, 1992, following a stroke at the age of eighty-five, while John was still in the Holy Land. On June 3, the day after Vera's passing, a message was received from the Universal House of Justice:

Grieve news passing stalwart maid-servant Bahá'u'lláh, Vera Long, who for many years served the Cause of God with great devotion. Her sacrificial efforts in assisting her beloved husband as national and overseas treasurer of the National Spiritual Assembly is gratefully acknowledged.

As a lasting memorial to his wife, John purchased a number of plots in the cemetery at Oakham that he donated to the Local Spiritual Assembly—a rare achievement in the United Kingdom. Vera's dignified black marble headstone records for posterity and public notice her distinction as a Bahá'í pioneer to Rutland.

Despite the shock of his loss, John increased his services to the Faith in the few remaining months of his life. He gave an inspiring interview on the local BBC radio station about the centenary commemorations in the Holy Land, and he went traveling teaching alone for three weeks throughout Scotland and Northern Ireland. He had meticulously planned a twelve-week return trip to visit Bahá'í communities above the Arctic Circle that summer, a trip he was never to make.

His last public service was a simple affair; he officiated at the planting of a flowering cherry tree in a prominent location in Oakham—a Holy Year gift to the people from the local Bahá'í community.

John was to survive Vera by only nine months. He was taken to hospital in March 1993 following a mild heart attack, and he died on April 10, at the age of eighty-six.

News of John's passing was received during the three-day Festival of the Covenant, a major event marking the Bahá'í Holy Year in the United Kingdom hosted by the National Assembly at Liverpool University. The fifteen hundred Bahá'ís gathered at the festival had been aware of John's deteriorating health, and prayers for him had been included in the program. Still the news was received with considerable shock by his many friends and admirers. The assembled believers prayed together again for John, this time for the consolation of his soul.

At his funeral service in Oakham, Mrs. Betty Reed, the woman who had introduced the Faith to him almost four decades earlier, delivered the eulogy. The message of the Universal House of Justice dated April 13, 1993, was also read:

GRIEVE PASSING DEARLY LOVED JOHN LONG, TRUSTED STALWART PROMOTER FAITH GOD, WHO SERVED THE CAUSE WITH UNFALTERING DEDICATION OVER A PERIOD EXTENDING WELL NIGH FOUR DECADES. DISTINGUISHED BY HIS STERLING QUALITIES AND INDOMITABLE FAITH, AS WELL AS BY HIS OUTSTANDING SERVICES RENDERED IN TEACHING, ADMINISTRATIVE AND PUBLISHING FIELDS, HE GREATLY ENRICHED ANNALS FAITH BRITISH ISLES. THE MEMORY OF HIS INDEFATIGABLE LABOURS IS BOUND TO INSPIRE RISING GENERATIONS.

Adapted from articles written by George M. Ballentyne

ROGER WHITE
1929–1993

We are grieved to learn of the passing of Roger White who served the Faith with such great devotion for over four decades in North America, in Africa, where he provided secretarial support to the Hand of the Cause William Sears, and in the Holy Land. For a period of twenty years he rendered distinguished services at the World Centre, the highlight of which was the major role he played in the preparation of materials for the volumes of *The Bahá'í World* published during that time. He will long be remembered for his humility and kindness, his humour, his dedication to the Cause, and for his outstanding poetic skills through which he enriched the literature of the Faith and contributed immeasurably to its proclamation. Kindly convey to the members of his family and his friends our condolences and the assurance of our prayers in the Holy Shrines for the progress of his soul.

Universal House of Justice
April 12, 1993

Roger White was an artist whose works transcended race, culture, or religion and inspired others around the world to create music, poetry, plays, paintings, and dance—to make art. Perhaps his influence was due to his ability to help us understand and rejoice in the dual nature of man—the dual nature of each of us. He described the intrinsic tension within himself and within us all in an essay written in 1972 entitled “Point a Loving Camera”:

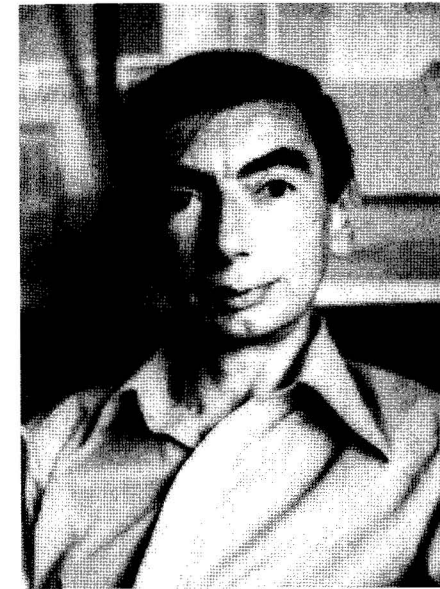
Without admitting to schizophrenia in the clinical sense, I will perhaps be understood if I say that two of me recently visited Nassau, and took along a camera.

There is a “culturally bound” me, the part that grows nostalgic remembering early Shirley Temple movies, the original Flash Gordon comic strip, carousels, Christmas trees and Cole Porter songs, and a limitless array of penny candy that made choice a harrowing experience; the me of a simpler time when cars seemed to be of only two kinds, big and baby Austin; when love was something that happened regularly on the silver screen to Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy, and when heaven was to be able to dance like Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire. That part came to Nassau—perhaps even led me there—for how could I resist relating to the bronzed languid figures in the travel folders.

And there came to Nassau, too, that part of me which I seek to have Bahá'u'lláh take possession—the central part, the essential me. Here are found the roots of faith, the beginning of a dim consciousness of eternal life. If I am to know myself, it must be this part. If I am to be reached, to reach others, it must be from here.

My camera is trained on an Israeli ship marked “Haifa” at the public dock. A Bahamian some feet away and not in range of my lens springs forward, almost striking the instrument from my hand—“Don't you take pictures of me!” It is as though one kept running into invisible barbed wire.

So begins my vacation. Is Bahá'u'lláh right? In this day, is there no place to go?



Roger White

For the visitor to Nassau the solution is simple. He confines himself to the white tourist ghetto—frequents the private white beaches and bars of the luxury hotels.

For the Bahá'í, this does not seem to be adequate if we are to take literally the injunction to be engaged in delivering the message of the coming of One Who summons all mankind to the recognition of oneness. In the atmosphere of entrenched hostility in Nassau, one asks with a new intensity, is there “a power in this Cause that far transcends the ken of men and angels?” Can we become channels for it? For it is only this power of universal love that can conquer the citadels of men's hearts. Without it, we are like my bronzed authoritative people of the travel folders, meaningless mannequins against a painted backdrop.

The question of how to achieve the quality of universal love has long held my attention. In Nassau, from a simple

young man (a member of the race the Master described as the “pupil of the eye of mankind”) I received the gift of the knowledge that love begins with recognition.

Sam, a native Bahamian, and his family of small children shared a bench with me. My presence was ignored in a studied manner and my acknowledgment of the smile of one of the children gingerly scrutinized. A white tourist with borrowed courage speaking too loudly and defensively (only later did I pause to consider the tourist's fear and the inevitability of his action) descended on us, announced “those kids are cute as a bug's ear and I want a picture”—simultaneously clicking and darting away. Sam winced. I knew I had witnessed something hurtful and ugly. I said the Greatest Name.

In the next instant, when Sam's eyes locked with mine, he sensed a shared rage—we had been photographed in an offensive manner, like inanimate objects. In a flash born of the pain of the moment (for Sam, I am sure, a familiar pain) Sam recognized me—saw beyond my color, to me. Barriers, self-consciousness gone, the gates of communication swung open and we spoke from the heart. He said, in effect, he felt no one who loved him, who saw him would indiscriminately point a camera and shoot; he wanted to be selected, singled out, recognized for his essential self. We spoke of the need to teach ourselves not only to see the world from one another's eyes (it will not be enough to exchange one cultural prison for another) but to see with the eye of God, as it were, Who sees only the whole.

I think of Sam now, whenever I use my camera, which has become

to shake the universe,
 intimidate the stars,
 blind to His love of the people of
 your town
 for the innocence of their aspiration;
 blind to their genuine virtue and
 power and beauty.

The tempest came in your twelfth or
 fifteenth year a clean cold wind,
 and you were left like a stripped
 young tree in autumn
 with a cynical winter setting in
 and nothing large enough to house
 your impulse to believe.

The need lay as quiet, unhurried and
 insidious as a seed
 snowlocked in a bleak and lonely
 landscape.³²

After his graduation from high school in Belleville, Roger left home to live in Toronto. There he was introduced to the Bahá'í Faith by Gary Rea-Airth. Attending fireside meetings in Kingston, Ontario, he became very attached to the prominent Canadian Bahá'í teacher and administrator, Winnifred Harvey, and he declared his belief in Bahá'u'lláh in August 1951. Winnifred Harvey had been taught the Faith by Rowland Estall, who had himself been taught by May Maxwell. Thus, from these earliest days, Roger developed a deep personal affinity with the early heroes of the Faith and dared to hope that he might enjoy some kinship of spirit with them.

Roger returned to live in Belleville after his declaration as a Bahá'í. It was there that he met Helen Owens, who shortly afterward also recognized Bahá'u'lláh. They were married in a Bahá'í ceremony in 1952. The newlywed couple became instrumental in confirming new believers, and within one year the first Local Spiritual Assembly

of Belleville was formed, with Roger and Helen serving on it.

Roger worked as a clerk to the County Court in Belleville, progressing to the post of assistant editor of *Hansard*, the daily record of debates in the Canadian Parliament's House of Commons in Ottawa. He was also on call to the United Nations as a shorthand reporter. The Whites, having moved as a result of Roger's appointment, were soon elected to the Local Spiritual Assembly of Ottawa. In the ensuing years they held regular firesides in their home and, between them, served on four national committees.

When his marriage to Helen ended in 1962, Roger moved to Vancouver where he worked for the Supreme Court of British Columbia. The Hand of the Cause of God William "Bill" Sears and his wife, Marguerite, visited Vancouver, and one night, when Bill went to bed after delivering a talk, Marguerite, Roger, and another Bahá'í discussed Bill's health. Marguerite believed that if her husband's workload could be eased, he might live to serve longer. From this a plan was formed for Roger to become Bill's secretary. For three years, from 1966 to 1969, Roger devotedly served the Sears in Kenya and acted as secretary to the Hands of the Cause in Africa. During a lull, when his other duties permitted, he danced a leading role in a professional production of *Gyps and Dolls*; he was a lithe and graceful dancer.

Returning to North America a further two years were spent with Bill in Palm Springs, California, as secretary and research assistant. It was an amicable relationship, enhanced by the love of laughter the two men shared and warmly recalled in a late poem: "You may alter my grammar and sentence structure," Bill had told Roger, "but don't rewrite my jokes!"

³² *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XIV, p. 642.

though *shadow* will be retained
that we may contrast the radiance . . .
. . . In time, our desire to speak will
abandon us.

All that need be said the light will
say. *Yes*.

Roger White passed away on April 10,
1993, in Richmond, British Columbia, sur-
rounded by his family.

*Based on memorial articles by
Eileen White Collins, Anne Gordon Perry,
and Robert Weinberg*

STANLEY THEODORE BAGLEY
Knight of Bahá'u'lláh
1912–1993

Stanley Theodore Bagley was born in
Bertrand, Missouri, on February 2,
1912. Prior to his passing on April 15, 1993,
he wrote about his first contact with the
Faith:

I learned about the Bahá'í Faith from
a young Bahá'í, Florence Johnson,
in early fall of 1934. She invited me
to attend a talk by Mr. Dale Cole, a
teacher of Economics and Political
Science, I think, in Detroit . . . I was
especially attracted by [the principles
of] progressive revelation and the
unity of all religions. I was deepened
through meetings at the Louhelen
Bahá'í School, and particularly by the
stories of the future Hand of the Cause
Dorothy Baker.

I signed my membership card in
March or April of 1935, but I had ac-
cepted [the Faith] in my heart before
that. We were elected to the first Local
Spiritual Assembly shortly after at
Riḍván 1935.

The young Bahá'í who introduced
Stanley to the Faith, and to whom he refers

in his memoirs as his “spiritual mother,”
became his wife on March 2, 1935. Florence
and Stanley were busy with such Bahá'í
activities as teaching, offering hospitality,
and serving on the first Local Spiritual
Assembly of Flint, Michigan, until their
departure to Sicily in 1953.

Stanley was often voted chairman or
vice chairman during the intervening years,
and he was a delegate to the National
Convention several times. He was twice the
chairman of the State Convention. From
the very beginning, Stanley and Florence
talked of pioneering in the future. Concern
for the education of their three children—
Gerry, Susan, and Carol—was a hindering
factor until the Intercontinental Teaching
Conference in Chicago at Riḍván 1953,
when the appeal of the beloved Guardian
dissolved all their barriers. The children
were included in the final decision, and
they were eager to participate.

Stanley related, “We first chose to go
to Africa, but the committee was so slow
in responding to our offer, that we chose



Stanley Theodore Bagley

the Bahá'í teachings with neighbors who attended the funeral in 1990 of his beloved wife, Florence,³³ and with the nurse's aides who took care of him during his final days on earth.

The Universal House of Justice sent this message on April 19, 1993, upon hearing of his passing:

GRIEVED LOSS MUCH LOVED
KNIGHT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH STAN-
LEY THEODORE BAGLEY WHOSE
NEARLY SIX DECADES UNSWERV-
ING DEVOTION CAUSE GOD
ACHIEVED HISTORIC DISTINC-
TION IN HIS OPENING SICILY, WITH
HIS WIFE FLORENCE AND THEIR
THREE CHILDREN, DURING GLORI-
OUS TEN YEAR WORLD CRUSADE.
GRATEFULLY RECALL HIS EXTEN-
SIVE TEACHING ADMINISTRATIVE
SERVICES BELGIUM, FRANCE,
GUADALOUPE, MARTINIQUE AS
WELL AS UNITED STATES. ASSURE
ARDENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES
PROGRESS HIS NOBLE SOUL DIVINE
WORLDS. KINDLY CONVEY OUR
LOVING SYMPATHY MEMBERS HIS
DISTINGUISHED FAMILY.

Stanley Bagley was buried in Ozark, Alabama.

Carol Jocelyn Bagley Payne

GERTRUDE BLUM
Knight of Bahá'u'lláh
1909-1993

GRIEVED PASSING KNIGHT
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH GERTRUDE BLUM
WHOSE DEDICATED SERVICES PIO-
NEER SOLOMON ISLANDS ALMOST

FORTY YEARS IMMORTALIZED
ANNALS FAITH. SHE ACHIEVED
RARE DISTINCTION AWARD MEM-
BERSHIP BRITISH EMPIRE MEDAL
FOR SERVICES BAHÁ'Í FAITH AND
COMMUNITY. FUTURE GENERA-
TIONS BELIEVERS WILL GLORY IN
HER DEVOTION PERSEVERANCE
SACRIFICIAL ENDEAVOURS. ASSURE
PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS
HER LUMINOUS SOUL CONSOLA-
TION FAMILY FRIENDS.

Universal House of Justice
June 6, 1993

Gertrude Gewertz Blum was "knight-
ed" twice in her life. First, in 1954,
she was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh
by Shoghi Effendi for being, with her
husband, Alvin, the first Bahá'í pioneers
to the Solomon Islands, and then, in
1989, she was made a Member of the
Order of the British Empire by Queen
Elizabeth II "for long and dedicated ser-
vices to the community and church in
the Bahá'í Faith." Such recognition of
one life's journey is as extraordinary as
the story of the journey itself.

Gertrude Gewertz was born in New
York City on December 9, 1909, into a
strict Orthodox Jewish family. Her parents
were Russian; her father had immigrated
to America toward the end of the nine-
teenth century, making a living selling fruit
and vegetables from a horse and wagon.
Gertrude was the middle of seven chil-
dren. Circumstances did not permit her to
complete a formal education so she began
to work outside the home when she was
fourteen. After work she studied shorthand
and typing, and eventually she got a job as
a stenographer.

Shortly before the Depression Gertrude
attended a series of ten lectures given by
Keith Ransom-Kehler. Gertrude wrote:

³³ See "In Memoriam," *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XX,
pp. 1003-5.

came for her passport and visa interview, the letter had disappeared, and her application was refused. Two years later someone in the company where she had worked found the letter wedged between two desks.

Meanwhile the National Spiritual Assembly asked her to pioneer to Birmingham, Alabama. On hearing a southern dialect for the first time, Gertrude wrote, "I thought to myself, 'My God, I can't understand a word they're saying. How am I ever going to take dictation?'"

In Birmingham she said, "I felt terribly lonely. I had never lived away from home before. Once I was so lonely I couldn't eat. Talk about 'Southern cooking!' They cooked their beans in pork fat!" Coming from a Jewish background, she had never eaten pork before.

Gertrude wrote:

I got a job with the American Plumbing Company. Fortunately, the manager was a Northerner, but the others in the office were from the South. One day, my waste basket was full, so I asked the janitor to empty it. He was a black man everyone called Washington, but I called him Mr. Washington. It was as if I had thrown a bomb in the place. Someone said, "We don't call any nigger 'Mr.," and I replied, "Well, he's an older man, and I was brought up to respect older people. I don't know him, so I couldn't call him by his first name." They made it difficult for me. I was in tears, and eventually I went to the manager and said that I didn't think I could stay there.

Gertrude went to work at a new air force base where bombers were being manufactured. Another Bahá'í moved into the city, and they got an apartment together. She attended meetings of organizations where she thought she might find people

interested in the Faith, and during the weekends she walked the streets saying the Greatest Name.

I noticed a sign, "Dr. Juanita Johnson." I thought it unusual to find a woman doctor in these parts so I went in to meet her . . . [Later, a traveling teacher] Mrs. [Mabel] Ives contacted Dr. Johnson, and both she and her husband became Bahá'ís. They had a brown stone house, located in the business section, which was fortunate for us because this was the only area where white and black could mix—in other areas they were not allowed to go into each other's homes . . . It was after Louis Gregory's visit that we were able to form our Local Assembly. This was the only organization in Birmingham that practiced racial integration at this time.

In 1941 Alvin Blum went to visit Gertrude. They had met five years earlier when Alvin had gone to a class in public speaking that Gertrude was attending. They both were from New York Jewish backgrounds and had attended some of the same Bahá'í events. Soon after the visit Alvin asked her to marry him.

The United States entered the war, and Alvin, knowing he would be drafted, applied for non-combatant duty and was assigned to the Medical Corps on the West Coast. "[W]e had planned that I join him there and get married," Gertrude explained. She continued:

But before we could, he was transferred secretly to the Pacific, and I did not hear from him for several months. Eventually I received two letters in the same post—one from Alvin, in which [he] could not tell me where he was . . . and one from a New Zealand Bahá'í . . . telling me that they had received

and dry-cleaning equipment to set up the town's first laundry service.

Gradually the Blums began to get to know people and hold meetings about the Faith. The Solomon islanders were welcomed into their home; never before had they been invited to eat with foreigners. Word soon spread that people had brought a new religion. In 1956, two years after the Blums arrived, the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Honiara was formed.

The Blums were able to establish a branch of their business at Auki, on Malaita, with a store, a bakery, and a theater. Meanwhile in Honiara they had added a bakery, soft drink bottling, ice cream and ice block manufacturing, a general store with refrigerated goods and vegetables, and a peanut oil extraction plant. "When we began the bakery," Gertrude wrote, "Alvin acquired a little red book used by the Australian Army to explain how to make bread in a field kitchen. We propped the book open on the oven, followed the instructions scrupulously, and out came beautiful bread. We hugged each other with joy!"

At Ridván 1959 Gertrude and Alvin were elected to the first Regional Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the South Pacific. From this time on they were not only involved in the business and local teaching activities but also in regional administration. At the end of the Ten Year Crusade there were four Local Spiritual Assemblies in the Solomons.

In 1963 Gertrude and her family attended the first Bahá'í World Congress in London. "It was a time of triumph, fraught with great emotion at having taken part in this—in helping a little to fill a part of the Divine Plan. When the members of the Universal House of Justice rose in front of that congregation of believers, we felt that heaven and earth did meet."

Three years later the Regional Spiritual Assembly was divided into two with Honiara becoming the headquarters for the National Spiritual Assembly of the South West Pacific. Shortly afterward Alvin's health began to deteriorate. He was ordered by the doctor to take an extended leave from the Solomons, and so the Blums went to Sydney to attend the Intercontinental Bahá'í Conference. Gertrude was one of the main speakers, addressing the difficulties of teaching the Faith in French-speaking areas of the Pacific.

Upon returning to the Solomons, Alvin's health continued to deteriorate, and he passed away in 1968.³⁵ Six months after Alvin's death, Gertrude was appointed as an Auxiliary Board member, and the Counsellors asked her to visit Australia and New Zealand. "This coincided with the visit of the dear Hand of the Cause Enoch Olinga, and we left the Solomons together." She stayed in Auckland until the South Pacific Oceanic Conference, held in Suva, Fiji, in May 1971, returning to Honiara in 1972. Now retired from active business life, her home became the center for the community. Day and night people went to learn of the Faith or be deepened. She combined her teaching with her wonderful skills as a cook, and her little house was always full of people.

In 1978 Gertrude made a second pilgrimage to the Holy Land and visited Iran. That same year Hamuel Hoahania traveled to Haifa as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Solomon Islands for the election of the Universal House of Justice. He was the first Solomon Island Bahá'í to visit the Holy Land, and this was a profoundly moving experience for Gertrude.

³⁵ See "In Memoriam," *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XV, pp. 439–41.

Cemetery more prayers were said by friends and family, which led to further inquiries and requests for literature and information about the Faith by several individuals.

Ramon's passing provided us with a truly valuable Bahá'í proclamation, for which we're sure that Bahá'u'lláh will bless him and his family.

Supplicating prayer for his soul at the Holy Shrines and strength for his family, with loving Bahá'í greetings, we remain,

*In His Service, De Nationale Geestelijke
Raad van de Bahá'í van Suriname*

JEANNE KRANEN

1907-1993

On June 13, 1993, almost eighty-six years old, a pioneer of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh in the truest sense of the word passed away. She had entered the Bahá'í community on August 31, 1950, in The Hague, and as "Aunt Jeanne" used to say, "The whole of The Hague hung out its flags." It was the Queen's Birthday. This little joke typified her and the way she charmed her friends, young and old. In spite of her many and serious physical problems, she was always happy, giving a cheerful "welcome" to everyone who visited her. Wherever she lived, a small sign that read "Alláh'u'Abhá, Welcome" hung directly across from her front door.

Jeanne Kranen was born in Schiedam, South Holland, the Netherlands, on June 17, 1907. Her family moved a few times before settling in 1926 in Laan van Meerdervoort in The Hague. Many years later, in 1987, Jeanne, as the last living family member, donated the property to the National Spiritual Assembly.

After completing her education as a teacher, she taught in various schools in the Netherlands, went to England to better learn the language, traveled to Paris to



Jeanne Kranen

practice French, and eventually found a position as a governess in Belgium.

When Jeanne was forty years old, she accepted a position as governess for the children of the Dutch ambassador in Tíhrán. Perhaps she was the only Dutch Bahá'í who first heard about the Cause in the very Cradle of the Faith. The story began the moment that she, through her own physician, came in contact with Dr. Ayadi. Later she read in the newspaper that he was not only a Bahá'í but that he was also the personal physician of the Sháh.

Once, when her taxi tried unsuccessfully to find a certain address, a Persian man in a small car stopped and asked where she wanted to go. He brought her personally to the address she gave him, and along the way he spoke about someone called Bahá'u'lláh, but this did not mean anything to Jeanne then. A couple of days later she was walking with the children in the city. Suddenly a small car with the friendly Persian drove up and stopped. The children, thinking it was a taxi, jumped in.

campaign for three months—the Jeanne Kranen Teaching Campaign—which led to four declarations. We, the Bahá'ís of today and the coming generations, will always think back with love and gratitude to you and be inspired by your valuable contribution to the development of the Faith in Cyprus.

Upon receiving the news of her passing, the Universal House of Justice wrote on July 14, 1993:

We were deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Miss Jeanne Kranen, whose profound faith in Bahá'u'lláh and tireless services to His Faith constitute a bright light in the annals of the Dutch Bahá'í community and an imperishable link established during the Ministry of the Guardian between The Netherlands and the Bahá'í community of Cyprus.

We shall pray at the Sacred Threshold for the progress of her radiant soul in all the worlds of God.

Lottie Tobias

**ANNE-MARIE
BLAGOVESTCHENSKY DUPEYRON
1936-1992**

**SERGE BLAGOVESTCHENSKY
1898-1993**

**ANDRÉE BLAGOVESTCHENSKY
1910-1993**

Serge Blagovestchensky was born in Russia, more precisely in Minsk, on August 13, 1898, of Orthodox parents. He was often called “Blago,” and he enjoyed saying that his name signified “Good News.”

He said that he was a “Cossack” and that he liked horses very much, and at the

time of the First World War, when he was about sixteen—an age to be a soldier—he enlisted in the cavalry. In the face of the collapse of the Russian army, he and his orderly and a group of other soldiers fled toward the West. They encountered serious difficulties, and Serge succumbed to typhus. In spite of it all, he had the good fortune to find a brave peasant who nursed him.

Once recovered, this small band headed toward Constantinople. It seems that Serge must have been separated from the group, because he arrived alone in Tunisia. There, his lucky star followed him; he met a Frenchman residing in Tunis who gave him lodging for some time and strongly encouraged him to go to France. In Paris Serge found other Russian émigrés.

His knowledge of horses and his short stature enabled him to find work as a jockey. This was not to his liking, and after a while Serge took up the study of law, working weekends as a taxi driver. Earning his diploma he established an office as an insurance consultant in Paris. During this time he married, but the union did not last.

* * *

Andrée Roche was born on September 15, 1910, of a French family from Le Raincy, near Paris. She married a Dupeyron, with whom she had a daughter named Anne-Marie, born in Tunis in 1936. The marriage did not last, and Andrée and Anne-Marie returned to Paris. Andrée later met Serge at the home of mutual friends, and some time later they decided to marry and divide their time between Paris and Juan-les-Pins on the French Riviera, where Serge owned a villa.

Serge took an active interest in Anne-Marie's education, and she considered him her real father and would never undertake anything unless Serge had formally given his consent.

for several years. Andrée also served for a year on one of the first teaching committees for Corsica, and Anne-Marie undertook journeys to Iran and to the Yucatan.

Unfortunately, all became seriously ill. Anne-Marie who underwent two major pancreas operations died on October 6, 1992. A devoted daughter, she had never married. The Universal House of Justice remembered her in its message of October 13:

DEEPLY SADDENED PASSING
DEAR ANNE-MARIE. RECALL WITH
PROFOUND APPRECIATION HER
DEVOTED SERVICES FAITH. FER-
VENT PRAYERS OFFERED PROGRESS
HER SOUL KINGDOM ON HIGH.
CONVEY BLAGOVESTCHENSKYS
DEEP HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES.

Serge had been operated on in Paris for prostate cancer and continued treatment in Monaco. Several years went by, but the illness gained the upper hand, and he passed away quietly in Monaco on June 18, 1993, at the age of ninety-four:

The Universal House of Justice . . . was grieved to learn of the passing of Mr. Serge Blagovestchensky, whose long and devoted services to the Faith are warmly remembered. The House of Justice will offer prayers in the Holy Shrines for the progress of his soul and for the healing of his dear wife.

Department of the Secretariat
June 30, 1993

Andrée, grievously hurt by these shocks, died peacefully within a few months:

The Universal House of Justice was saddened to learn of the passing of Mrs. Andrée Blagovestchensky. Her family and friends may be assured of the prayers of the House of Justice

in the Holy Shrines for the progress of her soul in the Abhá Kingdom.

Department of the Secretariat
September 26, 1993

The Blagovestchensky family generously divided their fortune among their family, charities such as the Hector Otto Foundation in Monaco and the Little Sisters of the Poor in Vence, and the Bahá'í community of Monaco, to which it made a gift with a view to the purchase of a Bahá'í center for the country. All three are buried in a vault in the cemetery of Vence.

*Adapted from translations of
tributes written by Paulette Bodansen
and Charlotte Campana*

JOHANNES "HANNES" PALU 1913—1993

Johannes Palu was born on May 27, 1913, the elder son of Juhan and Elsa Palu. He lived a very simple life with his family in Mõisaküla, a small town in the south of Estonia. His father was employed as a smith for the Estonian railroad. Johannes started his schooling in Mõisaküla and went on to high school in Pärnu and finally entered the University of Tartu, where he studied law for several semesters.

In 1930 Johannes enrolled in the first Esperanto class in his school, and in the following year he joined and became a very active member of the Esperanto Club. He liked the logic and the structure of the Esperanto language and devoted his life to its propagation through teaching, translation, and writing.

In 1938 Johannes moved to Tallinn where he met and married Raia Taal, a secretary and translator at the Tallinn Paper factory. Raia was also an ardent Esperantist. Together they made their home in Nõmme, a suburb of Tallinn.

Spiritual Assembly of Tallinn; he was elected a second time but resigned because of ill health. In spite of his poor health he found time to write articles, to assist the translation work and to support the activities of the Bahá'í community, always with the special love and dignity that he possessed.

Maintaining correspondence with more than two hundred individuals, Johannes was well known, respected, and loved by Esperantists all over the world. In 1992 he was made honorary member of the Esperanto-Asocio de Estonio (Estonian Esperanto Society), which he had served for many years.

He passed to the Abhá Kingdom on June 26, 1993, at the age of eighty. The Department of the Secretariat wrote in a letter to the Regional Spiritual Assembly of the Baltic States dated August 5, 1993:

Hannes and his dear wife Raia Palu who, according to the records at the Bahá'í World Centre, were the first two inhabitants of Estonia to accept the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, rendered imperishable services to the Cause by keeping its banner hoisted through so many years before the doors to widespread teaching opened in those lands. Mrs. Antonina Apollo, who learned of the Faith from them in 1977, became a faithful and devoted believer, collaborating with them and with the successive visiting teachers and pioneers in building up the community of Tallinn.

The Universal House of Justice requests you to convey to Mrs. Raia Palu and to Mr. Valeri Apollo its loving sympathy in the loss that each of them has suffered. It will pray at the Sacred Threshold for the progress of the souls of these two

dearly loved followers of Bahá'u'lláh, who have earned an immortal place in the annals of the Cause in the Baltic States.

Johannes is buried at the Hiiu Cemetery in Nõmme near his last home. The Regional Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Baltic States had a befitting memorial stone placed and inscribed with words which so poignantly described him:

The lovers of mankind, these are the superior men, of whatever race, creed, or colour they may be. . . — 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

*Adapted from an article
by Brigitte Lundblade*

MAY MARTHA SEEPÉ 1918–1993

Be assured that the Universal House of Justice has offered prayers in the Holy Shrines for the progress of the soul of Mrs. May Seepé in the Abhá Kingdom.

Department of the Secretariat
September 6, 1993

May Martha Seepé, known as “Auntie May” to everyone, was the first woman of South Africa’s “colored” community to become a Bahá'í.³⁸ Her enrollment took place at her home on November 6, 1955.

³⁸ A distinction is made by some South Africans between “colored” and “African”. While both may refer to native born Africans, the term “colored” implies being of mixed race or Malaysian descent. Dorothy Senne, who was not of mixed race or Malaysian descent, was considered to be the first African Bahá'í in the country, declaring in January 1955. See “In Memoriam,” *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVII, pp. 434–36.

could speak English, Afrikaans, Sesotho, Zulu, and Xhosa and had a good ear for language. She and Max would buy a dictionary whenever they didn't know the language and would piece together sentences. Sometimes they would try to find an interpreter, but May added, "People always understand, if you try."

Her favorite themes for teaching were the oneness of mankind, the oneness of religion, "the earth is but one country and mankind its citizens," and all barriers are man-made. When asked what the Faith had done for her, her quick response was, "The Faith has led me to be detached. I can easily detach myself from whatever is not within the framework of the Faith."

May was a person of total devotion to service with no strings attached. What she liked most about the Faith were the Holy Writings and the movement from place to place. She went everywhere with Max on trips, except when he attended the first and subsequent International Conventions and the World Congress. In 1981 she went on pilgrimage without Max but with a group of other pilgrims from South Africa.

The Seepé home was always a place for fireside teaching and administrative activities. May served on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Western Township, Newclare, and Sophiatown, which later became integrated into the Johannesburg Assembly. She served almost continuously until her passing on August 1, 1993, rarely missing a meeting in spite of her growing physical infirmities. She was often elected a delegate to the National Convention, and she served for some time on the National Teaching Committee and as an assistant to an Auxiliary Board member. She also used her home for children's classes and Bahá'í women's activities; she taught knitting so the women could make some money to contribute to the fund.

After Max's death in 1982 she was joined in her home by her sister Sarah. In their latter years May and Sarah were like twins in their services to the Faith. They died within a few months of each other.

Lowell Johnson

PAPYAS NDELEMA

1942–1993

Papayas Ndelema was born on December 12, 1942. He worked in the Meteorological Department of the Malawi Government at Mzuzu, which was then a small town in the Northern Region of the country.

He met Donald Makonyola, a Malawian Bahá'í, who introduced him to the Faith. Donald remembers first imparting the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to the late Papayas when they were in Karonga on relief duties. Papayas was then a strong Christian belonging to the Catholic Church—a person opposed to the Faith. He was given to read *Release the Sun*, *Thief in the Night*, and *Wine of Astonishment*—books by the Hand of the Cause William Sears. Papayas could not reconcile himself to Bahá'u'lláh's claim. How could Bahá'u'lláh be the Promised One when He was born to a noble family in Persia and did not descend from the heaven of Christ in the clouds? Donald explained to him that it is the Holy Spirit which descends from heaven to occupy the Chosen One. With Christ it happened in the River Jordan at His baptism; with Bahá'u'lláh the first intimation was in the Sýyáh-Chál (the Black Pit) of Tíhrán. Once he grasped this, Papayas accepted Bahá'u'lláh, and he enrolled in the Bahá'í Faith on September 14, 1969, while working at Mzuzu. He later recalled that as a boy, his grandmother related a prophecy that there would come teachers with a new

Message from God just as the Christians had done.

Papyas became a tireless teacher of the Bahá'í Faith, and he served on the first National Spiritual Assembly of Malawi. He was also appointed to serve as a member of the first National Teaching Committee there. He and Donald translated the first Bahá'í prayer book into Chichewa for use by the Malawi Bahá'í community.

Papyas privately studied radio engineering and got a diploma, which led him to resign from the Meteorological Service and to take up a new job in the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation. After his retirement he lived at Domasi with his wife, Lexa Ndelema, and their children. Lexa, also a Bahá'í, loved him and helped him when they were together. He passed away to the Abhá Kingdom on August 8, 1993, at his home. The Local Spiritual Assembly of Zomba conducted a Bahá'í funeral that was attended by some of the National Spiritual Assembly members and other Bahá'ís including those from Blantyre and Lilongwe. It was touching to hear his children firmly singing Bahá'í songs at his funeral. May his soul continue to progress in the Abhá Kingdom.

Luka Mzungu and Donald Makonyola

DANIEL HAUMONT
Knight of Bahá'u'lláh
1925–1993

Daniel Haumont, who was born to Catholic parentage on May 15, 1925, in Paris, France, arrived in Tahiti from Morocco in February 1954. He then lived in the Marquesas Islands and became a Bahá'í there in 1955. He later returned to Tahiti before moving to New Caledonia.

During this time of the Ten Year Crusade, the French government controlled the Loyalty Islands and considered it a

reserve for the indigenous people of the area. Historian Graham Hassall notes:

Entry to French territories was particularly difficult. French government policy denied non-French citizens long-term residency in French Overseas Territories, and both New Caledonia and the Society Islands had been assigned to the Australian Bahá'ís, none of whom were eligible for permanent residency. Consequently, pioneers to New Caledonia and French Polynesia were itinerant rather than domiciled, and traveled between colonies when their visas expired. Access to the Loyalty Islands was even more challenging, as at first the Australian Bahá'ís did not know they were designated off-limits to all Europeans, including French citizens.⁴²

Since Daniel was considered to be a French Tahitian, he was able to enter. He arrived at Maré Island in the Loyalty Islands on October 11, 1955, and remained for a few weeks. However limited his stay, he succeeded where others were unable and became a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Loyalty Islands. Shortly afterward he went back to Tahiti and eventually returned to New Caledonia where he lived for seventeen years. In 1989 Daniel moved back to France.

Toward the end of his life he drew nearer to Catholicism but without leaving the Faith. Being very sick he had few contacts with the Bahá'í friends, and in the Holy Year of 1992, he was too feeble to join the other Knights of Bahá'u'lláh in Haifa for the centennial ceremonies. He died in Bourges, France, on August 12, 1993. His

⁴² Graham Hassall, "Pacific Bahá'í Communities 1950–1964," in *Pacific History: Papers from the 8th Pacific History Association Conference*, ed. Donald H. Rubinstein (University of Guam Press & Micronesian Area Research Center, Guam, 1992), pp. 73–95.

family, who are not Bahá'ís, had his body returned to New Caledonia. All his life Daniel was a seeker of truth, interested in history and in exegesis. On learning of his death the Department of the Secretariat wrote on August 22, 1993:

The Universal House of Justice has received your fax informing it of the passing of Mr. Daniel Haumont, Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Loyalty Islands. We have been asked to inform you that the House of Justice will offer ardent prayers in the Holy Shrines for the progress of his soul.

This article draws from the research of Graham Hassall and from Lilian Alá'ís, "A Frenchman introduced the Faith in the Loyalty Islands," Herald of the South, no. 32, and from Lilian's collaboration with Jean Sévin

ELLEN CATHERINE SIMS
1906–1993

GRIEVED PASSING OF DEVOTED PIONEER OF FAITH ELLEN SIMS. HER MEMORABLE RECORD OF SERVICE TO THE FAITH GREATLY ENRICHED BY FOUR DECADES OF EXTENSIVE SACRIFICIAL TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES IN SOUTH AMERICA. PRAYING FOR PROGRESS HER RADIANT SOUL IN THE ABHÁ KINGDOM. KINDLY CONVEY OUR LOVING SYMPATHY MEMBERS HER FAMILY.

Universal House of Justice
August 26, 1993

Ellen was born in Hurley, Wisconsin, on March 14, 1906, to Edwin Lincoln and Cecilia Jeanette Cochrane. She was the oldest of nine children, six of whom lived.

Her father was a Presbyterian, and her mother came from a staunch Roman Catholic family. Ellen and two of her siblings were enrolled in a Catholic school in New London, Wisconsin. Her father considered the school's disciplinary measures to be too harsh and placed them in the public school.

Ellen enrolled in the Normal School, and at sixteen she was the youngest licensed school teacher in the state of Wisconsin. She taught all grades in one-room schoolhouses for several years. She was also an accomplished pianist and played in theaters for silent movies. She was offered a scholarship to the Chicago Conservatory of Music and, at the same time, a teaching position in the Oak Park, Illinois, school system. She chose the latter.

Her family's financial situation went from one extreme to the other as her father worked as the owner and operator of a gambling concession in a New London hotel. Ellen used to become very upset whenever her aunts came to visit them, dressed in fur coats and jewels. She felt that they looked down on her family that often times had very little or nothing to eat. Because she had suffered during her childhood and youth, especially from the attitudes shown by her mother's family, Ellen began to search for a religion that was just.

Ellen investigated whatever religion or sect she stumbled across. She considered Mormonism, Rosicrucianism, and spiritualism. While exploring the latter she must have displayed a special sensitivity because she was invited to become a medium with a famous spiritualist. While in a séance, sitting in the circle holding hands with the people on each side of her, she heard a voice telling her not to do it, that it was dangerous. At another time, while resting after lunch one day, she looked toward the

door and saw a luminous man with a beard standing there, smiling at her. He beckoned to her. She sat up and for some reason said, "I'm not ready yet," upon which he smiled and left. Years later she saw a photograph and recognized the man as 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

While she was teaching in Oak Park, she met and married Stuart Sims, an English-born electrical engineer. At the time female teachers were not permitted to be married, so she and Stuart kept the marriage secret until the end of the school year.

Owing to the family's financial problems and the death of her mother, she and Stuart took her youngest brother, Donald, to live with them. When the school term ended, the three of them moved to Montreal, Canada, where Stuart had been transferred. There, in June 1930, she gave birth to their first daughter, June. Shirley was born in December 1931.

In 1933 Ellen and Stuart moved to New York City. During the Depression Stuart had a difficult time finding work, and Ellen's only luxury was to ride the streetcar to the public library once a week for books. There she found *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*. She took it home and copied most of it, thinking she would never see the book again. She was convinced that she had finally found what she was looking for. But she could not find the Bahá'ís.

The family moved to New Jersey where Stuart found work. He was a Freemason and wanted Ellen to be introduced to the wife of a Mason friend. Ellen was not interested until one day when she asked the friend out of courtesy about the health of his wife. The man replied that she was in New York City at a Bahá'í meeting. Suddenly Ellen had to meet her.

Ellen attended Bahá'í meetings in the city and wanted to become a Bahá'í, but she thought she would wait until Stuart was ready to accept the Faith as well. In 1938



Ellen Catherine Sims

she fasted and studied the *Gleanings*. When she read, "For the faith of no man can be conditioned by any one except himself,"⁴³ she went back to New York and declared. It was Naw-Rúz. A few months later Stuart accepted the Faith.

Both Stuart and Ellen served on the Local Assembly of Newark, New Jersey, and later on the first Assembly of Red Bank. They served on the Regional Teaching Committee and gave public talks, and Ellen served as chairman of the publicity committee.

In October of 1944 their last child, Dawn Tahirih, was born.

Eight years later Ellen and Stuart separated. Through the National Assembly she consulted with the Guardian, who advised her to take Dawn and pioneer, naming several African countries. This was not to be. In 1953 Ellen and Dawn went to the

⁴³ *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1983, 2005 printing), sec. LXXV.

dedication of the Temple in Wilmette, and on the way back they were in a car accident. It took Ellen a year to recover.

Later they went to the annual Souvenir Picnic in West Englewood, New Jersey, where Ellen met members of the National Assembly of South America and the entire membership of the Western Hemisphere Teaching Committee. They all urged her to pioneer to South America, and two months later, with the approval of the Guardian, she and Dawn were on their way to Paraguay.

She was a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Asunción for many years, and in 1957, when the first Regional Assembly of the Republics of Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Bolivia was formed, she was elected to it.

In 1959 she was one of two delegates elected to the Regional Bahá'í Convention in Santiago, Chile. In 1961 Ellen and Dawn moved to Colombia where Ellen served in Medellín and Pereira and was again elected to the National Assembly. She and the other members attended the election of the first Universal House of Justice in Haifa and the Jubilee in London in 1963.

After serving the Faith in Colombia for several years, and as more Colombians were being elected to the National Assembly, Ellen asked to move to Bolivia. Permission was granted, and a period of her most intensive activity began. She served in Cochabamba and Sucre. Again she was elected to the National Assembly, serving as its treasurer 1968–1969. She served on the National Teaching Committee and the Regional Teaching Committees for the Departments of Chuquisaca and Cochabamba.

She was attacked by robbers while living in the local Bahá'í center in Cochabamba. When they left, she contacted the local friends, who came and took her to the

hospital. She had two black eyes and required stitches, but when the friends came to visit her, all she could talk about was the publicity the Faith had received because of the incident.

Her transfer from Cochabamba to Sucre was as a result of the Hand of the Cause Rúhiyyih Khánúm's visit to Sucre. Upon Rúhiyyih Khánúm's return to Cochabamba, she said, "Ellen, you must go to Sucre!" and so she did. During her stay in Sucre she broke her hip in an accident. While she was recuperating, there was a revolution, and Ellen was terrified that the rebels would carry out their threat and blow up the gas depot under her apartment.

From Bolivia Ellen went to Argentina, where she underwent two more hip operations. During her stay in Rosario, while she was in a body cast, the Spiritual Assembly of Argentina appointed her to the National Proclamation Committee, along with Dawn and her son-in-law, Zia. Ellen used to joke about it, saying that she had the ideas, Dawn put them on paper, and Zia carried them out.

Ellen pioneered to Santiago del Estero, returning to Rosario a year later for her second hip operation. When she was again able to walk, she returned to Paraguay, spending two years in Caacupé. She was on the Summer School Committee and the National Bulletin Committee. Later the National Assembly asked her to move to the Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds in Asunción to serve as caretaker and hostess.

In Asunción she served for several years on the Local Spiritual Assembly, the Feast Committee, the National Teaching Committee (secretary for two years), the National Literature Committee, and the National Asiatic Teaching Committee. During the last ten years of her life, Ellen found it difficult to walk, and she rarely left the National Center, except to attend

special Bahá'í functions. Her last service to the Faith was a translation of an article on Ḥuqúqu'lláh, which she gave to the secretary of the National Assembly on the afternoon of August 24, 1993, saying, "My work is finished." Ellen passed away at 1:00 AM the following day.

*Dawn Tahirih Vojdani
and June Marie Messe*

MORVARID KWORDADI TOLOUEI 1928–1993

WITH SORROWFUL HEARTS WE INFORM YOU OF THE PASSING OF MRS. MORVARID KWORDADI TOLOUEI, STAUNCH PIONEER IN THE INTERIOR OF BRAZIL, WHO 14 YEARS AGO CAME TO OUR COUNTRY. WITH HER TWO SONS AND DAUGHTER-IN-LAW SHE SETTLED IN DOURADOS, MATO GROSSO DO SUL, WHERE IN A SHORT TIME THEY CHANGED THE DESTINIES OF THE FAITH IN THAT AREA FORMING DOZENS OF LOCAL ASSEMBLIES AND BRINGING HUNDREDS OF SOULS TO THE COMMUNITY OF THE MOST GREAT NAME. ALWAYS VERY DISCREET, MRS. TOLOUEI WILL ALWAYS BE REMEMBERED AS THE BEDROCK BEHIND THE SUCCESS OF A DISTINGUISHED AND DEDICATED BAHÁ'Í FAMILY. WE HUMBLY BESEECH YOUR PRAYERS FOR THE EVERLASTING PROGRESS OF THAT DEAR SOUL.

National Spiritual Assembly
of the Bahá'ís of Brazil

GRIEVED PASSING STALWART DEDICATED PIONEER MORVARID KWORDADI TOLOUEI. HER VALIANT SERVICES WARMLY REMEMBERED. ASSURE PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES



Morvarid Khordadi Tolouei

PROGRESS HER RADIANT SOUL.
KINDLY CONVEY HEARTFELT CON-
DOLENCES HER BEREAVED FAMILY.

Universal House of Justice
September 23, 1993

Morvarid Khordadi was born in the city of Yazd, Iran, on April 22, 1928, and was raised in a Bahá'í family. Before his marriage, her father, Khodamorad Khordadi, was a businessman and acted as a Zoroastrian minister. When he married Shirin, a Bahá'í, he became a dedicated believer who died at his pioneering post in Pakistan.

Morvarid married Mr. Rostam Tolouei in 1953. Rostam was a widower with five children. Their marriage produced another three, so Morvarid raised a family of eight. Rostam died in 1977.

Morvarid left Iran to live for a few years in India. She returned to Iran and lived in Tíhrán, serving on local Bahá'í committees. In 1978 she and her two sons moved to the Philippines and then pioneered to Brazil.

She chose the state of Mato Grosso do Sul as her pioneering post and lived in the state capital of Campo Grande for five years, and then she settled in the city of Dourados for another nine years. She was a member of the Local Assembly for all those years.

Although language was an obstacle for her in teaching the Faith, she used other means; she opened her home and endeavored to provide all the support needed by her family and the other Bahá'í friends to teach the Faith effectively.

Morvarid died at her pioneering post on September 18, 1993. Her death was a major proclamation of the Faith. The largest newspaper of the city published a long article entitled "The death of the first Bahá'í pioneer in Dourados."

On her gravestone was engraved "To be a Bahá'í simply means to love all the world; to love humanity and try to serve it; to work for universal peace and universal brotherhood."⁴⁴ Many visit the public cemetery every day and comment about her stone. It has become a silent teacher of the Faith.

Daryoush Tolouei

VALERIE M. WILSON 1919–1993

Feel moved to appeal to gallant, great-hearted American Bahá'í Community to arise on the eve of launching the far-reaching, historic campaign by sister Community of the British Isles to lend valued assistance to the meritorious enterprise undertaken primarily for the illumination of the tribes of East and West Africa, envisaged in the Tablets of

the Center of the Covenant revealed in the darkest hour of His ministry.

I appeal particularly to its dearly beloved members belonging to the Negro race to participate in the contemplated project marking a significant milestone in the world-unfoldment of the Faith. . .

Shoghi Effendi, August 5, 1950⁴⁵

Valerie Merriell Wilson was born September 7, 1919, in Oakland, California. Little is known of her early life other than that she graduated from the School of Physical Therapy at the Children's Hospital of Los Angeles and worked for the Agnew State Hospital in San Jose.

Her discovery of the Faith has been described by Adrienne Reeves:

One afternoon Sadie [Ellis] received a call from a young man who was visiting in Los Angeles from Palo Alto, California. He said his mother, who was a Bahá'í, had instructed him to be sure to look up the Bahá'ís. Sadie invited him to her fireside that evening. When he came, he had with him a young woman and explained they would not stay long, as they were going out, but he wanted to carry out his mother's wishes. Sadie welcomed them, and when they left a little later, she invited the young lady to come again as she was living and working in Los Angeles. The young lady, Valerie Wilson, came back the very next week, said she was greatly attracted to the Faith and wanted to study it seriously. The young man never became a Bahá'í, but Valerie . . . became

⁴⁴ *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, 5th rev. ed. (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing, 2006, 2008 printing), p. 81.

⁴⁵ *Citadel of Faith: Messages to America, 1947–1957* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1965, 1999 printing), p. 87.

a member of the Ellis extended family and soon a declared believer.⁴⁶

While in her earlier thirties she became one of the first African-American pioneers. Responding to the call of the Guardian for the Africa Campaign, she settled in Monrovia, Liberia, in 1952, being formally introduced to the Bahá'í group there in late November. She reported that on December 1 she started working for the government. "I'm working in the isolation ward with T.B. patients, not physical therapy in its full sense, but I will be self-supporting." All the doors seemed to open for Valerie. Bill Foster,⁴⁷ the first pioneer, arrived in Monrovia several months earlier and had written, "I'm a very popular guy now because the Germans, Dutch, French, English, Portuguese, Lebanese, Arabs, Americo-Lib., Natives & Staters men all want introductions & recommendations to Val, especially since they all know I'm married . . . she won't have a dull moment for a long time." Bill's statement was prophetic but not in the way he intended.

Ten days later Valerie found herself in trouble; a letter was addressed to the Director of Public Health and Sanitation:

Mr. Director:

There is a Miss Wilson who I understand is employed in the Liberian Government Medical Service living at Ducor House.

You will notify her immediately that her service in the Medical Service is

immediately terminated and she [is] requested to depart the Country, failing which I shall issue the necessary directive to the Department of Justice to institute Deportation proceedings against her.

It was signed by the president of the country, William V.S. Tubman. She met him and offered an apology, and through the prayers of the Guardian and the US Africa Teaching Committee and the intervention of a physician, she was reinstated. The situation was further eased when the American pioneer and later Knight of Bahá'u'lláh Matthew Bullock met with President Tubman and the American ambassador in March. Valerie had met Matthew and members of the Africa Teaching Committee when she attended the Intercontinental Teaching Conference in Kampala, the first of the Ten Year World Crusade.

Valerie later introduced programs of physical therapy and organized classes in nutrition for women and girls. It is said that she counted among her private clients President Tubman and his wife.

A year later the Local Spiritual Assembly of Monrovia was one of "no less than sixteen new spiritual assemblies in the African continent" announced by the Guardian⁴⁸ and the first in West Africa. Valerie served that Assembly as its secretary and assisted it to deepen in its understanding of administrative principles and procedures.

In 1952 the Guardian appointed Músá Banání as a Hand of the Cause in Africa, and Valerie served as an Auxiliary Board member under his guidance beginning in 1954. In 1956 the National Spiritual Assembly of North West Africa was

formed. With a secretarial seat in Tunisia, it embraced twenty-five territories including Liberia. Valerie attended the first Bahá'í Convention in Tunis in April of that year and participated in the National Assembly's formation. Elected to that body she was serving it at the time of the International Convention in 1963. She joined other Assembly members in attending the Convention and in the election of the first Universal House of Justice.

Deeply devoted to the Faith she traveled extensively throughout West Africa, often under conditions of physical hardship and risk of health. She made a nine-week trip in early 1955 visiting communities in Ghana, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Togo, and Nigeria. She wrote to Músá Banání, "Upon returning to Monrovia, in the wee hours of the morning of February 28th, after having made a round trip of 7,557 miles, I found myself in a very happy frame of mind but very very tired . . . Well it never rains but what it pours," she wrote. Having worked for the government for almost two years, she returned from her vacation to discover that she was without a job. The government had not included her position in its new budget. Later that year her energies were greatly diminished by bouts of malaria and jaundice.

Valerie was also tested by family responsibilities. She wrote:

Since coming to Africa, my mother has become a Bahá'í. Before leaving for Africa, I was asked to give at least two years of service here. Of course I'm ready to stay in Africa for the rest of the 10 Year Crusade, but my mother is beginning to ask why I don't return home, since I have served the period requested. She is now nearing 70 years of age; her health for the past 10 years has been poor. But she is not one to

give up. Her last letter to me is one which tears at my heart. She's home all alone, managing to live off Social Security, which includes maintenance of the home. She feels that she has come to the end of her rope; she is tired and can't keep struggling any longer.

Valerie returned to the US in 1957 and took three postgraduate courses to keep abreast of changes in the physical therapy profession before going back to Liberia in March 1958. She continued to be concerned for her mother and tried unsuccessfully to convince her to move to Africa. In late 1959 she wrote, "I think my mother's need for me is one of loneliness and being tired of trying to maintain the house without help. Maybe Bahá'u'lláh will bless me with a job."

As the Faith developed in West Africa, and particularly in Liberia, so did the workloads placed upon the shoulders of the pioneers and the nascent Assemblies. The need for additional pioneers intensified—a situation that was further exacerbated when some were forced to leave their posts before the end of the Crusade—a need that was difficult to meet because of visa restrictions, diminishing funds, and limited prospects for overseas employment. Once again Valerie found her limits tested: "We're all still putting forth much time and effort, but I must confess I don't have the energy I once had; we're all suffering various degrees of weariness. Serving on local, national, and international levels has added much burden of responsibilities—it's too much for me now. I will have to ask to be relieved on one of these levels—just not able." Valerie endured until she was compelled to make a restorative visit home in 1961.

She served in West Africa for nearly twelve years. The Ten Year Crusade came

⁴⁶ Reeves, Adrienne, 2006. "Sadie Rebecca Johnson Ellis." *Lights of the Spirit: Historical Portraits of Black Bahá'ís in North America, 1898-2000*, Gwendolyn Etter-Lewis and Richard Thomas, editors, pp. 274-75. Valerie was enrolled as a Bahá'í February 6, 1949, by the Local Assembly of Los Angeles.

⁴⁷ See William R. Foster, pp. 224-29.

⁴⁸ *Messages to the Bahá'í World, 1950-1957* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1971, 1999 printing), p. 141.

to an end in April 1963. Valerie stayed on. In October the Universal House of Justice announced, "the formation next Ríḍván of nineteen National Spiritual Assemblies, resulting in the dissolution of six of the existing regional National Spiritual Assemblies." One of the new Assemblies would be the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of West Africa, with its seat in Monrovia. After attending an emergency meeting of the existing National Assembly in Tunis in November, Valerie left Liberia to stay with her mother in Palo Alto, California.

After a long illness Miss Valerie Wilson passed away there on October 1, 1993.

From information and documents provided by H. Elsie Austin and Roger Dahl, US National Archives

LEONARD FANI CHIPOSI 1928–1993

DEEPLY SADDENED LOSS LEONARD
CHIPOSI. LONG YEARS DEDICATED,
UNSTINTING SERVICE INDELIBLY
INSCRIBED ANNALS CAUSE GOD
ZIMBABWE. FERVENTLY PRAYING
HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS
RADIANT SOUL ABHÁ KINGDOM.

Universal House of Justice
October 15, 1993

Leonard Fani Chiposi was born on September 8, 1928, in Chimanimani—a small scenic town in the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe. He was the second child in a family of five brothers and four sisters. At a very early age his mother passed away, and his father remarried. Two of his brothers and one sister were born of his stepmother.

The Chiposis were a closely knit family; the affection and the love among the brothers and sisters were apparent from the way they cared for each other. His was a

family of staunch Methodists and religious church-goers. Two of Leonard's brothers became church leaders, and Leonard testified that he might have followed the same path had he not found the Faith.

Owing to the colonial rule and the treatment of indigenous people as second-class citizens, Leonard had to struggle to acquire an education. With great determination he managed to complete secondary school. Opportunities for university education were remote and out of the financial reach of his parents.

Leonard started his professional career as a teacher in Chimanimani before moving to Harare (then known as Salisbury), where he was employed in several white-collar jobs in the industrial and commercial sectors.

In Harare in 1955 he first heard about the Faith from Mr. Moses Makwaya, one of the country's earliest believers and one of two indigenous believers who were members of the Local Spiritual Assembly established in April of that year.

A firm Methodist Leonard did not accept the Faith without resisting it for a while. However, deep in his heart he was touched by its teachings, and he continued to investigate. After attending a few meetings with Bahá'í friends, he was convinced and declared his Faith in Bahá'u'lláh in early 1956. He found the Faith to be the inspiration that he had been looking for, and he developed as an outstanding teacher and administrator. Within a short period of his acceptance, he became a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly as a result of a by-election. The following year he was elected chairman of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Highfield, a suburban township of Harare.

In 1957 he was the first indigenous believer elected as one of the two delegates to represent Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia) at the Convention electing the

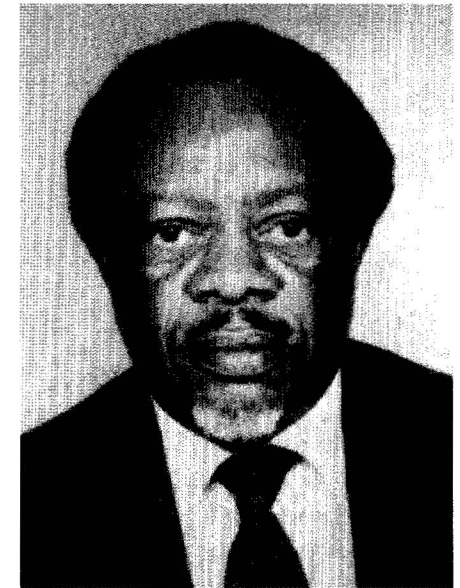
Regional National Spiritual Assembly of South and South West Africa.

He used to talk about how the Faith and adherence to its teachings and principles helped him to progress in his professional career. Through sheer determination, hard work, and living the life of a true Bahá'í, he gained the admiration and respect of his employers, and at the age of sixty he retired from the position of personnel officer at a highly reputable international firm—a position for which a university degree was normally a prerequisite. During the last few years of his life, he was occupied with his own business—a butchery shop and grocery store. His business flourished where others failed, owing to his fair dealings with customers who came from all segments of society.

For thirty-seven years Leonard served the Blessed Beauty. His administrative services included membership on the Area Teaching Committee of Southern Rhodesia and on the Regional Teaching Committee of Northern and Southern Rhodesia (now Zambia and Zimbabwe), often as its chairman. In 1970, at the National Convention of the Bahá'ís of Rhodesia, he was elected to its National Spiritual Assembly, which, with the exception of a couple of years, he served until his last days.

He was often its chairman or vice chairman, highly admired, loved, and respected by his fellow members. While he could not sing very well, he insisted that in Africa the singing of songs in Bahá'í gatherings was the source of inspiration for the believers. Because of this he was known as "the Singing Chairman."

Twice he had the bounty of attending the International Convention (1983 and 1988) and of participating in the election of the Universal House of Justice. In 1983 he was appointed by the House of Justice as one of the tellers.



Leonard Fani Chiposi

On a few occasions Leonard, on his own initiative, took upon himself to travel teach and visit the Bahá'í friends in the remote rural areas. He was also effective in the field of public relations, dealing with cabinet ministers and high-ranking government officials. Many of the permanent secretaries in the government ministries knew him personally. Because he knew so many of the dignitaries, he was known as a walking "Who's Who."

Leonard suffered an occasional asthma attack; otherwise he was an active and healthy person. On October 10, 1993, he was taken to the hospital, suspected of having malaria. Around noon of that day, his pure and sanctified soul left the cage of his physical body and soared to the Abhá Kingdom. His sudden loss was a great shock to the Bahá'í community in Zimbabwe, as well as to those friends in the surrounding countries who knew him from the days when the National Assembly served the entire southern African region.

He was survived by seven children from his three wives. His first wife, Mabel, was the first indigenous woman in Zimbabwe to declare her faith in Bahá'u'lláh in 1957. She passed away in 1958 at a very young age and had the honor of being the first Bahá'í to be buried in the Bahá'í cemetery, which the city authorities allocated to the Faith. He and his second wife divorced owing to an irreconcilable situation. Gloria, his third wife, was with him at the time of his death. All three wives were Bahá'ís.

Leonard's popularity and the love and respect he instilled in the hearts of people were evident at his funeral, attended by more than seven hundred of his friends and admirers, ranging from officials high in the government ministries to businessmen and customers, neighbors, and former co-workers.

SALIYANTO 1941-1993

Saliyanto was born in the small village of Tambakrejo, Magetan, in the province of East Java, Indonesia, on December 10, 1941. His parents were from the same village. His father, Jikin, was a farmer, and his mother was named Sini. They were together until Saliyanto was seven months old; then his father left them, and there was never any news of his whereabouts. When he was eight years old, his mother remarried and moved to her new home in the nearby village of Tambakmas.

This was the time of the Japanese occupation, and there were clashes between them and the Dutch, who had colonized the territories as the Dutch East Indies. Every morning before going to school, Saliyanto would visit his mother who sold vegetables in the local market. During a trip to the market he encountered Dutch soldiers. They searched the market that

morning and then ordered everyone to sit down quietly while they searched their bodies. They came to little Saliyanto and pointed their guns at him. He closed his eyes and thought that it was the end, but surprisingly they never pulled their triggers. The soldiers left the market; Saliyanto went to his mother and then to school.

Saliyanto's first school was in the house of a villager. When he was eleven, he was schooled in another village, and because his mother could not afford his tuition, he had to live with a family who were quite well off. (They owned cows.) As was the custom Saliyanto was supported, and in return he had to work for the family for two and a half years. And, as also was the custom, when he finished his term of work, he received a calf as a bonus.

Saliyanto was not very happy there. He finished his secondary school in 1959 and studied to become a teacher, and in 1961 he received his Teacher's Certificate. He left for Jakarta and worked in the Department of Industries. He lasted four months; he became restless and returned to his village.

In 1961 he heard about the Faith from his stepbrother Slamet Sudarmo, who had just become a Bahá'í. Saliyanto wrote to Jakarta asking for more information and was sent two books, *The Bahá'í Faith* and *The Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh*. He read them over and over but confessed he did not feel anything.

One day a friend asked him to go to a small town in East Java for a deepening on the Faith. Saliyanto agreed and went with another friend who was also a seeker. Before going he had to memorize one prayer.

They went to Bojonegoro, and there they met the pioneer Dr. Nurodin Soraya.⁴⁹ The meeting changed his life; Saliyanto wrote in his diary, "After recognizing

⁴⁹ See Nurodin Soraya, pp. 252-55.

Bahá'u'lláh, I believed so much in His Truth, Greatness, Majesty, Glory and Purity of His Teachings. I was dazzled, and from then on my whole life was for Bahá'u'lláh."

Saliyanto often visited Bojonegoro, and because he could type, he took up the work of writing to the friends and typing the translations of prayers and Holy Writings. Except for the first year of Saliyanto's Bahá'í life, his beloved Faith was banned in Indonesia. This made his pure-hearted and faithful devotion to the Cause even more meritorious, as he valiantly served at great personal risk.⁵⁰

In 1962 he was asked to go to the island of Kalimantan. After a week of walking and river boat trips, Saliyanto and another Bahá'í arrived in Puruk Cahu. Here he worked first as a night watchman and later as a primary school teacher, living in Paruk Cahu until 1965.

In December 1964 Saliyanto married Sukinem, a girl from his village. He returned to Tambakrejo and was offered a teaching position. As it required him to declare his political party affiliation, he refused.

In 1967 Saliyanto became a member of the National Spiritual Assembly. He made his first trip to the Mentawai Islands and stayed there for four months. On April 5, 1967, Saliyanto and four other Bahá'ís were called to meet with the Attorney General. They explained the Faith to him and were asked to write a formal letter requesting official recognition of the Faith. The letter

was written, but the recognition was not granted.

Saliyanto attended the First Oceanic Conference in Palermo, Italy, in 1968. During this time he also made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Four months later the Hand of the Cause of God Dr. Raḥmatu'lláh Muhájir asked him to become an Auxiliary Board member.

Saliyanto again visited the Mentawai Islands for two months. He was fascinated with them and called them "paradise islands."

Nineteen sixty-nine saw the beginning of Saliyanto's difficulties and persecution. On May 18 he was called by the head of the village and was asked to recant his Faith. He refused. In April 1970 he was called by the public prosecutor of Magetan and Madiun and was interrogated for his religious beliefs. A few weeks later he was put into prison for a night with ten other friends in Cepu, Central Java. Again in 1971 he had to deal with the police in Magetan on the matter of teaching the Faith. There was a brief period of happiness when he attended a Regional Conference in Singapore; then more persecutions followed. In June and July 1972 he was again interrogated by the public prosecutor in Magetan who tried to force him to recant. On December 4, 1973, the police confiscated all his Bahá'í books and his passport. The next day his wife, Sukinem, was called by the police, and five days later Saliyanto was again summoned by them. On February 19, 1974, and again on the day before Naw-Rúz he had to face the military authorities. This time the interrogation lasted a month, and he and Sukinem were treated like criminals. Sukinem was⁵¹ tortured, and Saliyanto was questioned at gunpoint and slapped hard in the face.

Saliyanto was never daunted by the exercise of intimidation and the brute force

⁵⁰ In August 1962 the Indonesian government banned the activities of some religious minorities including those of the Bahá'ís. Ten years later the Bahá'í administrative institutions were dissolved by another official ban. The restrictions were eased twenty-eight years later by a presidential decree (May 2000).

behavior of the authorities. Eventually, when the military realized that he and his wife would not recant their Faith, Saliyanto and his family were asked to leave the town. They moved to Semarang, where they lived for three years, then Waru Sidoarjo, where they stayed for another two years. He was questioned by the authorities of Purwokerto in Central Java. In 1977 Saliyanto attended the Regional Conference in Singapore which brought him great happiness. Then in March 1978 he went to visit eight of his Bahá'í friends who were imprisoned in Banyuwangi, East Java. Saliyanto was also imprisoned and released five months later.

Saliyanto never wasted his time. He would travel to remote villages and towns throughout Java, Bali, Sumatra, and Sulawesi, often under difficult conditions and circumstances, to inspire and encourage the friends. He was a tireless and dedicated servant of Bahá'u'lláh, and there was never a task that was impossible for him. In times of crisis he would convey information and instructions back and forth between the imprisoned friends and the National Spiritual Assembly. Later, when the Assembly was disallowed, he served the consultative group overseeing the protection of the Faith.

Monthly he would send newsletters and deepening materials to the friends throughout Indonesia—materials which kept their spirits high and faith strong. He would personally convey the Riqvân and other special messages; in some instances it was not wise to send information by post, so Saliyanto would personally deliver them to the friends, greeting them with his shining, smiling face.

His outstanding services in contacting prominent people and government officials to explain to them the true nature of the Faith and to attempt to lift the ban in

Indonesia will never be forgotten. He met with people in the Ministry of Religion, Ministry of Education, and Attorney General's Department and contacted Members of Parliament. He answered arrogance with imperturbability, adversity with perseverance, and calamity with cheerful patience. He earned the respect and admiration of the Legal Aid Foundation that, in 1993, asked him to serve as the Bahá'í representative on their Religion and Human Rights Committee. As a sign of obedience to the government, he did not take up the offer. In all his efforts and travels his wife, Sukinem, and children—Gatot, Nurwanto, Ita, and Elmi—supported him fully.

On the morning of October 14, 1993, he was busy typing and posting letters to the friends. In the afternoon he complained of a severe headache and was taken to the local hospital. He died at 7 PM. Saliyanto was buried early the following morning in his village of Tambakrejo, Magetan. Over the next days and weeks, the friends from around the country came to pay their respects to his grave and his family. His unforgettable services were acknowledged by the Universal House of Justice on October 15, 1993:

DEEPLY DISTRESSED PASSING
DEARLY LOVED MR. SALIYANTO
OUTSTANDING PROMOTER FAITH
IN INDONESIA. HIS DEVOTED
SERVICES MANIFOLD FIELDS
ADVANCEMENT INTERESTS FAITH
WILL LONG BE REMEMBERED.
ADVISE HOLD MEMORIAL GATH-
ERINGS BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITIES
IN INDONESIA. KINDLY CONVEY
CONDOLENCES MEMBERS HIS
FAMILY ASSURANCE PRAYERS PROG-
RESS HIS LUMINOUS SOUL ABHÁ
KINGDOM.

MARZIEH NABIL
CARPENTER GAIL
1908-1993

As a little girl Marzieh Khanum wrote a letter to the Master: "Dear 'Abdu'l-Bahá, I love you. I hope you will come to see us." And He wrote His reply in Persian on the same letter, turning it into a Tablet: "O God, make Marzieh, Razieh," voicing His desire that she who is pleasing to God (Marzieh) might be well pleased with God (Razieh).

For the rest of her life the second child and eldest daughter born of the first Persian-American marriage in the Bahá'í Faith would devote herself with heart and soul to the Cause of God. Her parents, Persian diplomat Ali-Kuli Khan and Boston debutante Florence Breed, were called upon by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to unite East and West. Like her parents before her Marzieh would spread the Bahá'í message in the United States, Europe, and Persia, seeking always to promote greater understanding between two cultures, Persia being only slightly less obscure in the West than the Cause she championed.

Her parents' position took her to the Versailles Peace Conference, where her father was a member of Persia's delegation, and in Tíhrán she was presented at the Court of the then Crown Prince Regent from whom she would one day receive a proposal of marriage. At age ten Marzieh left the United States with her family to spend her formative years in Paris, Constantinople, Tiflis,⁵¹ and Tíhrán. Her education was unorthodox, derived from a succession of tutors. Lacking other children to play with, she and her two siblings, Rahim and Hamideh, found

⁵¹ Presently Tbilisi, capital city of the Eurasian country of Georgia.



Marzieh Nabil Carpenter Gail

companionship with each other and the adults around them.

Marzieh met and became friends with the future Guardian as he passed through France on his way to Oxford. Her parents had been nurtured by the Master with whom Marzieh and her siblings had been photographed. On her finger she wore a ring given to her by the Greatest Holy Leaf. Part of a small circle of Bahá'í families whose interests had become synonymous with those of the Faith, her love for the Holy Family would carry her throughout her life, and this love would eventually become devotion to the Universal House of Justice.

Suitors began to pursue Marzieh when she was as young as thirteen, but her parents, following the directives of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi, wished her to pursue an education. Enrolled in Vassar College in 1925, Marzieh transferred to Mills College for her sophomore year when her family moved to California. In 1927 David Starr Jordan broke the quota on

women to allow Marzieh to finish her last two years at Stanford University, where she was known among her classmates as "our Persian princess." Using the attention to great advantage, she and Howard Carpenter organized small weekly discussion groups on the Bahá'í Faith. In 1929 she was elected to Phi Beta Kappa and obtained her BA "With Great Distinction"—the honor being the non-Latin equivalent of *summa cum laude*. In June 1929 she became Marzieh Carpenter.

Marzieh had begun to write for the Faith during her junior year at Stanford, producing several essays for *Star of the West*. In 1932 she received her MA in English from the University of California at Berkeley—the same year Howard received his MD from Stanford Medical School. In September the two sailed for Vienna where Howard studied advanced ophthalmology. At the request of Shoghi Effendi they traveled with Martha Root for three weeks in Central Europe and the Balkans, teaching the Faith and following up on contacts 'Abdu'l-Bahá had made during His Budapest journey. This was followed by five weeks of teaching in Bulgaria with Marion Jack and then more teaching in Greece and Albania en route to the Holy Land.

In 1933 Marzieh and Howard Carpenter spent three weeks in Haifa receiving instructions from Shoghi Effendi, who hoped that they would become the "vital link connecting the East and the West in the Bahá'í world." Specifically the Guardian wanted them to bring seeds of the developing Administrative Order from the West to the East. In an unpublished letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi dated November 26, 1933, the Carpenters were advised:

Our Persian believers have had as yet no training in the Administration. Their knowledge of its basic principles, and

of the ways in which it should function is too vague and fragmentary. So your presence in their midst and particularly in such an important committee as the one in which you are so ardently working is a real blessing and a unique opportunity of which your Persian brethren should take the fullest advantage possible.⁵²

Marzieh found a job as the first female reporter on the staff of a Tíhrán newspaper. Fluent in English, French, Persian, and Arabic, as well as having some capability with Russian, she also worked on various Bahá'í translations, including one of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*.

Howard was prevented by the authorities from obtaining a medical license for over a year. Once the license was granted he was stricken with poliomyelitis and paralyzed from the waist down. For seven months he lay in a hospital bed until Rahmat and Najmia 'Alá'í lovingly took him into their home, caring for him as they had for Keith Ransom-Kehler a year earlier. The Guardian urged the Carpenters to be patient, to consult competent physicians, and to continue their labors in Persia. Marzieh and Howard were obedient, but when doctors advised a return to the United States as Howard's only hope for recovery, the Guardian contributed funds for their release from Tíhrán and for their long journey back to San Francisco. In November 1935, within months after arriving back home, Howard Carpenter passed to the Abhá Kingdom.⁵³ Such are the sacrifices made for the love of God.

⁵² Shoghi Effendi to Marzieh Carpenter, November 26, 1933, unpublished letter courtesy of Nushin Mavaddat.

⁵³ See "In Memoriam," *The Bahá'í World*, vol. VI, pp. 491-93.

As Marzieh herself would write of a fellow believer, "the same test which drives one soul away only confirms another."

Never to have children of her own, she published an article in the December 1937 issue of *World Order Magazine* entitled "Till Death Do Us Part," in which she briefly bemoans the childless marriage. In an unpublished letter to Marzieh, Shoghi Effendi wrote, "I truly prize your services and the spirit that prompts you to render them. Your perseverance is magnificent, your accomplishments notable, and your loyalty exemplary."⁵⁴

Marzieh continued to translate Bahá'í Scripture and to write essays. Having studied Arabic at Berkeley she worked closely with her father, and at times their relationship presented her with tests and challenges to grow. Yet it was her second husband, Harold Gail, who would help her organize her writings and pull her life back together. Harold became a Bahá'í soon after their marriage in 1939, and the pair would go on to serve the Faith together for over fifty years.

In 1954 the Gails sold the factory that Harold had recently established in Portland, Oregon, and sailed for Europe in response to the Guardian's call. After consulting with the European Teaching Committee, they settled in France where, with other pioneers, they helped to form the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Nice in 1956. After two years in Nice they moved to Austria where they lived for six years and assisted the formation of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Salzburg, with Marzieh also serving for a time as chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Austria. This was followed by a year in Holland where they helped to form the

Local Spiritual Assembly of Arnhem and then a number of months traveling in Italy, England, and Spain. At the conclusion of the Ten Year Crusade, the Gails moved back to the United States where they helped to form the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Keene, New Hampshire.

Marzieh Gail may be considered a sort of "patron saint" of women Bahá'í scholars, always conscious of her audience, unveiling the Cause in her books and essays, lectures, and talks. Her contributions to Bahá'í scholarship were perhaps most evident in her many translations, which continued until 1992 for the Universal House of Justice. They included *The Seven Valleys and the Four Valleys* (1945) and *The Secret of Divine Civilization* (1957) with her father, *Memorials of the Faithful* (1971), *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá* with a committee at the Bahá'í World Centre, and *My Memories of Bahá'u'lláh* (1982).

Marzieh was productive, owing in large part to the sacrificial services of her husband, who typed, cooked, did the laundry, and otherwise took care of all domestic and practical matters. The two were extremely fond of each other and very private, often living without a phone. Such circumstances freed Marzieh to write a dozen Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í books in addition to countless essays, articles, and short stories. Her remembrances of 'Abdu'l-Bahá are contained in *The Sheltering Branch* (1959) and those of His Exalted Sister in *Khánúm: The Greatest Holy Leaf* (1981). Many of her essays and pioneering stories are contained in *Dawn Over Mount Hira* (1976) and in *Other People, Other Places* (1982).

While in Europe Marzieh conducted historical research on the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, resulting in the publication of *The Three Popes* (1969). Several of her non-Bahá'í books also met with some critical success. *Persia and the Victorians*

⁵⁴ Shoghi Effendi to Marzieh Carpenter, June 10, 1939, unpublished letter courtesy of Nushin Mavaddat.

(1951) was a Book Society recommendation. *Six Lessons in Islam* (1953) was translated into German, and *Life in the Renaissance* (1968) was translated into Italian, French, and Spanish. Her other books included *Summon Up Remembrance* (1987), *Arches of the Years* (1991), *Bahá'í Glossary* (1955), and *Avignon in Flower: 1309–1403* (1966). Poet Roger White would say of his friend, "She is the first lady of Bahá'í literature and I and many writers are indebted to her for leading the way."

In 1981 Harold and Marzieh Gail moved back to San Francisco, where they had met some five decades earlier. Known for an absolutely wild sense of humor, Marzieh was considered fondly by her friends to be "dangerous" for her quick wit. Selfless and self-effacing she was also remembered for her ingenuity in turning every possible human interaction into a teaching opportunity. Her local communities revered her, and her life served as an example of total consecration to the Cause. On October 16, 1993, a year after the death of her second husband, Marzieh Gail passed away in San Francisco, California, leaving behind her literary work as a legacy for future generations. On October 18, the Universal House of Justice responded to the news and expressed its sorrow:

DEEPLY SADDENED PASSING MARZIEH GAIL FAITHFUL MAID-SERVANT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH. HER PIONEERING EFFORTS AND HER VARIOUS ENDEAVORS AS ENGLISH TRANSLATOR ORIGINAL BAHÁ'Í LITERATURE AND AS AUTHOR BOOKS AND ARTICLES ENSURE ENDURING REMEMBRANCE HER OUTSTANDING SERVICES CAUSE GOD. FERVENTLY PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HER SOUL ABHÁ REALM.

HENRIETTA CRITTENDEN
CLARK TRUTZA
1923–1993

OUR HEARTS DEEPLY SADDENED BY NEWS PASSING DEARLY LOVED HENRIETTA TRUTZA FAITHFUL HANDMAIDEN BAHÁ'U'LLÁH WHOSE MANY YEARS PIONEERING SERVICES ALONG WITH HER DEAR HUSBAND HAVE LEFT ENDURING CONTRIBUTION TO PROGRESS FAITH PACIFIC AREA. HER SPIRIT DEVOTION DURING PERIOD WORK WORLD CENTRE EXEMPLARY. KINDLY CONVEY OUR LOVING SYMPATHY MEMBERS HER BELOVED FAMILY. FERVENTLY PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HER ILLUMINED SOUL ABHÁ REALM.

Universal House of Justice
November 16, 1993

A picture of stately elegance, Henrietta dressed to receive community members and guests to her home, wherever she lived. Welcoming people for firesides, Feasts, and Holy Days, she frequently wore a beautiful hostess gown, given to her in St. Lucia by Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum.

Henrietta was born on January 6, 1923, in Denver, Colorado, to Elizabeth Crittenden Clark and George Nathaniel Underwood Clark. Her paternal grandmother, Josephine Hall Clark, and great-aunt Henrietta Clark Wagner⁵⁵ were among the first Bahá'ís in the United States. Henri, as she was known to many, was therefore a third generation Bahá'í, as were all but one of her seven brothers and sisters.

When 'Abdu'l-Bahá visited the United States in 1912, the Clark home on 4141

⁵⁵ A member of the first Spiritual Assembly of Los Angeles in 1910.



Henrietta Crittenden Clark Trutza

Xavier Street was one of the places He honored with His presence. The home was later owned by a succession of Bahá'ís before being purchased in 1990 by the Denver Spiritual Assembly. It is now listed on the register of National Bahá'í Historic Sites, and restoration efforts have been undertaken by the Clark House Council. Henrietta served on the Council and provided invaluable information about the home as it was during the time of the Master's visit when He blessed it saying, "God willing, it will always be a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár." Henrietta verified the authenticity of the family rocking chair that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had used—a chair in which all the younger children had been rocked.

Henrietta met and married Herbert Buder. The couple lived in Austin, Texas, and they had four children before the marriage dissolved. Henrietta and the children remained in Austin, and she hosted many Bahá'í meetings there, was appointed an assistant to an Auxiliary Board member, and served on the Spiritual Assembly. The

children were included in activities, and they remember visits from prominent Bahá'ís such as Florence Mayberry, Curtis Kelsey, Jack McCants, and the Hand of the Cause of God Dr. Ugo Giachery.

Among the seekers who attended her firesides were Phil Trutza, his wife, and son. Mrs. Trutza was terminally ill with cancer and accepted the Faith before her death. Phil also declared his faith in Bahá'u'lláh. In 1961 he and Henrietta were married, and they raised five teenagers.

Henrietta attended the first Bahá'í World Congress at Royal Albert Hall in London in 1963. A short time later she and Phil attended a teaching conference in Texas and were inspired to pioneer. They went to St. Croix in 1964 with three of their children—Anne and Bob Buder and Sam Trutza. Henrietta and Phil then moved to St. Lucia where they operated their own construction business. They endured many obstacles and were favored with many bounties. They worked closely with Esther Evans, Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Windward Islands. Henrietta was elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Leeward, Windward and Virgin Islands when it was formed in 1967, and as a member of that institution she went to Haifa as a delegate to the Second International Convention in 1968.

Circumstances forced the Trutzas to leave St. Lucia in 1969. Henrietta and Phil returned to the United States and served as caretakers of the Bahá'í Center in Washington DC. A series of moves followed as Phil pursued opportunities in the construction industry. Wherever they were, Henrietta was busy with Bahá'í activities, and during this time their goal was to replenish their resources so as to return to the pioneering field.

By the late 1970s their goal was achieved, and Henrietta and Phil went to Pohnpei

(then Ponape) in the Caroline Islands, taking their granddaughter Felicia with them. They designed and built the Ḥazíratú'l-Quds there, and Phil built a similar edifice on the island of Yap. Henrietta developed a deep and lasting friendship with Knight of Bahá'u'lláh Virginia Breaks,⁵⁶ with whom she often worked to achieve Bahá'í goals. She and Phil stayed with Virginia during their time in Pohnpei.

Henrietta made extensive traveling teaching trips and assisted the consolidation work of local communities throughout the islands. On one such journey she made an arduous two-week boat trip with Felicia as her sole companion. They traveled to remote atolls where isolated Bahá'ís were reported to be living. She always went equipped with the utmost courage and a faith in Bahá'u'lláh, never knowing what would lie around the corner.

In 1979 after two years in Pohnpei, the Trutzas went to American Samoa and later to Western Samoa where Henrietta served on the National Teaching Committee. She continued her traveling teaching to remote areas to assist with Local Assembly elections each year.

In 1983 when Phil's contract expired, the couple was invited to serve at the Bahá'í World Centre, where they remained until 1987. Henrietta served at the International Teaching Centre while Phil worked as project manager for the restoration of Holy places in Akká, Bahjí, and Haifa. Most notably he oversaw the restoration of the house of 'Abdu'lláh Páshá and the roof of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. Phil suffered a stroke in 1987 leaving him unable to work, so the family returned to American Samoa. Henrietta cared for Phil, and both continued to serve on the Spiritual Assembly of Tafuna and to host events at

home. Additionally Henrietta served on the National Teaching Committee.

Phil passed to the Abhá Kingdom February 1, 1989, becoming the first Bahá'í pioneer to be buried in Samoa. Soon after his death Henrietta returned to the United States settling in Cheyenne, Wyoming, where she found employment with the Public Defenders Office. She was serving on the Cheyenne Assembly and was active in community affairs when she began to plan another pioneering venture to Puerto Rico with her sister, Josephine Johansen. In the summer of 1993, before the dream could be realized, Henrietta was diagnosed with a terminal illness. She moved to Syracuse, New York, to be cared for by her granddaughter Felicia Canfield, and there she peacefully ascended to the Abhá Kingdom November 8, 1993.

During her life of service to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, Henrietta was guided by the quality of radiant acquiescence, and she will long be remembered for her unflinching devotion, dauntless courage, and countless acts of kindness.

*Natalie Reyes with assistance
from Felicia Canfield, Linda Buder,
and Anne Garrett-Wermuth*

EMILY CHRISTINA GENERAL 1902-1993

We have been grieved to learn of the passing of Mrs. Emily General, distinguished leader and historian of the Six Nations people. Her strong commitment to the Faith contributed greatly to the respect with which its message was received among Native Canadians.

Please assure the members of her family and the many Canadian Bahá'ís who knew and admired her of our prayers for the progress of her soul in the Abhá Kingdom.

Universal House of Justice
November 23, 1993

Emily General of the Turtle Clan was born on December 25, 1902, and lived on Six Nations Reserve in Ontario, Canada. Six Nations is part of the Iroquois League—an alliance formed about 1600 by “The Great Peacemaker,” Deganawidah, a Huron. Emily's mother, Sofia, was Mohawk, her father, Alexander, Cayuga. She had a sister, Laura, and two younger brothers, Albert (Bert) and Sylvanus.

In July 1930 Emily accompanied a group of chiefs from Six Nations to London, England, to meet a representative of the Crown and to study the *Haldimand Treaty of 1784* which confirmed the sovereign status of Six Nations.

Emily was a schoolteacher. In later years she frequently stopped at Bobby's Grill for coffee and lemon pie after delivering *The Hamilton Spectator*. One day she was surprised to see a number of people entering the restaurant. When she asked the owner, Bobby Jamieson, the first Bahá'í on that reserve, the reason for this influx, he explained they were holding a Bahá'í meeting at the back and invited

her to attend. As a result of stumbling upon this fireside, Emily declared her belief in Bahá'u'lláh in 1961. She found His Teachings similar to the teachings of Deganawidah and the Longhouse religion. Grace General, the wife of a cousin, also became a Bahá'í.

I met Emily briefly at a gathering in Hamilton, Ontario, in 1967, just before my husband, Dan, and I moved to Yellowknife. When we returned to Caledonia, we bought a house just steps away from the Six Nations Reserve. Jeannie Seddon, our Auxiliary Board member then, gave us the responsibility to teach there. That was how I came to know Emily. We became so close she considered me her daughter. I stayed with her for long stretches. Often I would accompany her on her newspaper route up and down those dirt roads. I helped her toss her papers out of her little green Datsun. Sometimes she would say, “One of my pupils lives there,” and proceed to tell me about the family. Several of the people along her route had become Bahá'ís.



Emily Christina General

⁵⁶ See Virginia Breaks, pp. 101-4.

Emily imparted her high standards to the children of the community. She taught them to take pride in their work, to strive for excellence, and to care for one another. She always praised them when they did well. She cared deeply for her people and wanted her property to become a center of learning and a refuge for all. There, she envisioned children learning how to grow medicinal herbs and becoming stewards of the environment.

Phyllis Lickers, Bobby Jamieson's widow, remembers how Emily loved to work outside with her plants. "She also liked to think the best of everyone no matter what, and always had something good to say about them—some little gem in their disposition that she would focus on."

Emily was a sought-after historian. It was important to her that her people retain their history. As well she dedicated herself to bridging the gap between native and nonnative cultures. For example, in the 1930s she and Laura were walking at the back of their farm when they dreamed up the notion of starting an outdoor event. This marked the beginning of the Six Nations Pageant, an annual showcase of Mohawk history and culture. McKenzie Creek ran through her property, and Emily incorporated it into the pageant with portrayals of characters, such as the famous writer and performer Pauline Johnson reciting poetry from a canoe.

Many requests came for Emily to address nonnative gatherings. In later years Dan and I would take her to these events. She was a great speaker and exerted every effort to help people understand native culture and history.

Emily was extremely direct and open about the Bahá'í Faith. We were a team and travel taught together extensively. She would say, "Come on Helen. I'll pay your way." So away we went. We visited many reserves in

Ontario and attended meetings of native councils such as the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake, Quebec. From meeting with the Iroquois Bahá'ís we branched out to include the Ojibwa at Rama Reserve. She was delighted when we flew to Cape Breton Island to visit the Mi'kmaq in Eskasoni.

In 1977 Emily, Grace, Melba Loft, and I attended the Intercontinental Teaching Conference in Mérida, Mexico. Before setting out Emily and Grace refused to apply for a Canadian passport. After all, Emily had witnessed the Crown affirm the *Haldimand Treaty* and her people's sovereignty. John Sargent recalls approaching Canada's Department of External Affairs for a letter to present to the Mexican authorities stating they were "citizens of North America."

We roomed together in Mérida. In the evenings after the conference, we attended firesides at which forty or fifty people enrolled as Bahá'ís. Grace said, "Oh my goodness, we will have to form our Assembly when we go home."

There were seven Bahá'ís living at Six Nations then. I phoned John Sargent and said, "Come home, John. We need you to form the Spiritual Assembly." I moved in with a friendly lady, Frieda Green, that I met at Grandma's Restaurant. I could only stay with her during the week, as nonnatives were not allowed to live there permanently. We formed the Six Nations Spiritual Assembly in February 1977.

Over the New Year holidays of 1979 Emily and I traveled to Silver Creek, Alberta, to attend a Bahá'í native conference. Allison Healy from the Blood Reserve remembers Emily wearing her traditional buckskin dress and explaining the workings of the Iroquois Confederation. "She was a real general, a very inspiring and intelligent woman. She taught us about the power of that matriarchal system, how the

clan mothers chose the leaders and would kick them out if they didn't live up to the women's expectations."

Emily passed away at the Iroquois Lodge on November 21, 1993. As a teacher and an historian her legacy endures. A Six Nations school has been named after her. But above all her legacy endures through her potent example as a unifier, on and off the reserve.

Helen Kelly

VIRGINIA TAYLOR SIMS 1908–1993

Virginia Taylor Sims was born on September 20, 1908, in Cincinnati, Ohio. She was the daughter of Dora and Benjamin R. Taylor, both of whom became Bahá'ís before the turn of the century. Virginia's father served as a delegate to the second Mashriqu'l-Adhkár Convention which resulted in the establishment of Bahá'í Temple Unity in March of 1909.

The story goes that when she was a four-year-old child, Virginia accompanied her parents to the train station to meet 'Abdu'l-Bahá as he arrived in Cincinnati. When Virginia saw the Master, she broke free from the arms of her parents, exclaiming that she wanted that man in white. Thus, even in the early days of her life, she was drawn to and able to identify the spiritual strength and purity of this stranger dressed in unfamiliar garb. It would almost seem that the path of her life was set at that very moment.

In the 1940s she met James A. Sims who became her husband and joined the ranks of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh. The Sims had three children: James Jr., Patricia Ann, and Donald.

During the latter years of her life Virginia was a pioneer in West Memphis,

Arkansas. Shortly before her passing in December 1993, she moved to Illinois. On December 27, the Universal House of Justice wrote to the National Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States:

PASSING LOYAL, STEADFAST, STALWART VIRGINIA TAYLOR SIMS SADLY DIMINISHES DWINDLING NUMBER FRIENDS WHO WERE PRIVILEGED ATTAIN PRESENCE BELOVED MASTER DURING HIS EPIC JOURNEY NORTH AMERICA. SHARE DEEP SENSE LOSS YOUR COMMUNITY THIS INTREPID TEACHER CAUSE GOD. FERVENTLY PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HER NOBLE SOUL ABHÁ KINGDOM.

VIRGINIA BREAKS Knight of Bahá'u'lláh 1906–1993

DEEPLY SADDENED PASSING MUCH LOVED KNIGHT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH VIRGINIA BREAKS. HER PROMPT RESPONSE GUARDIAN'S CALL TEN YEAR WORLD CRUSADE, FORTY YEARS UNINTERRUPTED SERVICE CAROLINE ISLANDS, CONSTANT DEVOTION AND EXEMPLARY SELF-ABNEGATION HAVE EARNED HER UNIQUE DISTINCTION ANNALS FAITH. ASSURE ARDENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HER NOBLE SOUL DIVINE WORLDS.

Universal House of Justice
December 8, 1993

Virginia Breaks was born on November 9, 1906, in Crawfordsville, Indiana. She attended Western College in Ohio and later worked in hospital bacteriology and serology in Chicago and Crawfordsville. She moved to Honolulu, Hawaii, in 1941

and worked as a research assistant in the department of parasitology at the university there. Continuing her studies she pursued a master's degree in public health statistics (MAPH) at the University of California at Berkeley. Upon her graduation in 1944, she worked for the Kern County Health Department for about two years before accepting a position with the California State Department of Health in San Francisco. This is where she was introduced to the Bahá'í Faith and embraced it; the Local Assembly of San Francisco accepted her declaration on August 26, 1947.

Virginia was in her late forties when she attended the dedication of the House of Worship in Wilmette and the International Teaching Conference in Chicago in 1953. She wrote:

Looking back it seems to me that events in my life were preparing me to come to the Caroline Islands, even before I accepted the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. It was there [at the Conference] that the Caroline Islands were mentioned as one of the 131 places where there were no Bahá'ís. That name went right to my heart. I remembered that there had been notice of an opening for a Vital Statistician and Medical Records Librarian [in the Carolines]. I felt qualified for that. On my return to California I applied for the position.

My application was rejected because a young man with experience was needed. I learned that three young men in my section of the Health Department had applied and been turned down because they didn't have experience.

I wrote to the Director of Public Health of the Trust Territory of the

Pacific Islands⁵⁷ again and asked if they would consider me if they did not find a young man with experience in this kind of work. There was a long wait. In the meantime I tried without much success to learn about the Caroline Islands, where I was determined to go. I found a book about the Gilbert Islands—that was as close as I got. I tried to find out how to get to the Caroline Islands in case I didn't get the job. There was no way.

After about two months, the Director of Public Health sent a Sanitary Engineer, who was returning [to the United States] after two years in the Trust Territory, to interview me. He gave me a good recommendation, and I was offered and accepted the position. You can imagine how happy I was then . . . November 16 (our time)⁵⁸ [1953] when I could cable our beloved Guardian that I had arrived at my post.

As happy as she was to have pleased the Guardian, she was surprised to learn why it was necessary to have a job to get into the Trust Territory. There were no hotels, and temporary accommodations consisted of Quonset huts left by the US Navy. Transportation was also limited. The outer islands could be reached by boat,

⁵⁷ The United Nations Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (Micronesia) was administered by the United States beginning in 1947. The trusteeship for Chuuk, Yap, Kosrae, Pohnpei, Mariana Islands, and Marshall Islands districts ended in December 1990.

⁵⁸ The announcement by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Western Caroline Islands of the passing of Ms. Breaks notes her arrival as November 15, 1953. A realignment of time zones and of the international date line went into effect January 1, 1995. The realignment put the Caroline Islands in the Hawaii-Aleutian Standard Time Zone but with a date one day later.

but as there were only two airstrips in the territory, travel to Guam and other districts was by World War II vintage seaplanes.

Her first teaching efforts were to other Americans, and she said that she met only two people who had heard of the Faith. With time she was able to reach out to the islanders. She hosted weekly firesides, and when no seekers attended, she deepened Stem Salle, a new believer from Namoluk, who had learned of the Faith from Mary Elizabeth Hill, the head of the Trust Territory School of Nursing in Koror. She corresponded with the Guardian, and in May 1956 she received a letter written on his behalf:

Dear Bahá'í Sister:

The beloved Guardian was deeply impressed with your outline of teaching work which you have been able to accomplish during the past two years and the interest which has been developed.

Now that you have become acquainted and well-established and will not have to travel so much, the Guardian sincerely hopes you will be able to devote more time to the teaching of the native people, so that a goodly number may become firm in the Faith. He feels that this vast territory, which has been spiritually asleep for so long is now awakening, and he hopes through your diligent efforts, many may find the light of Divine Guidance.⁵⁹

Virginia had the great bounty to be the first person to tell many people about Bahá'u'lláh and His teachings. Notable among them was Betra Majmeto—the first

Marshallese Bahá'í, the first Marshallese member of the Auxiliary Board, and the first Marshallese Bahá'í Counsellor.

Another was Rose Mackwelung,⁶⁰ a Gilbertese. Virginia described her acceptance of the Faith:

She was recommended to me as a Kosraen translator. I looked her up, introduced myself as a Bahá'í, and asked her if she would translate a pamphlet about the Faith. She asked me about the Faith and for something to read about it. I gave her a copy of *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*. After reading the pamphlet, which was in English, she agreed to translate.

On one visit to Pohnpei, she asked me to come to her house and tell some of her friends about the Bahá'í Faith. So the first fireside on Pohnpei was held at her home. One of those present, a Kosraen man, said when he heard the principles of the Faith, "This should be taught in all schools." At this time, Rose did not think that she would be a Bahá'í. Several years later when she was convalescing from eye surgery at the Olsons' home in Inarajan, Guam, Cynthia Olson⁶¹ (Knight of Bahá'u'lláh to Mariana Islands) read *Thief in the Night* to her. At a certain point in the book, Rose said, "Stop, that is enough, I believe." From that time she was a firm Bahá'í and in the last years of her life served on the first National Spiritual Assembly of the North West Pacific.

Virginia felt the strain of isolation and the concomitant narrowing of vision. She appreciated the need to maintain an inner

⁵⁹ Dated May 6, 1956, and signed by Leroy Ioas, *Messages to the Antipodes: Communications from Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá'í Communities of Australasia*.

⁶⁰ See "In Memoriam," *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XIX, pp. 672–74.

⁶¹ See "In Memoriam," *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XX, pp. 899–903.

strength and a wider perspective—qualities of character that were fortified by occasional trips outside of the Trust Territory, especially to gatherings of the Friends. She attended the first North East Asia Conference in Nikko, Japan, in 1955; the Second International Teaching Conference in Kampala, Uganda, in 1958; and the All-Philippine Teaching Conference in Manila about a year later. In 1962 she made her pilgrimage to the Holy Land and was fortunate to attend the First World Congress in London, England, in 1963. Virginia wrote:

At the First World Congress, friends were asking the pioneers what they would do at the end of the Ten Year Crusade. The last address at the World Congress was by the Hand of the Cause Faizi. He made it clear that the wish of the Guardian was that the pioneers would remain at their posts. This talk had a profound effect on me. I wanted to carry out the wishes of the beloved of our hearts, our Guardian, Shoghi Effendi.

She did. Four days before her passing she noted, "I am able to do this now through the loving-kindness of my friends, David and Gayle Rutstein. I thank Bahá'u'lláh with all my heart for all his blessings of these past forty years." The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Western Caroline Islands shared the news:

Virginia Breaks, Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Caroline Islands in Micronesia, passed away today, December 8, 1993, still at her post in Yap . . . She was eighty-seven years old, and we recently noted the fortieth anniversary of her arrival in the Carolines . . . Her death followed a sudden illness of three days duration . . . Despite being afflicted by

a progressively deteriorating physical condition she remained an active and pivotal member of the Yap Bahá'í community. She also maintained a phenomenal level of worldwide correspondence until her passing. Her death brings to a close an illustrious and exemplary earthly life characterized by her single-minded devotion to serving the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

Adapted from a memoir prepared by Virginia Breaks and material provided by Roger Dahl, US National Archives

**KHODABAKHCH
ATTAR-HAMEDANI
1917-1994**

We were saddened to learn of the passing of beloved friend Mr. Khodabakhch Attar-Hamedani. His many years of dedicated services to the Cause of God, and his endeavours in the international arena for the progress of the Chinese people, will long be remembered. We will offer our fervent supplications in the Holy Shrines that Bahá'u'lláh's bountiful blessings and favours will surround him in the Abhá Kingdom.

Universal House of Justice
January 6, 1994

What a fabulous destiny to have been born in Hamadán, the ancient Ecbatana, the capital of the Medes, and then to die seventy-seven years later in Guangzhou, China, having traveled to and fro across a fair portion of the planet. And for all his adventures and for all the languages he learned to speak, Khodabakhch's tongue embraced and retained the slightly guttural accent of his native home.

I know not whether we should be saddened over his death. For Khodabakhch, the son of my first cousin, has, by having lived according to his ideals, managed the feat of making a success of his death. To die in a foreign land, often far from their homeland, has been the destiny of Persian pioneers who left Iran in the 1940s and 1950s. Some of them, having reached a certain age, are careful not to return home for fear of dying there and not being buried at their posts. Faithful to their promises to the beloved Guardian, having left under his orders, they founded and then carefully nurtured thousands of communities throughout the world before quietly departing this earthly plane. They had one glorious title, one single reward: being the cause of joy, great or small, to "his blessed person," the Guardian. As soldiers of peace in his army, these aristocrats of the Bahá'í community went forward to earn titles of nobility in far-distant lands, accomplishing what the world considered and still considers futile: the awakening of conscience, the transmission of spiritual wealth, the conquest of the hearts of men, and the offering of an ideal. In their mouths the expression "beloved Guardian" had, and still has, a depth of meaning that the princes of the earth would envy. Their attachment to Shoghi Effendi, their guide (although he was very modest), was a mixture of filial tenderness and spiritual resonance. They lived for the sole pleasure of pleasing him and of edifying a future he described. This was their gift. And their satisfaction was to receive from him a measure of his approval. For some it would have been the report of a pilgrim that the Guardian had mentioned their name and expressed joy for the services they were rendering. For others it might have been a small note of encouragement from the Guardian's secretary or, better yet, his signature at the

foot of a short letter written on his behalf. Then there were those who treasured the supreme award—a letter written in the Guardian's own hand—a letter such as the one that Khodabakhch held dear.

With his departure, we have lost a living library. The Dogon people of Mali have kept a sense of symbolism, and at the funeral of men such as Khodabakhch, a book is carried as a sign of the erudition and pleasure of the deceased, and to demonstrate that life is over, a pencil (the tool he had used most in the course of his life) is broken. Khodabakhch took many departures, leaving with a suitcase in one hand and a pack of books in the other, and yet, like other Easterners who had not forgotten their roots and oral tradition, he carried in his heart the many verses, poems, tablets, and epistles he had committed to memory.

Khodabakhch Attar (meaning God-given perfumer) was eighteen years old when he left to pioneer on the Iranian homefront, his first voluntary exile. He wanted to become a doctor so as to better serve humanity, but life decided otherwise, and he became a merchant.

He married Monavar Rezvani during the Second World War, and nineteen days after their wedding, they were off to *Khásh*, a distant village lacking in just about everything. That is where their children Abbas and Bijane came into the world, in conditions most primitive. Then they went back to Rasht, where Behnouz and Behnam were born; they needed to prepare a nest egg to go still farther afield, perhaps to Afghanistan, India, or Egypt.

Finally, in 1952, one year before the Ten Year Crusade, the four sons and Khodabakhch and Monavar—the kindly mother and servant of her family and of all the community—arrived in Algiers. They were the first pioneers in Algeria, a country that was soon to know eight years

of devastating civil war. The Attars welcomed and helped other newcomers. Some managed to settle and to later bring their families. A warm and fairly sizable community grew and several Local Assemblies were founded, bringing about the formation of the National Assembly in 1963.⁶²

In November 1968 all foreign Bahá'ís were expelled, their properties confiscated, and the native believers, at least the men, were deported to the south, to the borders of the Sahara. My father, in his wanderings about the Mediterranean, searching for a land that would welcome his family, spent nine unforgettable months (1953–54) with the Attars before being expelled.

Khodabakhch and his family settled in Montpellier, France, for a while, but they had many plans and eyes on countries in the huge continent of Africa and in Southeast Asia. They left for the Far East. Unable to stay in China but for a few weeks, they finally settled in Hong Kong where they felt useful.⁶³ Fourteen

years went by, and each year found them becoming more and more “Asian,” something which delighted the mischievous, easy-going, and fun-making Khodabakhch.

Then destiny hit them with an incurable affliction; in 1984 their son Bijane, the mystical poet, packed his things and was very quickly carried off by cancer. It is normal for a son to bury his father, but how unhappy are the poor parents who bury a son. In truth, in spite of their courage, Khodabakhch and Monavar never recovered. Khodabakhch was orphaned by his son, and then Monavar left him, passing away in 1991.

In order to fulfill his destiny, this old student made a long trip to China to learn Chinese, for he had to abide to the end by the promise he made to the “young master,” as the Easterners used to call the Guardian in the 1930s. When Shoghi Effendi granted you the aristocratic title of “pioneer,” you expected to remain true to your last breath.

I said earlier that I do not know whether or not to be sad at the death of Khodabakhch. His departure for China in 1993 reminds me of the words of another old, gray-moustached Iranian pioneer that I met at the first International Convention in Northwest Africa in Tunisia in 1956. He looked at the adolescent I was then and said, “I am going to go and found the first Bahá'í cemetery in ‘X’”—a country in Western Africa. And he kept his word. My cousin Khodabakhch passed away on January 4, 1994. Just like that old man, he had gone very far, had in fact gone farther, to found the first Bahá'í cemetery of Guangzhou.

From the translation of a tribute written in French by Foad Saberán

in Hong Kong”, web published January 2000. According to Hassall, Khodabakhch Attar was elected as treasurer of the first National Spiritual Assembly of Hong Kong which was established in 1974.

DOROTHY CAMPBELL ROUGEOU 1909–1994

To speak of the spirit that animated Dorothy Campbell, one might say that she was devoted to a divine ideal whose broad, universal dimensions and perfection she knew could come only from God. This ideal gave her vision of the divinely ordained destiny for mankind. It was vast and embraced the people of all national, religious, racial, and social backgrounds as members of one great human family, one universal brotherhood, living in peace, harmony, unity, understanding, and spirituality. This is the heart and core of the Christ-promised Kingdom of God on earth, a new world spiritual civilization, revealed by God in this new global age. In light of prophecies in the Scriptures of all the great religions of the world, Dorothy recognized God's most recent Messenger, Bahá'u'lláh, the prophet-founder of the Bahá'í Faith, as the promised Manifestation of God. She declared her faith in 1942 while living in Jackson, Mississippi. New horizons opened to her mind, a new and high flight propelled her spirit, and a new perspective of the purpose of life was a constant inspiration for her soul.

Dorothy spoke of this transcendent message of God to many people in her eagerness to share with others this new measure of divine light that had come to the human race and whose illumination is destined to penetrate all corners of the earth. Dorothy wanted to be a part of this divine drama—a drama that began for her when she started her pioneering career in 1950, traveling to Mexico, Guatemala, Venezuela, Peru, and Bolivia. In December of 1950 she settled in Sucre, Bolivia, and in the new year she was appointed secretary of the Bahá'í Publishing Committee for Latin America by the recently established first National



Dorothy Campbell Rougeou

Spiritual Assembly of South America. In 1952 she was one of three Bahá'í delegates to the United Nations Regional Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations held in La Paz, Bolivia. The following year, she was elected to the National Assembly and transferred to Lima, Peru, to serve as its secretary. In 1961 the republics of Central America elected their own National Assemblies, and Dorothy chose to go to Ecuador. She was elected to the National Assembly there and served as its secretary. With other members of that Assembly, she traveled to the Holy Land as an elector of the first Universal House of Justice in 1963. Ten years later Dorothy married and returned to the United States.

Dorothy met and became friends with James Rougeou when they were students at Louisiana College in Pineville, Louisiana. Dorothy graduated in 1928, two years before James, and their paths separated. Forty years passed. Dorothy became a high school Spanish teacher and a Bahá'í pioneer. In Quito, Ecuador, she was the principal of

the Coropaxi Academy. James had become a principal of an elementary school, a supervisor of education, and a high school coach. Both had married, and with time both were single again. James began to search for Dorothy and learned that she was in Ecuador. He contacted her, and they renewed their friendship, and a short time later they were wed. They shared a very happy life together for twenty years.

Knight of Bahá'u'lláh Gayle Woolson remembers:

One of the treasures of my pioneering years in Latin America . . . was the special friendship I enjoyed with Dorothy for fifteen years when we were closely associated in our Bahá'í activities in South America. That was from 1953 when she became a member of the Regional National Spiritual Assembly of South America to 1968 when I was transferred in my position with the United States government from Ecuador to El Salvador. However, after that we kept in touch. It was a friendship of the heart, the mind, and the soul.

Dorothy had endearing qualities that won her many friends. She was outgoing and caring. Her personality had charm, and she was an interesting conversationalist. She was an avid reader and student of the Bahá'í writings as well as literature in other fields, but she never reflected a sense of superiority. Whenever she would convey knowledge to others, it was always with a spirit of sharing. The fact that she served for twenty years as secretary of Bahá'í National Spiritual Assemblies attests to her ability, efficiency, and strength of character. In the midst of the load of Dorothy's national secretarial work, she would periodically

visit other localities to help with the teaching work of developing Bahá'í groups and communities. She would give time to visiting individuals who wished to discuss the Bahá'í teachings with her. Her seriousness was combined with a delightful sense of humor.

Dorothy passed away on January 12, 1994, in Franklin, Louisiana. James explained that she had a heart condition and that when complications set in, she was hospitalized. She then developed pneumonia that took her earthly life—a life that had begun when she was born to Daisy and Oliver Morton on August 9, 1909, in Monroe, Louisiana.

Adapted in part from a memoir by Gayle Woolson

VIVIAN DUNLOP WESSON
Knight of Bahá'u'lláh
1895–1994

Vivian Dunlap Wesson was born on March 12, 1895, in Texarkana, Texas, the daughter of a Baptist minister, James Dunlap, and his wife, Julia Bryant. Vivian attended school in Chicago, Illinois, until her junior year of high school, when she moved back to Texas to help her father with the raising of her younger sisters and brother. She attended Paul Quinn College in Waco, Texas, and later returned to Chicago, where she worked as a stenographer and as a preschool and elementary school teacher. She met Henry Wesson, whom she wed on September 8, 1919, and they had one son, James J. Wesson.

Vivian became a Bahá'í in 1921 and was nurtured by Corinne True (later a Hand of the Cause). Vivian wrote:

The first year of my Bahá'í life was spent in her home as a maid. I was ill with



Vivian Dunlop Wesson

stomach (peptic) ulcers and of very little use to them. I think she kept me on just to teach me the Bahá'í way of life. I'm sure no maid ever had the care and privileges which were given me by the whole family. When I left them I was well and very well grounded in the Bahá'í Teachings.⁶⁴

Vivian gave many years of devoted service to the Faith in the Chicago area and was a member of the Chicago Spiritual Assembly before responding to the Guardian's Ten Year Crusade call for pioneers. The death of her husband in 1951 strongly influenced her decision. Vivian and Henry had been sweethearts for more than thirty years and had loved each other deeply. Vivian was inconsolable and could not bear to remain in their house alone.

French Togoland (presently Togo) was a country to which the Guardian hoped the Message of Bahá'u'lláh would be taken before the end of Riqvân 1954. Vivian wanted to teach reading and writing in West Africa, and she enhanced her prospects for employment before pioneering by taking a twelve-month course to become a medical laboratory technician. She made her application to pioneer, and the United States Africa Teaching Committee partnered her with Mavis Nymon of Fargo, North Dakota. The two did not meet until shortly before their departure in early April. Together, a thirty-three-year-old white woman from the northwest and a much older black woman from the deep south, they boarded a cargo ship in Boston. Vivian was fifty-nine, an age when many people think of slowing down.

We found that the ship was going to sail that evening and that was very good. But our miracles began then—the miracles of being taken over and being taken care of through the will of God. We had no idea of the complications that were going to stand in our way. We had *no* idea. We'd never traveled that far before, never been out of the United States. So we talked to each other and had wonderful times [on] the ship.⁶⁵

Vivian wrote in her memoirs, "This beginning experience has set the pattern of my life as a pioneer and as a believer. It gave me such joy, such a serene unshakable faith that I have never been the same."

Valerie Wilson, then an American pioneer in Liberia, wrote:

⁶⁵ From an interview conducted with Vivian Wesson by Gwendolyn Etter-Lewis cited in *Lights of the Spirit—Historical Portraits of Black Bahá'ís in North America: 1898–2000*, edited by Gwendolyn Etter-Lewis and Richard Thomas, Bahá'í Publishing Trust, Wilmette, 2006, p. 131.

⁶⁴ Letter to the United States Africa Teaching Committee, dated June 22, 1961, written by Vivian after hearing the news of Corinne True's passing.

On April 27th, Mrs. Vivian Wesson and Miss Mavis Nymon docked at Monrovia around 5:00 PM. It so happened that this was Feast night (Jamal-Beauty). We were indeed happy to meet them—from the dock we went straight to the meeting place for the Feast. It impressed the Friends that two women would come from America not knowing if they would get visas to go further than Liberia—let me explain. Mrs. Wesson and Miss Nymon had been waiting for months for visas to the Gold Coast [Ghana] and French Togoland their destination. It seemed that visas weren't forthcoming, so they decided to get visas for as far as Liberia, which they did. They felt that the doors would open from there—of course with their faith and prayers, it happened just that way. Mr. Foster and I accompanied them the next day (April 28th) to the American Embassy; from there we went to the French Embassy (We were expecting them to get a two-day visiting visa.), but out of a clear blue sky they were offered a ten-day visa; naturally we were all extremely overjoyed. From there we went to the British Embassy; they were given a visa for traveling through the Gold Coast only—then to the Farrel Lines office as they had to secure passage from Liberia to Fr. Togoland. It must be mentioned that the Captain of the ship also had a hand in helping them by talking to the American Consul. Everything went as smoothly as clock-work. It was a beautiful example of the Spirit of Bahá'u'lláh and the faith of the pioneers. Around noon the next day, April 29th, the pioneers sailed for their original destination.

With the passing of years there have been differing accounts of their arrival

in Togo. The most reliable recollection is likely to be the one Vivian posted to the United States Africa Teaching Committee on August 15, 1954:

Our ship came into the port of Accra [Ghana] about 4:30 PM May 1st about 5 days ahead of its original schedule; this was most unusual to everyone but us; we, of course, saw only the Will of God. It was too late to go ashore so we docked, while Mavis & I leaned over the rail into the night, almost too happy to breathe. Not much sleep for us—too excited—we prayed and prayed some more. We were put ashore about 9:30 AM of May 2nd rowed by the most picturesque boatmen on the coast chanting rhythmically in deep mellow voices (10 of them) and dipping their hand shaped & fingered oars in beautiful unison. Customs took about 2 hrs. The young man in charge of customs was kind & solicitous of our welfare.

Vivian wrote that this was when "the real miracle happened," and in her interview with Gwendolyn Etter-Lewis she adds a critical detail:

And then we asked the customs man if he could tell us where we could find a taxi. And he looked at us and he says, "You haven't been here before have you?" I said, "No, we haven't." He said, "You can't go anywhere today. Today is Sunday and it's a holiday. No taxis run and there's no traveling."

Vivian and Mavis were anxious to arrive in Togo before sunset so as to meet the *Riḍván*⁶⁶ goal and were stunned by this news.

⁶⁶ The celebration of the Festival of *Riḍván*, commemorating the anniversary of Bahá'u'lláh's declaration in 1863, begins on April 21st and ends at sunset on May 2nd.

[While] I was standing there, and we were pondering what to do, we both closed our eyes and started to pray, not out loud, but to ourselves. We just stood there with our hands folded and started to pray because we could see this was [a] serious thing for us . . . and we hear people passing . . . and I heard in the speech of the people passing my grandmother, my great-grandmother, who was an African woman. That's where I got my blood; I heard her voice. I heard her accents.⁶⁷

In her account to the teaching committee she continues:

I found myself addressed by a tall handsome young man enquiring in cultured accents if he could be of service, introducing himself as Carl Allotey. After a few moments of introductory conversation we explained our desire to reach Lomé, French Togo this day; he invited us to wait in his home which was close by, while he and a friend, who had arrived in the meantime to keep an appointment with Carl, went to try to make arrangements for a car to take us this last 120 miles of our journey. His friend was a native of Lomé, knew the city well, was a member of one of its most prominent families, his name Mr. Venance Ayivor, a teacher in Achimoto School in Accra. This has proven to be of great value to us in many many ways.

We left Accra between 3 and 3:30 Sunday afternoon, arrived at the frontier of Lomé 9:15. I was sad because we had not been able to make it before sunset; otherwise both of us were in a daze of joy. Oh yes I forgot to tell you that both Carl and Venance accompanied

us to the city. When we got through customs and into the city, we found the one hotel was full. Then began a round of knocking on doors asking for sleeping accommodations only to be told "sorry we have no room" until one last try by Mr. Ayivor at the home of a cousin who gave us a bed about 1:30 AM. These two men were waiting in Accra to help us; we know now that the best preparation for pioneering is complete reliance on God. He has not failed us once. The next day we found rooms with a brother of the man who gave us the bed, and we have been here since then. Mr. Allotey declared his faith in June.

Both women were given the accolade of Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for bringing the Bahá'í teachings to these West African shores.⁶⁸

Vivian and Mavis had experienced the frustration of bureaucratic delays in their attempts to apply for visas before they departed the United States. Now, about four months later, they were still unsuccessful in securing visas in spite of appeals to the French and American consulates and repeated visits to the Chef de Sureté. They had verbal assurances from authorities in Togo, but because they lacked properly signed and officiated documents they were expelled from the country. It seemed that French authorities became fearful that Vivian and Mavis were contributing to the general unrest and were encouraging the people to agitate for independence.

⁶⁸ David Tanyi was also named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for French Togoland, having arrived in April. Vivian wrote, "Since we did not know of the presence in Lomé of David Tanyi, we were taking desperate measures to be here before May 2nd."

⁶⁷ *Lights of the Spirit*, p. 132.

They were welcomed by Liberia, and the two women began working in the iron-rich mining area of Bomi Hills, forty miles "out in the bush" from Monrovia. Vivian found the miners' wages extremely low and the illiteracy appalling. Grateful for the efforts of the pioneers to promote literacy there, they were offered land, and the Bahá'í Literacy School was built. Vivian was able to fulfill her wish to teach reading and writing.

In early 1958 she wrote:

[T]here are many things to do here first and this being Africa no one is in a hurry but foolish foreigners. Mavis seems well but she is so over worked. She has worked out a program that uses every day and drives herself mercilessly. Her teaching work both for the Faith and the Literacy School is very demanding. She is in need of a vacation. I'm urging her but she is resisting because her program would be too difficult for me to carry on, and she does not want it dropped or adapted to my strength.

A few months later Mavis had to return to the United States, and while Vivian attempted to maintain the school's schedule by taking on Mavis's responsibilities, her health, which had held her back in earlier years, began to deteriorate more rapidly. She prayed and appealed for another pioneer to come to assist her, but none was found. She was appointed to the Regional Teaching Committee in July, and toward the end of that year she undertook an arduous 2,700-mile traveling teaching trip with Valerie Wilson⁶⁹ through Guinea to Sierra Leone. A "grumpy old" Vivian wrote, "Nothing but dedication to the goals of the Ten Year Crusade could induce me to leave my lovely country. Now that I have

done so, I am prepared to view all else as unimportant inconveniences, just things to complain to your friends about, giving yourself a little false virtue."

Vivian continued to appeal for a pioneer to join her. She felt that a man could be much more effective with a community that had grown to sixteen members. All but two were men, most under thirty with limited capacity to serve the Cause. "Our believers work a 10 and 12 hour shift [for the mining company] and have no time to go out. Most of the teaching work must be carried out by the pioneer." "I am eager to work with any person who is able to see a future for the Faith out here . . . I am not the Greta Garbo type; I love companionship and do get very lonely sometimes. Be assured of my desire and determination to remain out here as long as necessary." "If I could feel well I could have fun doing this job. When I sound discouraged please know that it's only my physical protest because my spirit soars with happiness that I can be here and do anything however small that will advance the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh." "There are literally thousands of believers in West Africa and perhaps some may be found for Bomi Hills before I am too too tired out."⁷⁰ After five years of teaching Vivian had to discontinue the literacy classes.

Because of the continuing decline of her health and the mounting concern of the United States Africa Teaching Committee, the Hand of the Cause Enoch Olinga encouraged her to leave Bomi Hills in 1961 and to visit him in the Cameroons. Vivian later wrote, "My body seems to be trying to keep up with the spirit; since I spent those

⁷⁰ From letters Vivian wrote to the United States Africa Teaching Committee, August 20, 1960, April 2, 1959, August 10, 1960, and August 23, 1960.

⁶⁹ See Valerie Wilson, pp. 85-88.

few magic months in the Cameroons there has been a renewal of vitality that is truly remarkable. Dear Enoch cautioned me to husband my strength by keeping to a less ambitious work program."

In January 1963 Vivian began to contemplate the end of the Ten Year Crusade and the implications its termination held for her obligations:

After long and prayerful consideration of the Message sent out by the Hands of the Cause in the Holy Land and the follow-up letters from the NSAs of the United States and North West Africa, I have decided to remain at my post. I have first hand knowledge that the NSA of North West Africa needs every pioneer in this particular part of its vast territory, especially the ones who work outside of Monrovia. Liberian Bahá'í communities are in need of literate believers who are able to carry the administrative end without supervision. This is not the right time to leave this post permanently without a pioneer. I must come home [to the United States] this year to apply for old age benefits; I will be 68 in March. I would not care to stay several years longer without these benefits.

In March 1970, having reached the age of seventy-five and finding village living in Liberia more challenging than her health permitted, "Mama Wesson," as she was known to her African friends, moved to Sierra Leone. She served there for seven years before returning to the United States in a wheelchair in June 1977, having suffered several heart attacks. Vivian had given twenty-three years of her life to Africa.

Vivian moved to the Lytton Gardens seniors' community in Palo Alto, California, where she lived for another thirteen years; she was elected president of the Residents' Council there in 1980. Her health improved

through prayer, proper diet, and daily walks, and she enrolled in classes at Foothill College with the intention of completing her degree.

Maintaining the flame of an unfulfilled desire to return to her beloved Africa till the end of her life, Vivian made her last trip abroad in 1992. She attended the Holy Year celebrations in Haifa, Israel, where she was reunited with the other Knights of Bahá'u'lláh for French Togoland, Mavis Nymon and David Tanyi.

Vivian "Mama" Wesson left this earthly life on January 13, 1994. Learning of her passing the Universal House of Justice cabled the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States on January 17:

DEPLORE NEWS PASSING DEARLY
LOVED GREATLY ADMIRING KNIGHT
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH VIVIAN WESSON. HER
HISTORIC TEACHING AND PIONEERING
SERVICES PARTICULARLY IN TOGO AND
LIBERIA HAVE LEFT GLEAMING
EXAMPLE UNWAVERING DEVOTION
CAUSE GOD. FERVENTLY PRAYING
HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HER
ILLUMINED SOUL ABHÁ REALM.

*Adapted in part from an article
by Deborah Shaffer and from
information provided by Roger Dahl
and Gwendolyn Etter-Lewis*

VUK ECHTNER
1905-1994

The name of Vuk Echtner is familiar not only to many Bahá'í friends in the Czech and Slovak Republics and in Austria to whom he imparted a knowledge of the Faith; not only to the people of Domažlice (Czech Republic), where the local press seldom missed an opportunity to congratulate its distinguished native;



Vuk Echtner

not only to the blind and visually impaired for whom he prepared more than fifty textbooks printed by the State Pedagogic Publishers; not only to the innumerable Europeans he came to know thanks to his outstanding linguistic talents and the six languages he had mastered; but also to countless Esperantists around the world with whom he became a friend.

The Universal House of Justice, after it learned that his soul had ascended to the realm on high, wrote on February 6, 1994, to the Regional Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Czech and Slovak Republics:

DEEPLY GRIEVED TO LEARN OF RECENT PASSING OF VUK ECHTNER, STALWART SERVANT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AND ONE OF FIRST TO EMBRACE HIS CAUSE CZECHOSLOVAKIA. WE REFLECT WITH ADMIRATION UPON HIS ILLUSTRIOUS SERVICES SPANNING ONE-HALF CENTURY COMPRISING VALUABLE TRANSLATIONS LITERATURE INTO

CZECH AND EXTENSIVE PROCLAMATION FAITH IN CONJUNCTION HIS WORK AS ESPERANTIST. HE CONTRIBUTED IMMEASURABLY TO CONSOLIDATION BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY DURING ITS EARLIEST STAGES THAT COUNTRY AND REMAINED STEADFAST THROUGHOUT HARDSHIP, INCLUDING TWO-YEAR INCARCERATION LATE FIFTIES FOR HIS BELIEFS. CONFIDENT HIS SACRIFICES WILL BE ABUNDANTLY REWARDED IN ABHÁ KINGDOM AND WILL DRAW UNTOLD BLESSINGS ON FOLLOWERS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH IN CZECH AND SLOVAK REPUBLICS.

KINDLY ASSURE HIS DEAR WIFE AND TWO CHILDREN OUR SUPPLICATIONS AT SACRED THRESHOLD FOR THE EXALTATION OF HIS SOUL IN ALL THE WORLDS OF GOD AND FOR THE ALLEVIATION OF THEIR SORROW AT THIS TIME OF LOSS.

Vuk was born on July 10, 1905, in southern Bohemia (Poběžovice) as one of ten children in a working-class family. He learned of the Bahá'í Faith from the well-known pacifist Jindřiška Wurmová when he was seventeen. Jindřiška's son, for whom streets are named in Brno and Olomouc, was one of the first Czech Bahá'ís.

In 1925, *La Nova Tago* (The New Day), the international Bahá'í Esperanto gazette was launched, founded by Friedrich Gerstner and Hermann Grossman in Hamburg, Germany. Vuk was among its contributors along with Martha Root, Lidia Zamenhof, John Esslemont, Adelbert Mühlischlegel, and Auguste Forel. When Lidia began to translate *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* into Esperanto, Vuk assisted her. Photographs and newspaper articles of the time testify to his work with these

luminaries of the Bahá'í and Esperantist worlds.

Vuk is also credited with organizing an international symposium in Prague in 1927, the theme of which was "Peace Through Instruction." Held at Charles University it was attended by Edvard Beneš, then foreign minister.

His life was characterized by a multiplicity of activities. For sixty-five years he collaborated with the Esperanto Museum in Vienna, and for forty-seven years (1928-1975) he was chief editor of *Aurora*, the Esperanto journal for the blind. Of his work with the visually impaired he wrote, "My work for the blind is 'word and deed devoted to the Glory of God and the good of one's fellows,'" citing the Czech edition of *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*.⁷¹

At the age of fifty he completed his studies at the Pedagogic Academy in night classes and taught at the famed Jan Deyl Conservatory and Secondary School for the Visually Impaired in Prague. He also created a Czech-Esperanto braille dictionary.

For many years Vuk was in contact with the eminent Czech orientalists Dr. Sommer, Dr. Ivo Spoutil, and Dr. Vincenc Lesny.⁷² The latter is a noted indologist often quoted in the Czech media today and by whom tributes about our Faith were penned. Vuk was also a friend of Dr. Jan

Rypka,⁷³ dean of Charles University in Prague, a recipient of a letter from Shoghi Effendi, and a person who had met many Bahá'ís and who, in 1948, had written an article entitled "My Bahá'í Friends."⁷⁴

The Communist regime was particularly repressive during the 1950s, and from 1951 Vuk had been a target because of his Faith and his work with the Esperantists. He was imprisoned for these "enemy activities" in 1956 and was given amnesty two years later. During his incarceration he transcribed twenty-two textbooks from various languages into braille. Over the course of his life, he transcribed a total of fifty-two textbooks into braille.

He was again in contact with the Austrian Bahá'í community in 1985, and during the Riḍván period of 1989 he was visited by Bahá'í friends from Austria for the first time in many years. In the course of later visits, a two-hour video was made with the Echtner family. It was a particular joy for him to meet Bahá'í friends from all over the world during the opening of the Townshend International School in Hluboká, and it seemed to his wife as if he had been rejuvenated, although on his return home his legs failed him.

Vuk was an example of constancy and steadfastness to many. He gave his visitors an inkling of the spiritual nobility of which 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke. Despite his physical infirmities he had a very clear vision, was well read, and well informed, even in his advanced age.

He strove for perfection. He used to recount that when he was editing the Czech Bahá'í-News, *Bahjské sešity*, he used to count the letters for a long time so that the verses

⁷¹ Dr. J. E. Esslemont, *Bahá'u'lláh a nova doba*, p. 91. *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, p. 112. "Bahá'í prayer is not, however, confined to the use of prescribed forms, important as those are. Bahá'u'lláh teaches that one's whole life should be a prayer; that work done in the right spirit is worship; that every thought, word, and deed devoted to the Glory of God and the good of one's fellows is prayer, in the truest sense of the word."

⁷² Director of the Oriental Institute in Prague, 1945-52. For his tribute see "Appreciations of the Bahá'í Faith," *The Bahá'í World*, vol. VIII.

⁷³ Oriental scholar, one of the founders of the Oriental Institute in Prague and a world-recognized expert in Persian and Turkish literature.

⁷⁴ *Novy orient*, vol. III, no. 1, 1948.

of the prayer on the title page would appear exactly in the center. He had qualities of a highly gifted educator complemented by forbearance and gentleness. Few of the Bahá'í friends who met him will forget his touching "Alláh-u-Abhá."

Vuk Echtner quietly passed away on January 20, 1994, in the eighty-eighth year of his life. On his bedside table his relatives found the Czech Bahá'í prayer book, which had been published in Austria in 1981. His wife, Antonie, who had supported him throughout their eventful life together, died shortly after on February 11, 1994, at the age of eighty-four.

Adapted in part from a translation of an article written in German by Hana Sodeyfi

AUDREY CAMERON

CA.1923-1994

Audrey Cameron was born in Golders Green, London. Her father, Jules, was of White Russian [eastern Belarusian] descent, a musical director and violinist. Her mother, Grace, a pianist, was of Polish aristocracy. Both parents were Jewish, although neither was Orthodox, and her grandfather had been a rabbi.

The family moved a great deal as both parents were musicians touring the country. The two greatest loves of their lives were their two daughters and music. In time Audrey turned to the dramatic arts, becoming a talented and successful actress. She toured with a repertory theater, appearing in many plays including *Peg O' My Heart* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*, having a leading role in the latter. It was while she was in repertory theatre in Halifax, Yorkshire, appearing in *Deep are the Roots*, that she met her husband-to-be, Earl Cameron, a Bermudian who was starring in that play. They married in 1955, and in 1956 their first

child, Jane, was born. The births of Simon, Helen, Serena, and Philippa followed over the course of the next ten years.

In 1963, having met a Bahá'í visiting from Bermuda who had arrived in London to attend the World Congress, Audrey and Earl declared their faith in Bahá'u'lláh, and from that moment they devoted themselves to its promotion. Audrey taught Bahá'í children's classes for many years at the Bahá'í Centre in London. In 1965 she served as secretary of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Kensington and Chelsea.

In 1968 the Camerons pioneered on the homefront to Ealing, where Audrey served as secretary of the Local Assembly for eight years. She also served as secretary of the Personal Consultative Committee during that time. Regular firesides were held at the Cameron home on Friday evenings attended by large numbers of Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís alike, and there were many declarations enabling the Ealing Borough community to grow and strengthen.

In 1976 the family moved again to Welwyn-Hatfield on the outskirts of



Audrey Cameron

London where another community was strengthened; there had been only three Bahá'ís in the area. The Cameron family remained in Welwyn-Hatfield for another three years, hosting regular firesides and meeting Bahá'ís visiting from all corners of the world. Here they met believers from the Solomon Islands.

Assured of the importance of pioneering to the islands of the Pacific, the Cameron family was on the move again, greatly encouraged by Counsellor Suhayl 'Alá'í. Earl visited the Solomon Islands in 1979 and explored the possibilities of earning a livelihood there. They purchased an ice cream business, made possible through the sale of their house in England, and in 1980 Audrey was once again secretary of a Local Spiritual Assembly—this time in Honiara, the capital of the Solomon Islands.

She and Earl continued tirelessly to teach the Faith, traveling together in a pickup truck to the outlying villages, often under very difficult circumstances, yet with unflagging good humor, the spirit of sacrifice, and a love of Bahá'u'lláh. Audrey continued to help those needing her assistance, and when she heard that a fellow Bahá'í required an architect to work in his office, she remembered another friend in the UK community who was an architect. She wrote to him. Not only did he pioneer to the Solomon Islands, but he has remained there until the time of this writing.

In 1989 she regretfully left the Solomon Islands to be with her daughter Philippa who was in the last years of her education at drama school in London. She returned to Ealing, a place where she had acquired many fond memories, and there she settled happily into community life.

Two years later she discovered that she had cancer that eventually confined her to bed. Nevertheless her strong resolve and determination remained undiminished.

Her radiance and loving spirit continued to shine despite the pain. She was finally forced to hospitalization and subsequently passed away peacefully on January 27, 1994. A memorial service was held for Audrey in her beloved Ealing, attended by numerous friends and relatives. The following message, dated February 1, 1994, was received from the Universal House of Justice:

Saddened news passing dearly loved maidservant Bahá'u'lláh, Audrey Cameron. With great devotion and a loving and selfless spirit she served the Cause in Britain and in the Solomon Islands where she pioneered along with her family. Assure prayers Holy Shrines progress her soul. Convey loving sympathy beloved husband and family.

RACHEL LEI CHAPMAN

1935-1994

Lei Chapman, the first native Hawaiian to serve on a Bahá'í National Assembly, was born in Honolulu in 1935. Her father, William Coleman, was of Samoan-Irish lineage and a member of a large family that included in its number Peter Coleman, territorial governor of the Mariana Islands and later governor of American Samoa. Her mother, Malia, was Hawaiian-Chinese. Lei attended Punahou School in Honolulu, Centenary College for Women, and later the University of Oregon.

She married Hugh Chapman, and they settled in the village of Volcano on the Big Island when Hugh completed his tour of duty with the US Navy. They had the intention of starting a new congregation of the United Church of Christ. Then they met Joan and Norman Ives who invited them to a fireside being given by Maury and Lois



Rachel Lei Chapman

Willows.⁷⁵ Lei's acceptance of Bahá'u'lláh was almost instantaneous. After a period of painful soul-searching, Hugh's doubts vanished, and together they informed the main chapter of the Church of Christ of their new-found faith.

Both Hugh and Lei were elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Hawaiian Islands in 1964. Hugh served as its chairman and Lei as corresponding secretary.

Later they pioneered to Tarawa (Kiribati) in the Gilbert Islands with their three children. When the children outgrew the available schools, the family returned to Honolulu. Hugh was reelected to the National Assembly, and Lei served on the Rural Teaching Committee, which was establishing the first Bahá'í community in Waianae.

Lei had a remarkable singing voice and a gentle way of teaching, qualities that kept her in demand for Bahá'í events.

⁷⁵ See Maurice Willows, pp. 274-77.

In the early 1970s Hugh was working for the Federal Aviation Administration, which transferred him to Alaska, first to King Salmon and later to Anchorage. Mass teaching was in full swing, and the Chapman family was quickly committed to the campaigns. Their home became an open-door training center, a dormitory, and a shower and laundry facility for itinerant teaching teams. Lei became the secretary of the National Teaching Committee during this time of intensive growth. Later she became director of the institute program⁷⁶ taking up the responsibilities of planning, supervising, and carrying out deepening projects throughout the state.

She gave a presentation on the station of women at the International Bahá'í Circumpolar Conference in Anchorage in 1976, and she was the first woman to serve as chairman of the National Bahá'í Convention in Alaska. A friend recalls, "Oh, what a song-filled Convention that was!"

Early in 1976 Hugh suffered a stroke and was given medical retirement. Lei resigned from the National Assembly,⁷⁷ and the Chapmans moved to a less severe climate on the US West Coast. When Hugh passed away Lei returned to her family's home on the island of Oahu, Hawaii. After her husband's death she suffered a mental illness which estranged her from active participation in the activities of her Faith. She died in Oahu on February 7, 1994. On that day the Universal House of Justice wrote to the National Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Hawaiian Islands:

OFFERING LOVING PRAYERS HOLY
SHRINES PROGRESS SOUL RACHEL

⁷⁶ Not to be confused with the institutes of the 1996-2011 plans.

⁷⁷ Lei was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska in the fall of 1973 and resigned after the Convention in 1976.

LEI CHAPMAN. HER DEVOTED SERVICES HAWAII AND ALASKA FONDLY REMEMBERED.

*Based in part on an article
written by Elena Marsella*

FEREYDOUN KHAZRAI
Knight of Bahá'u'lláh
1914-1994

SHARE YOUR SENSE LOSS IN PASSING
KNIGHT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH ROMANIA
FEREYDOUN KHAZRAI, STALWART
FOLLOWER BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AND
DEVOTED SERVANT HIS CAUSE.

RECALL WITH DEEP APPRECIATION
HIS PERSERVERANCE, WITH SUP-
PORT HIS DEAR WIFE, ARECLA, AT
PIONEER POST ROMANIA.

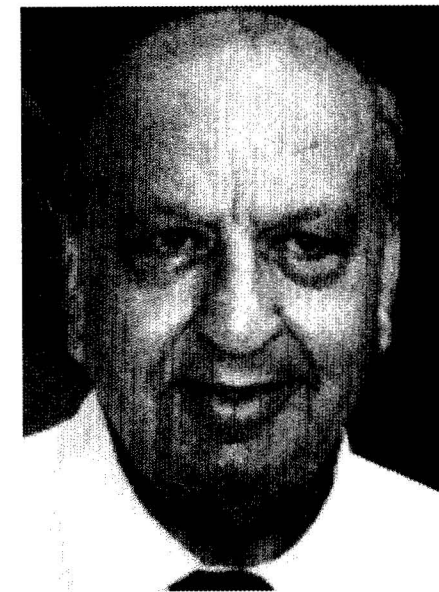
KINDLY CONVEY LOVING SYMPA-
THY MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY, AND
ASSURANCE FERVENT PRAYERS
HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS
RADIANT SOUL.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ROMANIA
BEING ADVISED HOLD NATIONAL
MEMORIAL GATHERING.

Universal House of Justice
February 22, 1994

Fereydoun Khazrai was born on Naw-Rúz 1914 (March 20, after sunset) in Sabzevár, Iran, to Moghadan 'Azízu'lláh Khazrai and Tahereh Parvíní. He was a grandson of Mullá 'Alíy-i-Sabzevári, one of the seven martyrs of Yazd. At birth he was given the name Parvíz, and when 'Abdu'l-Bahá learned of this, he is reported to have said, "Parvíz was not at all a just king. He would be better named Fereydoun."

In 1927 his parents sent Fereydoun and his brother to Europe to be educated. World War II forced them to return to Iran,



Fereydoun Khazrai

and from 1940 to 1946 Fereydoun worked with his father, a well-known merchant. By the time of his return he had forgotten his religious heritage, and he felt no adherence to the Faith.

At the end of the war Fereydoun moved to Paris, and in 1950 he was wed to Parvine Ansari, a direct descendent of Mírzá Sa'íd Khan, Minister of Foreign Affairs in the time of Bahá'u'lláh. Two children were born of this marriage—the first, a boy, lived but one week.

Fereydoun moved to Rome in 1952, where he established a business dubbing the sound tracks of American and Italian films into Farsi. He often went to the Embassy of Iran to visit a friend of his father-in-law, a consular official and chargé d'affaires. During a reception at the embassy, he met the distinguished scholar Alessandro Bausani.⁷⁸ Fereydoun did not know in whose presence he was at the

⁷⁸ See "In Memoriam," *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XX, pp. 895-96.

time, and after Professor Bausani left the embassy, the chargé d'affaires said, "He has become a Bahá'í," and uttered some insults. Fereydoun later met Dr. Bausani on several other occasions and enjoyed a pleasant relationship with him.

One night after having retired to his bed, he thought to himself, "My God. I don't know anyone to whom I can turn and ask, 'Is this story of the Bahá'ís true or false? I would so much like to know the truth!'" He fell asleep and dreamed. Fereydoun writes:

I dreamed that I had come to an immense garden but I did not enter. Much was hidden from my view, but I saw, at the end of a path, a dervish sitting and playing with pebbles. I began to approach him and a voice directed me saying, "Ask him concerning the matters that trouble you." When I was close enough to him, I spoke to him with respect and asked, "Are they not true, [Siyyid] 'Alí-Muḥammad and Mírzá Ḥusayn-'Alí [The Báb and Bahá'u'lláh]?" Continuing to play with the stones, the dervish raised his head, looked at me and said, "Their truths are like the things in my fist." He then opened his hand and there I saw a large diamond and an emerald, sparkling in his palm. The vision woke me and I wept unceasingly. I wept and moaned so much that I woke my wife who asked me if I was ill. I tried to quiet myself. The vision was so sudden and the response so peremptory that I could neither hold back my tears nor believe its veracity. At that moment I decided to become a Bahá'í, convinced that God was closer to me than my life-vein.⁷⁹ It

is enough to be sincere in our search for God for us to find Him, by whatever means, as long as the desire is enkindled within us.

A month after having the dream Fereydoun departed for Iran to give the news to his mother. When he arrived in Tīhrán, his sisters told him that she was in another town. He sent a telegraph to her, telling her to return immediately.

How many times had she begged me to make my declaration and I always refused! I told her of the change I had undergone, but she did not believe me. Only after sharing with her the story of my prayer and my dream did she accept what I was saying and offer thanks to Bahá'u'lláh. I asked for books so that I could deepen my knowledge of the Teachings. Acting on my mother's advice, I went to find Mr. Furútan who was then secretary of the National Assembly of Iran. I went to the Bahá'í Center at 6 AM and waited. I walked the paths about the Ḥazírat'ul-Quds and Mr. Furútan arrived about a half hour later followed by a dozen people. He saw me from afar and was very surprised. He knew the story of my family well. He asked me, "What are you doing here!" I smiled at him and with respect said, "I have come to enrol," and he led me to his office.

The following evening Fereydoun met with the Local Assembly of Tīhrán and was admitted into the Faith. Fereydoun returned to Italy, met with the Hand of the Cause Mr. Ugo Giachery, and attended his first Bahá'í event in Rome, the commemoration of the Martyrdom of the Báb. About this time, when many changes were transpiring in his life, his marriage dissolved.

Fereydoun lived in Rome from 1952 to 1961 and served on the Local Assembly and on its Reception Committee, often rising at 2 or 3 AM to meet someone at the airport. His mother visited him, and with the encouragement of Mr. Giachery, she decided to apply for pilgrimage. This gave Fereydoun the inspiration of applying as well, and in the latter months of 1956 the Guardian invited him to come.

Of his time in the Holy Land Fereydoun wrote:

One day during my pilgrimage, the Guardian spoke with enthusiasm and spontaneity of the countries of the East and those behind the Iron Curtain and, as if the words were being taken out of my mouth, I interrupted him and asked if I would have the privilege of going there.

This awkward interruption startled the other pilgrims, but the Guardian calmly repeated, "Try and you will succeed! Try and you will succeed!" And then he continued his talk. I was left in a dream and hardly knew where I was, or who had spoken to me. When I came to myself, I found myself in the company of the others in the Shrine of the Báb. I listened as the Guardian chanted the Prayer of Visitation. The prayer over, he went out and I was obliged to follow. The others remained in the Sacred Shrine.

Outside the Guardian asked me, in a friendly tone, if I would like to participate in the great Crusade. I was again speechless. Not a word would leave my mouth. With my habitual bad luck I knew that I would not succeed. As I hesitated, he posed his question again, but with a bit more impatience. I lost my train of thought and the command of my tongue, and yet I wanted

to explain my bad luck and the slips of my tongue. "If I have the dignity for this," I said, although I wanted to say that I hardly qualified for this honor. The Guardian waited for me to explain and grimaced. "Dignity?" he repeated after me. Then he recalled his earlier statement to me, "Try and you will succeed! Try and you will succeed!"

On the day of farewell, Dr. Hakim accompanied me to the house of the Guardian to say our goodbyes . . . The Guardian gave me his recommendations. "You are going to leave for Tīhrán. Put your affairs in order and return to Rome from where you will begin your pioneering career. In Tīhrán, speak to no one of this matter. It is in Rome that you will make your application to enter Romania as a pioneer. After, you will return here like Mr. Banání, Mr. Faizí, Dr. Muḥájir, a conquering victor."

In 1968 Fereydoun went to Romania, remaining there until 1981. He wrote:

I never found work in Romania, nor was I able to conduct commercial transactions. I struggled for three years to secure a resident's visa, during which time I had to return to Rome each month to get temporary visas . . . To get the authorization of marriage, one had to apply to the President of the Republic, an easy enough thing, since Romania had excellent relations with the Embassy of Iran. But for the administrative formalities, I had to go to the secret police. They asked me to collaborate with them by making regular reports of all cocktail and reception discussions between visitors and members of the embassy. I refused on principle. They responded by threatening me. They said that one day I would

⁷⁹ *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, sec. XCIII.

return to them on bended knee asking for their help and then they would have their revenge.

Fereydoun married in the late 1960s, and his wife, Arecla (Spulber), became the first Romanian Bahá'í. They had three children: a son, Aziz-Georges, and two daughters, Tahereh-Hortense and Marie Bahieh.

Their residence, like those of the other foreigners, had its telephone tapped, and their every movement was monitored. Anne Marie Krüger, granddaughter of Dr. Auguste Forel and secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany, and Miss Doris Katzenstein, also of Germany, were the first to realize such strict surveillance.

In this difficult environment Fereydoun seized every opportunity to talk of the Faith. It was a great joy when two medical students and their mother from Tâgumureş accepted the Faith. They endured pressure and persecution by the secret police until threats on the part of the Faculty of Medicine ordered them to break their relations with the Khazrais and to never see them again. The Romanians who were allowed to visit the Khazrais were those who were approved by the secret police.

In 1972 the vice president of the Iranian senate, and the owner of the largest newspaper and magazine business in Iran, was invited to Romania. He introduced Fereydoun to the director of the press as a representative of his newspaper, *ETTELAAT*, and Fereydoun was officially accredited as a foreign journalist. A few years later he was in the employ of the Iranian Embassy in Bucharest. Fereydoun wrote:

During an official visit, Amír-Abbás Hoveyda, Prime Minister of Iran, met with me to persuade me to leave Romania and to accept an important post in Germany. During a reception held in his honor, he continued to press

his offer. At that time I was receiving a rather insignificant salary from the embassy in Bucharest. When I refused the offer, the Prime Minister admitted, "You are surely a fool. I do not understand [your refusal]. If you change your mind, come and see me at my hotel."

Fereydoun was grateful. Foreigners officially representing their governments were usually posted for about two years; five years was the maximum. Fereydoun felt that the government had officially granted him the privilege of promoting the Faith, remaining in Romania for thirteen years—truly a miracle.

In 1979 the Sháh of Iran was dethroned, and Fereydoun lost his position with the embassy. He and Arecla remained in Bucharest in the hope that the political situation in Iran would change. In March of 1981 he lost his second post—that of foreign journalist, and even though he had not been paid since the revolution, the authorization had allowed them to stay in Romania. The Ministry of the Interior sent two policemen to their house to inform them that they were "persona non grata" and that they had twenty-four hours to leave the country.

They spent the next year in Germany. With the encouragement of the Universal House of Justice, they then pioneered to Strasbourg, which was then a goal of the National Assembly of France. Soon there were declarations, and a month later the National Assembly chose for them the goal of Lille, where a Local Assembly was formed in 1983.

The fall of the Iron Curtain and the revolution, which toppled the regime in 1989, restored their hopes of returning to Romania, and they decided to sell their house to raise the capital needed to establish a business there. This attempt was among

many efforts they made for a permanent return to Romania. All were unsuccessful. "He, verily, doeth what He willeth, and ordaineth that which He pleaseth."⁸⁰

At Riḍván 1991 Fereydoun and Arecla were invited to attend the election of the first National Spiritual Assembly of Romania. Fereydoun addressed the Convention, "My dear friends. We were forced to leave Romania in 1981 and today I live in material comfort in France, but know that since that day I have been unhappy because my heart remains in Romania." He then began to weep. He was also overwhelmed by the success of the Faith in the country, which then numbered more than six thousand Bahá'ís. They remained a month, traveling among the towns and villages, visiting the Bahá'ís and participating in teaching campaigns.

In 1992 Fereydoun attended the gathering of the Knights of Bahá'u'lláh in Haifa for the Commemoration of the Centenary of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh. In December of that year, in spite of a number of heart attacks and the debilitating effects of diabetes, he traveled once more to Romania, again with the hope of finding a solution for their permanent return. During this trip he experienced another heart attack, and the friends encouraged him to quickly return to France.

Fereydoun's health had suffered from the time of his forced departure from Romania. In 1984 he underwent open-heart surgery, and his convalescence was prolonged. In December 1993 he was again hospitalized in Lille, and his treatment was complicated by a serious pulmonary infection. He recovered somewhat but had to be readmitted in February. Subsequent interventions were unsuccessful, and he passed

to the Abhá Kingdom on February 14, 1994. In his testament Fereydoun had written:

How happy I am to have come into this world in this fertile century of divine spirituality. My children, my friends, work for the progress of the Cause of God. You will receive your fair reward.

Adapted from a manuscript written in French by Arecla Khazrai which draws substantially from the memoirs of Fereydoun Khazrai

DAVID MAURICE MAYBERRY 1908—1994

DEEPLY SADDENED PASSING DAVID MAYBERRY DEVOTED DEARLY LOVED SERVANT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH. HIS INVALUABLE EFFORTS AS PIONEER MEXICO ALONG WITH HIS WIFE FLORENCE, HIS READY CONSTANT SUPPORT WHICH FACILITATED HER WORK AS BOTH CONTINENTAL AND INTERNATIONAL COUNSELLOR AND HIS SERVICES WORLD CENTRE GRATEFULLY REMEMBERED. FERVENTLY PRAYING HOLY THRESHOLD PROGRESS HIS NOBLE SOUL AND FOR CONSOLATION MEMBERS HIS FAMILY.

Universal House of Justice
February 18, 1994

David Maurice Mayberry in company with his wife Florence became a Bahá'í in May 1941. Almost immediately they were joined by Florence's mother, brother, and sister-in-law. When the first Local Spiritual Assembly in the state of Nevada was formed, David was elected chairman.

David was born on April 4, 1908, in Provo, Utah, the youngest of ten children born to John and Frances Mayberry. His

⁸⁰ *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 116.



David Maurice Mayberry

father passed away shortly before his birth, leaving him to be reared by his courageous mother and older siblings. Both of David's parents came from a background of Mormonism. David was never Mormon and even as a child was troubled and confused by divisions in religious beliefs. An unusually bright child and a natural student, he grew up maintaining independent and questioning attitudes regarding life's choices.

Following his graduation from high school (the only one of his family to achieve this), David took a civil service examination, passed with high marks, and was offered a position with the US Post Office Department in Washington DC. To him this was a great financial accomplishment enabling him to send monthly support to his mother and to help her construct a new modern home.

In the early 1930s he transferred from Washington DC to the Reno, Nevada, Post Office to be near family members. In Reno he was selected as civil service secretary for

Nevada; he simultaneously became the secretary to the postmaster and secretary for the postal inspector. Later he became foreman of the Reno Post Office.

In 1936 he met Florence, and they were married after a six-week courtship—a marriage destined to endure for fifty-eight wonderful years. Soon after the birth of their son, Michael David, in 1945, David moved his family to Southern California. There he entered business life, establishing a masonry building materials company.

It was in Southern California that David's constant and selfless support of his wife's steadily increasing services as a traveling teacher for the Bahá'í Faith had its true beginning. His support was openhearted and never-failing. David was a witty, clear-thinking expounder of the Faith, but he preferred to speak from the sidelines, his clever sense of humor inducing laughter and warm friendliness. He never traveled with his wife on her lengthy trips as he desired to remain at home to tend his business and to share the loving and watchful care of his son with his mother-in-law.

In 1954 Florence was appointed an Auxiliary Board member when that institution was established. With the large area of western Canada and the western United States (including Hawaii and Alaska) assigned to her, her travel increased considerably.

In 1961 the Mayberrys decided to pioneer to Mexico. David sold his business, and they moved to Guadalajara. His wife's assigned area now became all of Central America as well as Mexico. Eventually David was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of Mexico. However, he was soon forced to return to Southern California to reassume the ownership of the business he had established. The purchaser had become severely handicapped by a long-term, debilitating illness. Back in California David

faced the difficult job of rebuilding the business.

In 1968 the Universal House of Justice appointed the Continental Counsellors to carry on the propagation and protection obligations of the Hands of the Cause of God. David's wife was appointed one of the North American Counsellors. He was delighted by this honor and assumed additional domestic obligations.

In 1973 the International Teaching Centre was established by the Universal House of Justice. Its membership comprised the Hands of the Cause of God and at that time three Counsellors, Hooper Dunbar, 'Azíz Yazdí, and Florence Mayberry.

To David, this honor bestowed upon his wife, together with her earlier appointments, was the fulfillment of a prayer he had offered one lonely, arid, and frightening night after doctors had informed him that Florence was near death, suffering from a severe case of peritonitis. His prayer was that if God would permit her to live, he would help ensure that she would be free to serve the Cause of God all the days of her life. He did not tell her of his prayer until much later. When he did, he said, "Please serve as much as you are able; don't think of me, just help me fulfill that promise!"

When Florence was appointed a member of the International Teaching Centre, David's response was one of surprise and delight: "Well, guess that means I'll have to sell the business again," which he promptly did. He joined her at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, where he served in the Finance Department. Unfortunately his health began a downward slide, and within a few years he was forced to retire and return to the States. Florence later joined him as her own health began to deteriorate. They settled in the Missouri Ozarks. There he valiantly continued his unflin-

support of his wife's continuing teaching commitments and travel.

On February 15, 1994, David died, a victim of heart failure and emphysema. At the moment of death he whispered to his wife, "I never dreamed I could be so happy, so happy with you here beside me, all those around . . ." The "all those" physically around him were his son Michael and his three grandsons, David Mark, Michael Richard, and Timothy Maurice, as well as close friends. But in her imagination his wife could sense unseen throngs of greeting souls already laughing at one of David's witticisms as they welcomed him to his new life.

*Florence Mayberry and
Timothy Maurice Mayberry*

SOSIPATERI MALINGA ISIMAI 1931–1994

GRIEVE PASSING MY DEAR FRIEND
SOSIPATERI ISIMAI, ONE OF UGANDA'S
EARLIEST BELIEVERS AND
ONE OF THE FIRST GROUP TO



Sosipateri Malinga Isimai

ACCEPT THE FAITH IN TESO. HIS LONG AND DEVOTED SERVICES TO THE CAUSE OF GOD IN AFRICA WILL FOREVER BE REMEMBERED WITH PRIDE AND AFFECTION BY THE UGANDAN FOLLOWERS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH. I REMEMBER MY STAY IN TILLING IN HIS HOME IN 1961 AND OUR MANY MEETINGS TOGETHER OVER THE YEARS. HIS CONSTANT DEVOTION TO MASS TEACHING THAT OTHERS MIGHT SHARE THE BOUNTY OF BEING A FOLLOWER OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, HIS VALUABLE SERVICES AS ONE OF THE INAUGURAL MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF UGANDA, HIS LONG SERVICES ON THAT AND OTHER BAHÁ'Í BODIES, HIS UNFAILING COURTESY, HELPFULNESS AND DEVOTION TO THE INTERESTS OF OUR BELOVED FAITH, HIS LOYALTY TO THE GUARDIAN OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH SHOGHI EFFENDI AND LATER TO ITS SUPREME BODY THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE WILL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN. KINDLY EXPRESS TO HIS RELATIVES MY DEEP SYMPATHY ON LOSING THIS DISTINGUISHED MEMBER OF THEIR FAMILY, ESPECIALLY TO HIS DEAR WIFE AND CHILDREN, AND ASSURE THEM OF MY LOVING PRAYERS FOR THE PROGRESS OF HIS SOUL IN THE ABHÁ KINGDOM.

Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum

Sosipateri Malinga Isimai was born in 1931 in the village of Tilling, in the former Teso District⁸¹ of Uganda. His parents were Malinga Isiriamai Musa and Asanasi Agwang. His maternal grandmother was

a half sister to Mr. Samusan Okadakina, the father of the late Hand of the Cause of God Mr. Enoch Olinga. It was therefore common for Mr. Olinga to informally call Mr. Isimai *esapat* (boy of my sister).

Mr. Isimai began his formal education in a primary two class at Kobuin, having been taught the primary one work at home by Mr. Olinga. Later he went to the Ngora Junior School. As a Catholic he became a lay reader in Akarukei Parish after leaving school.

In the mid-1940s he enrolled to fight in the Second World War. He did not stay long and returned home to become a farmer. He joined the cooperative movement and became a clerk in one of the major cotton stores in Abakuli, Ngora. It was probably at this time that he became a Protestant.

The youth of those days spent much of their energy consuming the local drink of the Iteso called *ajon* (wisdom of Iteso). At times even their labor could be paid for with an offer of the drink. The youth also enjoyed going to dances where the tunes were played on gramophones.

This was the situation up to 1952 when one day Mr. Olinga, who had been their good companion, returned from Kampala and declined to join in their drinking. The youth were surprised to see a remarkable change in his character. With eloquence he told them of a new religion he had accepted called Bahá'í. Mr. Isimai listened and was one of the first in that group to declare his faith. This was his turning point. Thereafter the village of Tilling became a center of intense Bahá'í activities. With early pioneers 'Alí Nakhjavání and Philip Hainsworth, he and a handful of other youth taught the Faith, and their efforts resulted in mass enrollments.

In 1953 Mr. Isimai attended the Intercontinental Conference held in

Kampala that launched the Ten Year Crusade. He was among the several people who arose to teach further afield. With only a bicycle as his means of transport, he embarked on teaching trips in the Teso District, before moving on to several other districts in northern Uganda and continuing to parts of southern Sudan. He then entered western Congo. Because relations between the Congo and Uganda were strained at the time, Mr. Isimai was under considerable risk.

He became a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of East and Central Africa in 1956 and also served on various national and local committees. In 1963 Mr. Isimai participated in the election of the first Universal House of Justice in Haifa and attended the first Bahá'í World Congress in the Royal Albert Hall in London.

He became secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly in 1964, a position he held for more than twenty years. Despite occasions of turmoil in the country he continued to steadfastly guide the secretariat. In September 1977 when the Bahá'í Faith and other religions were banned in Uganda, he and the Hand of the Cause of God Mr. Enoch Olinga remained to care for the Bahá'í Temple grounds at Kikaaya Hill near Kampala. While he was residing there, many people, both Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís, enjoyed his hospitality. In late 1978 he was unable to stay, and he left Mr. Olinga alone as caretaker. In September of the following year Mr. Olinga and his family were killed in Kampala by uniformed gunmen.

Mr. Isimai was an executor of Mr. Olinga's will. This was a very trying time for him because culturally the relatives at home thought they had rights to install themselves on Mr. Olinga's property. At one time a brother of the late Hand of the Cause filed a court suit for the property. Mr. Isimai, through love and patience,

saw the withdrawal of the suit and the restoration of amiable working relations.

He was married to Lois Aanyu (Isimai) with whom he begot nine children.

During the early 1990s, though he was no longer the secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly, he was allowed to stay on the Temple grounds because of the activities of insurgents at home. When the situation stabilized, he moved home and concentrated again on farming activities.

Sometime in early 1993 he suffered an upset stomach during a meeting of the National Assembly. His health continued to deteriorate, but he did not give up the work of the Faith. Even in poor health he served as the chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly. Doctors later diagnosed him as having kidney problems. Mr. Isimai passed away at Mbale Hospital on February 19, 1994, and was laid to rest in Tilling the following day.

Mr. Isimai could remember events that happened long ago and told humorous stories about them. He particularly enjoyed relating the challenges and difficulties the friends encountered during the early days of the Faith in Uganda. His listeners were captivated by his stories, and wherever he was, up until his last days, there was laughter.

On February 21, 1994, the Universal House of Justice honored his memory:

DEEPLY SADDENED PASSING
STAUNCH SERVANT BLESSED
BEAUTY SOSIPATERI ISIMAL. HIS
DEDICATED EFFORTS IN PROMO-
TION GOD'S HOLY CAUSE OVER
A PERIOD OF MORE THAN FOUR
DECADES, ON NATIONAL AND
LOCAL LEVELS, IN BOTH TEACH-
ING AND ADMINISTRATIVE FIELDS,
WILL ALWAYS BE LOVINGLY REMEM-
BERED. OWING HIS OUTSTANDING

⁸¹ Presently the Kumi District.

NATIONAL SERVICES ADVISE HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERING IN TEMPLE TO HONOUR HIS NAME. ASSURE FERVENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS NOBLE SOUL. ASSURE HIS BELOVED WIFE, DEAR CHILDREN, OTHER RELATIVES DEEP LOVING SYMPATHY.

HOUSHMAND ANVARI
1950-1994

SHAMAM BAKHSHANDEGI
1965-1994

RIAZ RAZAVI
1950-1994

SHOCKED GRIEVED NEWS VIOLENT DEATH HOUSHMAND ANVARI, SHAMAM BAKHSHANDEGI AND RIAZ RAZAVI IN CISKEI. PROFOUNDLY IMPRESSED STERLING EXAMPLE SET BY THEIR DEDICATION CAUSE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH IN WHOSE SERVICE THEY WERE DIRECTLY ENGAGED WHEN STRUCK DOWN BY ASSASSINS' BULLETS. DEEPLY SYMPATHIZE IRREPARABLE LOSS THEIR DEAR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS. MAY ALL HEARTS BE COMFORTED BY PROMISE BLESSED BEAUTY THAT THEY THAT HAVE FORSAKEN THEIR COUNTRY IN PATH GOD AND SUBSEQUENTLY ASCENDED UNTO HIS PRESENCE SHALL BE BLESSED BY CONCOURSE ON HIGH AND THEIR NAMES RECORDED BY PEN GLORY AMONG SUCH AS HAVE LAID DOWN THEIR LIVES AS MARTYRS PATH GOD. CONFIDENT JOYOUS WELCOME ABHÁ KINGDOM THESE DISTINGUISHED SOULS. ARDENTLY PRAYING HOLY SHRINES THEIR

PROGRESS DIVINE WORLDS. ALSO OFFERING SUPPLICATIONS BEHALF ALL RELATIVES FRIENDS. ADVISE HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERINGS THROUGHOUT SOUTH AFRICA.

Universal House of Justice
March 14, 1994

Three of the Bahá'ís of Ciskei who were eyewitnesses to the occasion shared with the friends the account of what happened on Sunday, March 13, 1994. The three women were members of the National Assembly of Ciskei as well as the Local Assembly of Mdantsane. One of the women, named Tangiwe, explained, "The Spiritual Assembly of Mdantsane had invited these friends [Dr. Shamam Bakhshandegi and Riaz Razavi] to come and consult about the International Year of the Family, to help us select appropriate writings and formulate a plan."

Another woman, Tammy, was first to describe what had happened. She explained that she had come to clean the Mdantsane Bahá'í Centre in preparation for the meeting. She had expected to be the first to arrive, but she found Houshmand Anvari, who acted as caretaker and manager of the Centre, busy painting. There were also several children who had been attending children's classes. Tammy said that Houshmand joked and teased her and the children.

Shamam arrived with a few others. He greeted them saying "Allah'u'Abhá" and shook hands with everyone, including the children. He joked about the meeting, commenting that there were more children than adults.

Then Riaz entered, and after greetings, everyone sat down. They said some prayers together and were singing and waiting for the other Assembly members to arrive when Houshmand came in with his hands

in the air, smiling and doing a little jig. Tammy said she did not realize that a gun was being held to his back. Houshmand continued to joke, but then the four gunmen became very aggressive. They said, "Boers (whites) to one side." The three pioneers very gently and without any fuss got up and stood against the wall away from the local Bahá'ís, Riaz standing in the middle with Shamam on the left and Houshmand on the right. The latter smiled at them continuously, Riaz's lips moved in prayer, and Shamam looked down and then heavenward. No one thought that anything serious was going to happen, perhaps only a robbery.

One of the men went to check the pioneers' pockets. They did this very aggressively, pulling the pockets until they tore, taking money and car keys and throwing documents and other things back at the three believers. The three victims remained calm, giving the impression to the local Bahá'ís that there was no real danger.

The Bahá'ís had been saying Allah'u'Abhá loudly and were told by the gunmen to be quiet, but they carried on as this made the victims smile. Tammy said she covered her face as she was very upset, and then suddenly she heard a single shot followed by a burst of machine gun fire. She said she thought they were all being shot. When the shooting stopped, there was absolute silence. The gunmen fled, taking Riaz's car. They had not taken money or watches.

Tammy said that she opened her eyes to a room filled with smoke and dust and that she rushed out to stop from choking. She then took the children outside and tried to get them over the wall to go and get help, but there were dogs on the other side.

Mrs. Shumi (Esther Nkonzo) continued, "There were four women and nine

children in the room where the incident occurred. Only four of the members of the Assembly were present so we waited for others to come. I remember looking at my watch and it was 11:52 AM. Then everything happened so quickly that we did not realize anything was wrong. When the gunmen came and demanded that we separate, one of the children clung to the leg of one of the pioneers and was roughly pulled away by one of the gunmen. After the first shots were heard, I saw Riaz and Houshmand on the ground and Shamam leaning against the wall and slowly falling down." After the gunmen fled, she went to look at the bodies. She held Houshmand's and Riaz's hands and said that they were dead and that she said prayers for them.

Tammy said, "I came and saw that Shaman was still alive. I held his hand and called to him to squeeze my hand if he could hear and he did. I called for help to get him to hospital. We got him there and the surgeons came running as I shouted, 'Shamam has been shot' and they rushed him to the theatre, but they could not save him." This is the same Cecilia Makhiwane Community Hospital where Shamam and his father, Dr. Amin Bakhshandegi, were practicing dental surgeons. Shamam's colleagues tried their best to save his life. His father was on duty at the time, and he was called to the intensive care unit; by the time he arrived, Shaman had died.

As these friends recounted the incidents, everyone was greatly moved, and the ninety-three-year-old father of Houshmand Anvari stood and gave a short talk, comforting everyone, saying that great blessings had been given by these martyrdoms not only for the families but for South Africa and the Bahá'í Community.

HOUSHMAND ANVARI

Houshmand Alex Anvari was born into a Bahá'í family on June 20, 1950, in Yazd, Iran. His family was the target of persecution and harassment from fanatical elements in that town. Houshmand completed his primary schooling there and then moved to Tíhrán where he finished secondary school. He continued his studies, enrolling in the Institute of Insurance at the University of Tíhrán and graduating with a bachelor of arts degree in industrial and commercial insurance in 1976. He satisfied the requirements for compulsory military service, and when the Iranian revolution began, he moved to the United States.

Houshmand studied computer programming and found employment with Control Data Corporation and later became a Branch Manager for McDonald's Corporation. In April 1985 he settled briefly in South Africa, where he worked for the Alianz Life Insurance Company based in Johannesburg. He went back to the United



Houshmand Anvari

States in 1986 and worked as a computer consultant.

In December 1985 he married Dina Toufiqi and with her had three children, Vaffa, Nava, and Ava.

In 1990 Houshmand returned with his family to South Africa, and they were encouraged by the National Assembly to take up residence in the East London region where they could be of assistance to South Africa and Ciskei. He and his wife established a day nursery at the Mdantsane Bahá'í Centre. Later they founded a weekend tutorial school at King Williams Town. Houshmand's work was instrumental in the development of the Bahá'í Centre in Lasmesi, and he served on the Spiritual Assemblies of East London and Beacon Bay. He was residing in the latter at the time of his death.

He had recently taken part in an entry-by-troops project in the northwest part of the country, making a two-week traveling teaching trip to KwaNdebele.

Houshmand was the caretaker and manager of the Mdantsane Bahá'í Centre and was painting the door of the Centre when the gunmen attacked.

Houshmand leaves his wife and three children, Vaffa, Nava, and Ava—aged eight, six, and three respectively.

SHAMAM BAKHSHANDEGI

Shamam was born in Nouakchott, the capital of Mauritania, on May 16, 1965. Always a brilliant student, he graduated at the top of his classes in primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. He continued his studies in Dakar, Senegal, and then moved to Las Palmas in the Canary Islands, where he finished his secondary education with distinction in Spanish.

Dr. Amin Bakhshandegi, Shamam's father, went to Botswana in 1980 to seek

employment, and in 1981 he took up a post at the Cecilia Makhiwane Hospital in Mdantsane, Ciskei. The following September, Shamam and the other members of the family joined their father, living in East London.

Shamam matriculated at the top of his class at Cambridge High School and was awarded the M. E. Morrshed Medal, the Cambridge Trust Fund Bursary, as well as a Three-Year Merit Award from the Department of Cape Province Education. Shamam was also proficient in five languages: English, French, Spanish, Persian, and Arabic. He was named Dux of the school.

Shamam became a South African citizen in 1988, and in 1989 he graduated with a bachelor of dental science degree at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) in Johannesburg. In 1991, while working two jobs, he registered for a master's degree in community dentistry. His research topic was "The Oral Health, Treatment Needs and Personnel Requirements of School Children in Mdantsane." This was the first scientific dental research performed in Ciskei, and he was one of three recipients of the Elida Ponds Research Award in Dentistry. (As Shamam had completed the research, his supervisor informed his family that his degree would be awarded posthumously.)

At the age of fifteen, he declared his faith in Bahá'u'lláh. Soon afterward, he became a member of the National Newsletter Committee of Senegal. In 1986, he was instrumental in getting the Wits Bahá'í Club recognized as a student society by the University of the Witwatersrand. He also became vice chairman and treasurer of the Bahá'í Society. In 1987 he was appointed youth coordinator for the Johannesburg area by the National Spiritual Assembly of South Africa. At the same time he was

chairman of the National Youth Committee as well as corresponding secretary of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Johannesburg. In 1988 he became chairman of the Local Spiritual Assembly, and in 1989 he was chosen as one of the delegates to the annual National Convention.

After graduating from university, he moved back to East London where he was appointed by the National Spiritual Assembly to serve on the Regional Teaching and Consolidation Committee of the Eastern Cape and Corridor. In 1991 he was elected chairman of the National Teaching Committee of Ciskei as well as treasurer of the Local Spiritual Assembly of East London. The following year, he was appointed book sales officer and lending library supervisor of the National Teaching Committee of Ciskei. Up until 1993 Shamam was elected as one of the delegates from East London to the annual National Convention.

Although Shamam lived in East London, he was greatly involved in Bahá'í activities in Ciskei. He was active in primary and secondary school oral care programs, and he visited the prison to treat patients. He was deeply involved in organizing the dental curriculum at Ciskei Nursing College. His great love was always for Africa and its people.

At the time of his passing, he was the secretary of the East London Assembly and a public relations officer for the region. Shamam held the post of supervisor of the Community Dental Section at Cecilia Makhiwane Hospital, as well as maintaining a private practice in Mdantsane. He was also the first and youngest health professional member of the Rotary Club of Bhisho and was soon going to be named director of the health section of the club.

He leaves his parents, Amin and Badri Bakhshandegi, and a sister, Djam.

RIAZ RAZAVI

Riaz Razavi was born on January 28, 1950, in Tíhrán, Iran. He was the eldest son of Mohammed Ali and Rouhieh Razavi. After finishing high school in 1968, he went on to complete his bachelor of arts degree in accounting in 1973. In May 1990 he qualified as a chartered accountant (Lesotho).

In 1975 he joined a group of Bahá'í graduates who first went to Haifa for three days and then on to travel teach in Africa. The one-month tour in Africa changed his life; he decided to stay.

Riaz traveled extensively through Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa before settling finally in Lesotho in 1976. During his stay in Lesotho, he married Vera Paquay, a Belgian, on February 6, 1978. In 1979 he became a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Lesotho and took part in the International Convention in Haifa in 1983.

That same year, he moved with his family to King Williams Town in South Africa where they were the only pioneers. When the Razavis came to South Africa, their intention was to pioneer to Ciskei, but as it was not possible to find accommodation, they lived in East London. While Vera was active in South Africa, serving as secretary of the King Williams Town Assembly, Riaz's main activities were in Ciskei. On August 1, 1989, he was appointed as an Auxiliary Board member for Ciskei.

Riaz went to Iran in 1993 to visit his father and brother. He again traveled throughout Iran seeing friends and visiting the relatives of martyrs.

In addition to his work and his Bahá'í activities, he enjoyed being part of other community organizations such as Toastmasters and the Rotary Club. He was also a member of the Central Primary



Riaz Razavi

School Management Board. Riaz was interested in sports and was an active member of the Athlone Tennis Club. He played a variety of musical instruments, and music was an important part of his life.

He left behind his wife, Vera; his son Jalal, who was fifteen years old; and his daughter, Rouhieh, thirteen.

* * *

More than five hundred people attended the funeral that was held first at the Cambridge Town Hall in East London, which was magnificently decorated with masses of flowers and where the coffins were placed side by side.

Bahá'ís came from Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana, Bophuthatswana, Transkei, Ciskei, and Namibia as well as some twenty different communities in South Africa. The program was conducted by the chairman of the Spiritual Assembly of Transkei and included addresses by the mayor of East London and Counsellor Daniel Ramoroosi. Messages from the Universal House of Justice and the Continental Board

of Counsellors for Africa were read by Counsellor Lally Warren.

The program concluded with eulogies. The chancellor of the University of Fort Hare offered one for Riaz Razavi. Two of Dr. Shamam Bakhshandegi's colleagues from the hospital spoke of him, and Nariman Khayitash read a short account of the life of Houshmand Anvari written by Houshmand's father.

Following the program, the friends went to the cemetery where the graves had been dug side by side.

The martyrdoms attracted the attention of the international media. All of the major television and radio networks around the country reported the event and mentioned the name of the Faith. Radio coverage included a well-known talk show on an American network and interviews on the BBC World Service and Radio France International.

Local newspapers that had previously refused to publish material about the Faith suddenly vied with one another to print articles. Even Iranian newspapers reported the event and mentioned that the victims were Bahá'ís.

Messages of condolence poured in from all over the world. The World Conference on Religion and Peace, the Catholic Bishops Conference, the South African Council of Churches, and the University of Fort Hare issued letters and statements expressing their support for the Bahá'ís and their shock at the tragedy.

Memorial services held in other countries were well attended, attracting government representatives and dignitaries. On the day the memorial service was held in Namibia, the Local Assembly of Windhoek planned a teaching campaign in memory of the martyrs, and the entire body of the National Assembly left its regularly scheduled meeting to support the campaign.

Three ten-day teaching campaigns were subsequently planned by the National Teaching Committee, each dedicated to one of the three martyrs.

Based on information provided by The Continental Board of Counsellors for Africa, The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Ciskei, The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of South Africa, and The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Namibia

GLADYS ISABEL McLEAN

1912-1994

Gladys McLean was born on June 8, 1912, in Edmonton, Canada. She was the eldest child of George William Alexander McLean and Lily Cross, immigrants from Scotland and England.

Because of her father's experience as a youth with traveling evangelists, religion was not spoken of in the home. However, the family led a Christian life, practicing kindness and generosity. Around 1920 they moved to San Francisco, where the seeds of Gladys's later loves were planted. There she found her first book of poetry, a tattered, blue book that she memorized in its entirety. There she attended Christian Sunday School, and although she was reprimanded for her questions, she became an ardent Christian. While still a child she converted her best friend, who had belonged to the Jewish Faith.

In San Francisco she learned of other religions and other lands, and she wondered why the other religions were not considered to be true. She was fascinated by an old Chinese dictionary and dreamed of the Far East and of Persia. She circled the name "Isfahan" on the map and pronounced it over and over for its beautiful sound. In her adolescence and later life the intimations increased. At the age of sixteen she

became deeply interested in Buddhism, and later she developed a profound respect for Islam.

After attending high school and teacher's college in Edmonton she taught school in Bonnyville, Alberta. When she had saved enough money, Gladys toured England and Scotland on bicycle and worked for a while as a governess. Returning to Edmonton she wrote for a local radio station and aired a program entitled "From a woman's point of view."

In 1941 she married Anthony Earnshaw. Two years later she went to Britain as a volunteer with the Victorian Order of Nurses. Returning again to Edmonton she continued her volunteer work with paraplegic veterans of the war. In 1950 she gave birth to her only child, Felicity.

Gladys had been an unusually cheerful person, but in the years following her marriage she experienced great unhappiness from which there seemed no escape. Her difficulties made her a ready seeker. Around 1944 she heard a talk given by Anita Ioas. She immediately recognized the truth in Bahá'u'lláh's Message, but for ten years she hesitated to join. She was, in her own words, "a slow learner."

At last in 1954 following a visit by Florence Mayberry who admonished her for "sitting on the fence," Gladys declared her faith. She continued to have a difficult life in Edmonton, and only when she moved to Victoria, British Columbia, in 1962 did she become fully active in the Faith. She began to hold Bahá'í children's classes and to teach more effectively. She shared her new beliefs with her family whom she dearly loved and for whose welfare she cared deeply. Although she had hoped for a firmer acceptance, she was fortunate that her relatives greeted her new faith with a positive spirit. The declaration of her niece, Meredith McLean,



Gladys Isabel McLean

after her thorough independent study and an unforgettable encounter with the Hand of the Cause Tarázu'lláh Samandarí, was a source of great joy for Gladys. Gladys's mother also brought her joy; although she never formally declared, she accepted Bahá'u'lláh during a summer school in Ireland and became attached to the Bahá'í prayers.

Spiritually galvanized by the 1963 World Congress, Gladys pioneered to the suburb of View Royal and began holding regular firesides. During her stay on Vancouver Island she obtained her BA and BED from the University of Victoria. Besides her Bahá'í activities she was an active member of the World Federalist Organization and the Indian Arts Association, of which she was president for a time and through which she became acquainted with many indigenous students.

Gladys left her home many times to visit, travel teach, study, and pioneer. Between 1969 and 1978 she obtained a Graduate Certificate in Education for Curriculum

Development from the University of Alberta, served on the Edmonton Local Spiritual Assembly, opened a new locality in Youngstown, Alberta, and went on the first of three pilgrimages to Israel.

In 1979 she pioneered for two years in northern Thailand, where she worked as an English teacher at Chiang Mai Teachers' College. While in Thailand she served on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Chiang Mai and developed a number of long-lasting friendships with leaders of the community and with the young people she taught. Accompanied by a student who had embraced the Faith, Gladys taught Bahá'í children's classes at a nearby village every Sunday. Her love for Thailand and her fervid interest in its history and culture continued to grow. Other responsibilities prevented her from remaining there, and she later wrote that the happiest days of her life were spent in Thailand.

Not long after Gladys returned to Canada, her father died. Her mother, then in her nineties, could not live alone. Gladys, in her seventies, could not bear to see her mother institutionalized so she decided to become her caregiver.

In 1984, placing her mother temporarily in a nursing home, Gladys undertook a traveling teaching trip to the Isle of Man, Thailand, Burma, Macau, Hong Kong, and Nara, Japan. It was her second visit to the Bahá'ís of Burma for whom she had a special affection. On this occasion she was deeply concerned about the damage done to one of their Bahá'í Centers and subsequently made efforts to raise funds for its repair.

Following the passing of her mother in 1986, Gladys attended the dedication of the India Temple and then went on another teaching trip to Malaysia, Burma, Thailand, and Japan.

While the topic of her firesides and talks during her 1984 and 1987 trips was peace and the Bahá'í Faith, the focus during her last tour was "The Global Environment as it Relates to the Bahá'í Faith." An active member of a number of environmental organizations, an ardent admirer of Richard St. Barbe Baker and John Muir, and an avid reader of their works and other writings on the environment, she equipped herself well. Her talks, which she typed on a little red typewriter carried everywhere, show that she meditated deeply on the relationship of the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh to environmental questions. This six-month trip in 1989 took her from Hawaii to New Zealand, Australia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, and Japan and filled her with more enthusiasm and gratitude than she had ever felt before. Everywhere she found herself supported by Bahá'u'lláh's blessings, and everywhere she found unprecedented interest in the Bahá'í Faith and noticed the extraordinary development of the Bahá'í institutions.

The spur of Gladys's vitality was her love of people, with whom she had such an ease that she was able to converse even with those whose language she knew little of. She loved the diverse cultures she encountered and demonstrated it by her visits to churches and temples of many creeds. She danced with Sufis and with the women of Gabon.

The older she grew the more active she became and the more she felt the peoples of the world to be her family. She wanted to return to Burma and contemplated ways of staying longer. Another of her wishes was to serve as a volunteer at the Indian Temple. Plans were made in 1993 to fulfill both. As the time drew closer for her trip, Gladys's activity accelerated. During her last summer in the Kootenays she hosted an extraordinary indigenous Bahá'í institute.

In the fall she received a group of Thai students who had driven from Alberta to visit her, and in early November while en route for New Delhi, she toured northern Thailand.

In New Delhi her activity and joy peaked. She worked many hours daily as a guide at the Temple, meeting and conversing with visitors from all over the world and serving her Lord, side by side with her beloved Bahá'í sisters and brothers. When her day's work at the Temple was over, she gave talks on "The Changing Role of Women in Society." After being in India for nearly three months, she went to Bangkok on her way to Burma. While getting her visa and packing small gifts to take to the friends, she became ill and asked her daughter to come from Canada to help her. Because of the seriousness of her illness, arrangements were made for her immediate flight to Edmonton and transfer to hospital, where she died nineteen days later on March 13, 1994.

During her last days she recited poetry, remembered her many loved ones, and continued to teach. She charmed the hospital staff with her courteous, loving, thought-provoking, and sometimes humorous words. She spoke of the great loss that results from prejudice and from the failure to show love. She talked about what she regretted most in her life—occasions when she could have, by some action, brought spiritual life to her fellows but did not.

Her funeral followed a night of high winds and early morning snowfall. It included readings and prayers in the Kootenay and Thai languages offered by people of Ethiopian, Scottish, Estonian, Persian, and Canadian backgrounds. Despite the severe cold two hundred participants drove to the graveside, where her much-loved chant of "Alláh-u-Abhá" was sung. A message written on behalf of the Universal House

of Justice on April 6, 1994, to the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada stated:

Mrs. McLean is particularly remembered for her tireless travels in service to the Faith, even after reaching the age of eighty.

It is fitting that, in her last months, Mrs. McLean should achieve the distinction of being the oldest person yet to serve as a volunteer at the House of Worship in India. Her example has, no doubt, already proven an inspiration to young and old alike.

The House of Justice will offer ardent and loving prayers in the Holy Shrines for the progress of the soul of Mrs. McLean and will beseech Bahá'u'lláh to comfort her children and grandchildren.

From an article by Felicity Enayat

DOROTHY FERRABY 1904–1994

Dorothy Ferraby (née Cansdale) was born in London in 1904. "My family was Church of England," she wrote. "I was christened into it, but I refused to be confirmed. I more or less sorted things out for myself, trying to get to know about other religions such as Judaism and Islam, and sometimes having terrific arguments with people who said these were all heathen. So I suppose I was prepared for the Faith before I even met it."

She became a Bahá'í in April 1934 and was immediately active in the London Youth Group. "From the beginning I had accepted the Faith almost instinctively, and afterward I read as many books as I could find. Somehow I felt that I had to justify

my instinctive belief, so I gradually acquired more knowledge and information."

Professionally she was a high-powered secretary in the Lever organization, and it was as an effective, highly responsible secretary—the focal point of Assembly, committee or board—that many will remember her. In 1937, together with Hasan Balyuzi, she became joint secretary of the London Spiritual Assembly, a joint secretaryship that continued for several years.

In 1941 she was elected to the British National Spiritual Assembly and became its secretary. Many of the friends in England have paid great tribute to the work of Dorothy Ferraby during the war years. However, she herself played it down.

During the war a few of us were still in London. Some were evacuated—with their jobs or their families—but quite a few of us were still there. And we kept things going all through the war. The most significant thing about the Faith during the war was that the administration held, the administrative bodies functioned, in spite of all the difficulties. During the Blitz the National Assembly went on meeting quite regularly outside London. Once it was clear that the Blitz was continuing (after the first shock or two, and one night we didn't go home at all, and we had to stay together all night in London), we organized ourselves. We had Assembly meetings on Sunday mornings. We held Nineteen Day Feasts quite regularly on the nearest Saturday afternoon, as these were quiet times. And we kept going perfectly well—we even had a public meeting now and again. I went to the Bahá'í Centre on the way home from work every day—to make sure it was still there and to pick up mail etc.—but I couldn't stay as I had to rush home

while there was still some transport to get home with. But after things calmed down in 1941, things became a lot easier—the Blitz didn't go on all through the war . . . We even got a few declarations during the war—including my husband, John.

Dorothy served continuously as secretary, treasurer, or recording secretary of the National Assembly for the next twenty years, only retiring when she accompanied her husband, the Hand of the Cause John Ferraby, when he became one of the Custodians elected from amongst the body of the Hands to serve at the World Centre after the beloved Guardian's passing.

As the years went by and the Bahá'í Administrative Order took shape under the guiding hand of Shoghi Effendi, Dorothy's service to the Faith extended, and her experience grew. She was a member of the National Spiritual Assembly in 1944 that, undeterred by the continuation of the war, had sent to Shoghi Effendi a proposal from Convention that the community embark on a Six Year Plan (1944–50). The Guardian's response was, "WELCOME SPONTANEOUS DECISION ADVISE FORMATION NINETEEN SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES SPREAD OVER ENGLAND, WALES, SCOTLAND, NORTHERN IRELAND, AND EIRE PRAYING SIGNAL VICTORY. SHOGHI RABBANI."

As there were only five Local Spiritual Assemblies in the British Isles at the time and they were all in England,⁸² this was to prove a tremendous undertaking, but through the power of Bahá'u'lláh, the energy of the whole of that tiny national Bahá'í community, and the wonderful support of friends from other countries, Ridván 1950 saw everyone celebrating a

⁸² London, Bournemouth, Torquay, Manchester, and Bradford.

magnificent victory. So the foundation of the British Bahá'í community was laid, and the springboard for the beginning of its overseas activity established.

At Ridván 1950 the Guardian announced an Africa Campaign (1951–53). Right away the National Assembly set up an “Africa Committee,” and John Ferraby became its first secretary. The friends wasted no time, and in December 1950 the first pioneer left for Africa, months before the Plan officially started.

In his message of February 25, 1951, Shoghi Effendi wrote about the Africa Campaign:

On the success of this enterprise, unprecedented in its scope, unique in its character and immense in its spiritual potentialities, must depend the initiation, at a later period in the Formative Age of the Faith, of undertakings embracing within their range all National Assemblies functioning throughout the Bahá'í World, undertakings constituting in themselves a prelude to the launching of world-wide enterprises destined to be embarked upon, in future epochs of that same Age, by the Universal House of Justice, that will symbolise the unity and coordinate and unify the activities of these National Assemblies.⁸³

Five National Communities (the United States, Iran, Egypt and the Sudan, India, and the British Isles) took part in the Africa Campaign that the British coordinated under the guidance of the beloved Guardian. In 1951 David Hofman became secretary of the Africa Committee, and in 1952 Dorothy was appointed to that office.

⁸³ *Unfolding Destiny: The Messages from the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith to the Bahá'í Community of the British Isles* (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1981), p. 261.

In February 1953 the first of the four Intercontinental Conferences of the Holy Year that commemorated Bahá'u'lláh's incarceration in the *Siyáh-Chál* and the Birth of the Bahá'í Revelation was held in Kampala, Uganda. There the Guardian's Ten Year World Crusade was launched. Convened by the British National Assembly, Hasan Balyuzi, the Assembly's chairman; John Ferraby, its secretary; and Dorothy Ferraby, a member of the National Assembly and secretary of the Africa Committee, attended that auspicious conference.

At Ridván 1953 the Africa Campaign reached a triumphant conclusion. Outside of Egypt and the Sudan, only a few individual Bahá'ís had been strung out across the huge distances of that continent like a precious string of pearls in 1950. Now the whole African Continent had been opened to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh in little more than two short years. In 1953 Dorothy and John volunteered for overseas pioneering, but Shoghi Effendi wrote that, although he appreciated their desire to go out as pioneers, he felt, “it would weaken the work of the National Spiritual Assembly too much,” and he advised them to remain in England. This showed clearly how much the Guardian valued their work as administrators in the Cause.

In 1950 John became the first paid secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly, a development approved by the Guardian. There is no doubt, however, that such a step for an individual, and even more for a family, becomes an act of faith. There is no career structure in the Bahá'í Faith, and elections of Assemblies and their officers take place annually. (No one knows better than its secretary that the National Assembly is always short of money for any purpose whatever.) The Ferrabys led the

way in radiant acquiescence in the field of service.

While all these activities were progressing, another institution was developing in the British Isles that will always be associated with Dorothy—the summer school. She became the registrar/treasurer of the 1939 summer school, and year by year it was Dorothy who encouraged, and often personally carried out, a nationwide search for premises suitable for a Bahá'í summer school. And year by year, as secretary of the summer school and often its chairman, it was Dorothy who smoothed ruffled feathers and feelings and organized repairs if those premises were damaged by unruly behavior (such as the setting up of a dartboard on precious oak paneling!). The programs of those summer schools contributed as nothing else could to deepening the understanding of the attending Bahá'ís, so many of whom were new believers.

In the winter of 1953 first John, and then Dorothy, went on pilgrimage, which in those days was a rarer event than it is today. They each had the privilege of coming into the presence of Shoghi Effendi.

In December 1954 the Ferraby family became the first Bahá'í residents in the newly acquired National *Ḥazíratu'l-Quds*, at 27 Rutland Gate, London, SW7. It should not be overlooked that Dorothy was not only a splendid Bahá'í administrator, she was also a wife and mother caring in every way for her family; she could be seen during the lunch break of a weekend National Assembly meeting rapidly and expertly ironing her young daughter's school blouse in readiness for the Monday morning.

In 1954 Dorothy was appointed by the European Hands of the Cause as one of the first Auxiliary Board members. She continued her service on the National Spiritual Assembly, which at that time was acceptable.

Dorothy went to Kampala, Uganda, again in January 1958 representing the British National Spiritual Assembly at the first conference in a second series of four Intercontinental Conferences.⁸⁴ “The first Africa Conference was unique,” wrote Dorothy. “It was held in a tent!” She continued:

The Guardian said it had to be held in Kampala, Uganda, which he said was the spiritual heart of Africa. A year before the conference there were an awful lot of declarations quite suddenly—a little bit of mass declaration out in the villages—and there were no suitable buildings in which to hold a conference. Someone in America found us an enormous tent, which we put up in the garden of the Hazira there, and it was very good because it was cool and had a roof, and it had walls with flaps of material so there were openings in it. It was very nice for the Africans because when they got tired and bored and didn't want to pay attention any more, they could quietly slip out and sit on the grass and relax, and then they could come back in again when they felt like it. It suited that particular conference perfectly—it was a wonderful thing. That was the first Intercontinental Conference, and we and our pioneers out there organized it, and it was very exciting . . .

When I went to live in the Holy Land, four American Hands were there—Millie Collins, Leroy Ioas, Horace Holley, and Paul Haney. Paul was the mainstay of the Hands as he did

⁸⁴ Although those four conferences had been called by Shoghi Effendi, they actually took place after his death in London, in November 1957. The Kampala conference was the first attended by the Hand of the Cause *Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum* after the Guardian's passing.

most of the donkeywork and the office work. He was the most wonderful person. Horace Holley was fun, and he had a wonderful sense of humor. He would keep you amused for hours just telling you funny stories and keeping you laughing. When there were no visitors we got into the habit of going down to the kitchen at about ten o'clock at night and making ourselves a cup of coffee. His wife, Doris, would come, and John would come, and we would all sit there at the kitchen table drinking coffee. It got to the stage when at about a quarter to ten every night Horace would put his head around the door and say, "Are you having coffee tonight?" And we would go and have coffee, and he would tell us some more stories!

In July 1960 after I got there Horace became very ill. He suddenly got worse, and one evening his wife put her head round our sitting room door and said, "Will you come and help—Horace has gone out in the corridor, and he has fallen down." We rushed out and Doris went to phone for the doctor. I knelt down beside him, and his head was on my knee. John and Paul went and got a mattress, which they wanted to roll him onto, and get him back to his bed. But a little while after his head was lying on my lap, he gave a big sigh, and he just died there on the floor. He was buried in the Bahá'í cemetery in Haifa at the foot of Mount Carmel.

Residing in Haifa in the early 1960s, Dorothy was appointed as the Holy Land's liaison member to the British-based World Congress Committee, and so she came more often to London. That committee was responsible for the organization of the Most Great Jubilee celebrations held in the Royal Albert Hall in London immediately

after the election of the Universal House of Justice at Ridván 1963.

I never actually attended anything at the World Congress—I was too busy with the organization side—but I attended the last session. There was a box at one side (a permanent fixture) where the address system is attached with the loudspeakers, and I usually had some announcements to make, and I used to get there about ten minutes before the end of the session, but people were already trying to come out. My chief memory of that congress is pushing my way against hordes of people going one way and just me trying to go the other, trying to get to my little box and finally getting there! The session being over, everybody would start talking, and there was me shrieking at them, "Will you please be quiet and listen." I never knew I could shout till then—bawling away all over the Albert Hall at them. But on the whole, everything went very nicely, despite hiccups along the way!

Returning with her husband to the British Isles after the election of the Universal House of Justice, Dorothy became an Executive Board member. That was a development in the institution of the Auxiliary Boards that would lead the way toward the appointment of the Continental Boards of Counsellors by the Universal House of Justice in 1968; Executive Board members do not exist today. Dorothy was appointed by the House of Justice as one of the first three members of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Europe. She traveled throughout Western Europe, and for many years she was the Board's secretary, serving it until 1985.

To recapture some of the highlights of Dorothy's life is to retrace the development of the Bahá'í Faith through most of the

action-packed years of this first part of the Formative Age. The history of the Cause was woven into the life of this outstanding and dedicated servant of Bahá'u'lláh.

And strangely enough, her health, especially during the last years of her service as a Counsellor, was not good. When on a visit to Holland Dorothy fractured her hip, making a major operation necessary. As the years went by this gave her trouble, and another operation became necessary. In addition a vital operation had to be done on her eyes. Undeterred she pressed on, continuing for a long time to travel to Holland and to Denmark by the least costly route, the overnight ferry as she had always done; eventually she was persuaded to start her travels in Europe by flying from the East Midlands Airport, which was closer to where she lived.

When John died in 1973, Dorothy moved from Cambridge to Nottingham, and then in September she went to live in an apartment attached to the house of her daughter, Bridget Beales, and she spent the last years of her life in the loving companionship of Bridget, her husband, and three grandchildren in a village in Nottinghamshire. She died there on March 22, 1994, and is buried in the village cemetery.

'Abdu'l-Bahá's blessed words seem to apply most especially to Dorothy Ferraby, "And then, with flying flags, and to the beat of drums, let us pass into the realm of the All-Glorious, and join the Company on high. Well is it with the doers of great deeds."⁸⁵

The Universal House of Justice wrote on March 24:

HEARTS GRIEVED PASSING DEARLY LOVED STALWART MAIDSERVANT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH DOROTHY FERRABY WHOSE DISTINGUISHED SERVICES CAUSE GOD EXTENDED OVER MORE THAN HALF A CENTURY. SHE CONTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANTLY ADMINISTRATION FAITH AS MEMBER NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BRITISH ISLES AND FIRST AUXILIARY BOARD EUROPE, PLAYED VITAL PART HISTORIC AFRICA CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED BY SHOGHI EFFENDI, SERVED WORLD CENTRE DURING CUSTODIANSHIP HANDS CAUSE, AND LATER AS MEMBER CONTINENTAL BOARD OF COUNSELLORS EUROPE. THESE SERVICES, AS WELL AS HER INDEFATIGABLE LABOURS AND STERLING QUALITIES, HER TENACITY, PERSEVERENCE AND UNFLINCHING LOYALTY HAVE ENRICHED THE ANNALS FAITH BRITISH ISLES AND SET WORTHY EXAMPLE.

ARDENTLY PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HER NOBLE SOUL ABHÁ KINGDOM. ADVISE HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERINGS COMMUNITIES UNITED KINGDOM. REQUESTING NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF GERMANY HOLD A MEMORIAL SERVICE MOTHER TEMPLE EUROPE. ALSO ADVISING EUROPEAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES HOLD COMMEMORATIVE GATHERINGS COMMUNITIES THEIR COUNTRIES.

CONVEY OUR LOVING SYMPATHY HER BELOVED DAUGHTER, OTHER MEMBERS HER FAMILY.

Betty Reed and Philip Hainsworth

⁸⁵ *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1996, 2009 printing), ¶210.5 and ¶210.6.

OLAVO NOVAES

1927–1994

Of humble background Olavo Novaes was born in the interior of the state of São Paulo, Brazil, in 1927. He was introduced to the Bahá'í Faith in the early 1950s, when he was working as a caretaker of the Theosophical Society in São Paulo, which offered its meeting and conference facilities to the different religions. Even before declaring his faith in Bahá'u'lláh and being enrolled as a Bahá'í, Olavo was an active teacher of the Faith. Working with Mr. Edmund Miessler,⁸⁶ he taught the Faith in the different neighborhoods of São Paulo, distributing Bahá'í leaflets.

In 1957 he still had not enrolled as a Bahá'í. When the beloved Guardian passed away, Olavo received a phone call informing him of the news and inviting him to a special prayer meeting. He attended and was impressed as everyone was deeply grieving. That was the beginning of a change in his life; he began to deepen himself and eventually declared his faith in Bahá'u'lláh.

In the early sixties Olavo offered to travel teach in other regions of the country. He was blessed to have known and to have taught with the many Hands of the Cause of God who visited Brazil. Olavo was also one of the first Brazilians who fulfilled an international pioneering goal for his country. He pioneered to Colombia, where he was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly. As a result he was privileged to be a delegate in 1963 to the International Convention in the Holy Land, electing for the first time the Universal House of Justice.

A very successful teacher of the Faith, Olavo also spread the Message of Bahá'u'lláh with courage and determination in Bolivia and Ecuador. He returned to Brazil and settled as a pioneer in the southern part of the country, traveling teaching throughout the states of Paraná and Mato Grosso do Sul. Responding to a call of Dr. Muhájir for pioneers to the Amazon, Olavo once again gave up his personal interests and moved to a region of Amazonia on the Brazil-Colombia border. He helped to establish the foundation of the Tabatinga Bahá'í community; Tabatinga is a municipality in the Tres Fronteras area of northwestern Brazil, in the state of Amazonas. He served the Faith there with absolute steadfastness, bringing into the Faith hundreds of new believers representing all levels of society and indigenous peoples. Afterward he moved to Manaus, the capital of Amazonas, where he spent the last days of his earthly life. He passed away at the end of March 1994. On April 10 the Universal House of Justice sent its condolences to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Brazil:

Saddened to learn of the passing of Mr. Olavo Novaes, who distinguished himself through his meritorious pioneering activities. His service in Colombia, which included membership on its National Spiritual Assembly, and later his outstanding labors in the upper Amazon region, all contribute to a record of devotion to the Blessed Beauty that is warmly remembered.

Assure prayers at the Sacred Shrines for the progress of his soul.

⁸⁶ See "In Memoriam," *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVII, pp. 430–31.

EDYTHE MAE MACARTHUR

Knight of Bahá'u'lláh

1906–1994

"I thank God for my parents," wrote Edythe MacArthur, "for their legacy of physical strength, mental determination and an inbred pioneering spirit." Edythe entered this world on May 15, 1906, in Lavenham, Manitoba, Canada, one of seven children born to Adelia Rose Ganton and David Sherman Milligan.

Edythe's parents were evangelical Christians, and from an early age she consciously searched for a Faith that would be compatible with her own questing spirit and provide answers to her searching mind. Edythe related in an interview with the editors of the *Canadian Bahá'í News* that she felt that she had become a Bahá'í without knowing it, when she was twelve years old. She was at a Christian revival meeting and was deeply stirred by the thought that there had to be a more profound and broader way to be of service to the world than by standing up and being "saved."

She attended public schools in Fesserton and Coldwater, Ontario, before enrolling in Nurse's College in Toronto. She also attended the Toronto Business College.

She married Merlin Ramsay MacArthur on June 25, 1929. "My husband," Edythe explained, "was of 'the old time religion'; [he] viewed it [the Bahá'í Faith] with askance." Merlin died in 1944, and there were no children born of the union.

In 1943 Edythe was introduced to the Faith by her sister, Doris Milligan Richardson,⁸⁷ and she declared sometime the following year.

From the time of her declaration, Edythe was always at the disposition of the



Edythe Mae MacArthur

needs of the Cause, her life exemplifying the following prayer of Bahá'u'lláh:

Make me ready, in all circumstances, O my Lord, to serve Thee and to set myself towards the adored sanctuary of Thy Revelation and of Thy Beauty. If it be Thy pleasure, make me to grow as a tender herb in the meadows of Thy grace, that the gentle winds of Thy will may stir me up and bend me into conformity with Thy pleasure, in such wise that my movement and my stillness may be wholly directed by Thee.⁸⁸

In Canada she helped form the first Local Spiritual Assemblies in no less than five localities in Ontario (Scarborough, Kingston, Welland, Ajax, and Bowmanville) and in Calgary, Alberta. She also served as a pioneer in St. John's and Labrador City in Newfoundland and Labrador; Dartmouth, Nova Scotia; Yellowknife,

⁸⁷ See "In Memoriam," *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVII, pp. 410–11.

⁸⁸ *Prayers and Meditations* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1987, 2008 printing), sec. CL.

Northwest Territories; Red Lake, Alberta; and in several other localities in Ontario.

One city to which she pioneered is not mentioned in the list above—Ottawa. She later described her experience there as “a miserable flop.”

I became ill to the point of being useless—with loneliness. Perhaps [it was] a natural reaction to one who hasn't realized [the] results of suffering a recent bereavement. I left for home after a three-day stay, arriving just moments before the passing of my very precious father. I have often wondered, was it loneliness or pure guidance? This, I do know, through the Mercy of God, this experience of loneliness was of great importance and bounty, for I never suffered to that extent of loneliness again. It was an emotional cleansing.

It was also an experience that prepared her for her next venture.

At long last, it was 1953, and we who were able to attend (by hook or crook) the Chicago International Bahá'í Conference were on our way . . . Some never to return the same as they had arrived . . . The day of the conference came when Ruhíyyih Rabbani [the Hand of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum] was to read, out loud, the prepared paper (by Shoghi Effendi) and list of global (virgin) pioneer territories that were to be settled and occupied by Bahá'í believers as soon as possible. This was a beautiful and tremendous challenge.

My Spiritual Mother (my sister Doris Richardson) signed immediately—she to Grand Manan Island, East Coast of Canada, and I to the Queen Charlotte Islands, West Coast of Canada. John Robarts, with whom

we registered, coined a phrase, “we had covered the water fronts.”

In 1953 both Edythe and her sister received the distinction of becoming Knights of Bahá'u'lláh.

“I learned isolation,” she wrote of life on the Queen Charlotte Islands, where her nearest neighbor was four miles away. “My daily visitors were mostly black bears, coons, chicken hawks and herds of deer.” But Edythe made a discovery: “This Queen Charlotte Island was not only special, but especially special. On its land there is one of the greatest and most widely known Canadian Indian tribes—the Haida.”

Other pioneers joined her in the months that followed, and a Bahá'í group was established. When she felt it was secure, she wrote to the Guardian about pioneering to South Africa. “His reply,” she writes, “was one of the most valued letters of my life.”

I had pioneered in Canada from coast to coast and felt myself to be a well-worn “citizen of the world” until I experienced my last view of Canada, late [one] evening on board ship as we sailed out to sea headed directly for South Africa, with the tears streaming down my face wondering if I would ever see my homeland again. Oh, that I had known at that moment of what a tremendous bounty lay in store in that far-off land with untold rewarding faces waiting to be discovered.

The garment of words couldn't possibly contain what passion I feel for this land, Africa, and its people. The love, the tragedies one experiences on that part of the earth's surface, is engraved for all time within the habitation of the heart. We formed the first LSA in Capetown. I pioneered to Windhoek,

s.w. Africa. There, I was on the “treason list” as a possible suspect as one believing in the “brotherhood of man.” I was a Bahá'í-sitter (as John R. [Robarts] named me) in Zululand for a year and a half. It was here I learned the African is closer to knowing God, and is prepared, listening and waiting for the “return of a Redeemer.” It was a bit startling to realize that here on this Continent [North America] we are still to be convinced [of] there being a God. Our noonday prayer is a constant reminder. With the African, it is a reality. My heart bled when I left Africa.⁸⁹

Early in 1958 Edythe returned to Canada to care for her aging mother, and in time she returned to the Queen Charlotte Islands.

Edythe attended the first Bahá'í World Congress in London in 1963, made her pilgrimage to the World Centre in 1969, and attended the Oceanic and Continental Conference in Reykjavik, Iceland, in 1971.

In 1979 she moved to Bowmanville, Ontario, to assist in the formation of the first Local Assembly there. She described it as a “home base.” “After having Bowmanville as my legal and permanent address all these years, [I realized] I had made a complete pioneering circle to at long last . . . make up ‘pioneer residence’ in my own hometown . . . to say nothing of perfect timing.” At another time she wrote, “I'm not too happy meeting my own dust. But never fear, there is a purpose.”

Edythe MacArthur entered the Abhá Kingdom on April 3, 1994. Hearing of her passing the Universal House of Justice wrote to the National Assembly of Canada on April 12:

SHARE YOUR KEEN SENSE LOSS
IN PASSING EDYTHE MACARTHUR,
DEDICATED FOLLOWER
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AND DEVOTED SERVANT
HIS CAUSE.

HER WIDE-RANGING PIONEERING
SERVICES SOUTHERN AFRICA
AND MANY REGIONS CANADA
CROWNED BY BELOVED GUARDIAN'S
DESIGNATION OF HER KNIGHT
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH FOR QUEEN CHARLOTTE
ISLANDS.

FERVENTLY PRAYING HOLY SHRINES
PROGRESS HER RADIANT SOUL IN ALL
WORLDS OF GOD.

*From memoirs of Edythe MacArthur
and information compiled by Roger White*

BERNICE YORKE

1921–1994

We share your sorrow in the loss of Mrs. Bernice Yorke. Her outstanding teaching and administrative services, including membership on the National Spiritual Assembly of Belize from the time of its inception 27 years ago, were rendered with exemplary devotion and are warmly remembered. Be assured of our prayers in the Holy Shrines for the progress of her radiant soul.

Universal House of Justice
April 13, 1994

Bernice Yorke was born July 6, 1921, and was one of the most distinguished of the early native Belizean Bahá'ís. She exemplified Bahá'u'lláh's counsel to “manifest naught save goodly character, pure deeds,

⁸⁹ “The Story of Edythe MacArthur,” *Canadian Bahá'í News*, August, 1964, p. 4.



Bernice Yorke

and a seemly and praiseworthy conduct."⁹⁰ Mrs. Yorke was renowned for her life of service; she was honored by government officials and by the Belize Arts Council for her many achievements in the arts. At a time when the Bahá'í Faith had yet to emerge from obscurity, many knew her as a Bahá'í and as a person dedicated to refinement and excellence of character.

Born to Mr. Henry Edney Conrad Cain and Mrs. Rhoda Stamp, her home environment fostered in her a meticulousness and a desire to do things well. Bernice, being the eldest of eight children, was given many family responsibilities, which she graciously accepted.⁹¹ Of Anglican background, Bernice attended St. Mary's Primary School, where she was introduced

to the performing arts and given a training that significantly influenced her later life.

Bernice was one of the first Creoles to graduate from Saint Catherine Academy, a high school for women. She became a teacher. Starting her career teaching at four primary schools, she later served as principal of Anglican schools in Placencia and San Ignacio, then as assistant principal at two high schools. She also lectured at the Belize Teachers College.

She married educator Mr. Edward Percival Yorke in July of 1946. Subsequently they had two children, Edward and Joy. Setting a high standard of courtesy and manners, Mrs. Yorke kept a very formal home and expected guests to act accordingly. Those invited to her dinners were welcomed to a table set for royalty in an atmosphere of peacefulness and order.

In 1955 Mrs. Yorke attended a short course offered by the British Drama League, and upon returning to Belize she conducted seminars on dramatic arts through the Bliss Institute, home of the National Arts Council and the National Library.

During the 1950s she attended a drama group hosted by Knight of Bahá'u'lláh Shirley Warde.⁹² Ms. Shirley also hosted a discussion group, which was joined by some of the drama members. One of the participants, Mrs. Gracie Grant, remembered that Ms. Shirley "invited us to the discussion group where she provided topics written on pieces of paper. We would draw from the hat a paper, and then present the topic. The group would then discuss the issue." Mrs. Gracie remembered that Mrs. Yorke and others in the group were particularly fascinated by the discussion of the equality of men and women. Mrs. Yorke confided to Mrs. Gracie that she

⁹² See "In Memoriam," *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XX, pp. 1023-25.

truly accepted this teaching and the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, and sometime around 1962 Mrs. Yorke declared her belief.

Mrs. Yorke placed a particularly high value on the education of children. In September 1966 she opened her own preschool. Cinderella School had as its motto "Nourish the love of learning." Her commitment to working with children was apparent in her firm and commanding voice with its distinctive timbre that tacitly declared, "You are noble. I love you. Always be good." The school grew to include the primary grades through Standard 4 (6th Grade). Mrs. Yorke gave individual attention to the students, seeking out their talents and abilities. She fostered a great love of the creative arts, helping her students to give speeches, poetry recitations, and performances of dance and drama of superior quality. Renowned for excellence in the arts, her school received many awards in the annual Children's Festival of Arts.

In her biography of Bernice Yorke, Adele Catzim writes, "She taught more than the ABC's; she taught everything else which was needed to achieve success on an individual and societal level." Mrs. Yorke taught a strict value system, highlighting manners and courtesy, and she taught people to have high expectations of themselves and to respect others. She was adamant about teaching the children the pattern of Bahá'í daily life, including prayers at the beginning of each day. She had them memorize writings and prayers and taught them Bahá'í ideals and world citizenship. She hung Bahá'í posters on the walls and filled the school with the spirit of unity, equity, peace, and justice. She was loving, highly courageous, intelligent, and elegant; her clothing was always spotless, neat, yet never extravagant. She spoke "the Queen's English" and taught the children excellence in English. She walked upright,

sat upright, and lived upright. Mrs. Yorke's dedication and excellence of character were a great model for the students.

Her Bahá'í-inspired school was open to people of all faiths. Parents of all social classes, low and high, placed their children in her care. Many of Cinderella's early graduates are the ministers of government and Belizean leaders of today.

Mrs. Yorke acted and produced shows between 1963 and 1988; some of the best known were the dramas: *Boss King*,⁹³ *Saint Joan*, *Dust on the Road*, and a speech entitled "Paradise."

Mrs. Yorke was also a painter. She was invited to serve on the Arts Council and eventually became the coordinator of the annual Festival of Arts. She was selected as one of seven Belizeans to receive the Belize Arts Council's "Outstanding Artist Award," for which she was congratulated by the prime minister, the governor-general, the minister of culture, and other officials. This was the first in a series of annual awards in the various arts.

In service to the Bahá'í community, Mrs. Yorke was a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Belize City for a number of years before she was elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of Belize in 1967, along with Knights of Bahá'u'lláh Shirley Warde and Cora Oliver. She continued to serve in this capacity until her death in 1994.

Mrs. Yorke represented the Faith in meetings with government officials, ministers, and civic leaders. She frequently spoke on radio for the weekly national Bahá'í program, and she served on many

⁹³ Knight of Bahá'u'lláh Shirley Warde collected folksongs and stories and from them wrote *Boss King*, which was described as a "folklore fantasy." In 1965 it was well received, running for nineteen performances.

⁹⁰ *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed After the Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1988, 2005 printing), p. 172.

⁹¹ Much of the information in this article is drawn from "For the Love of Learning: A Biography of Mrs. Bernice Edna Yorke" by Adele Catzim, March 1996.

committees. She did much to raise the Faith to a high level of government and public regard.

Mrs. Yorke was involved in many service organizations and philanthropic works. She was one of the founders of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) in Belize City in 1956. She was known as "patroness" of Help-Age Belize, which opened its offices in the early 1980s, and as one of the founders of the Women's Hospital Auxiliary. She helped with the Mercy Care Center to provide assistance to the elderly, poor, and disabled. She loved cooking and even more so cake decorating—a special skill she used to advance the home economics programs at the YWCA and the Women's Hospital Auxiliary.

Well educated and much inspired by the Bahá'í writings, Mrs. Yorke stood for women's rights and is remembered for her independence of spirit and self-reliance. On March 10, 1994, in recognition of International Women's Week, Mrs. Yorke delivered her last public address. Relying upon the words of Bahá'u'lláh, she explained the metaphor of regarding the world of humanity as being likened to a bird—one wing representing man and the other, woman. A transcription of her address was published in the newspaper.

She traveled to conventions and conferences including the International Bahá'í Teaching Conference in Merida, Mexico, in 1977. Mrs. Yorke went to the Holy Land in May of 1992 to attend the centenary observances of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh. She returned to Belize with a new fire in her heart that she shared with a gathering of the Cayo District friends the following July. She attended the Bahá'í World Congress in the autumn of 1992 and was part of a delegation that met at that time with the Belizean ambassador to the United States. Wherever she traveled, a smile, a twinkle

in her eye, and a bottle of fiery hot sauce accompanied her.

Mrs. Yorke was transported for emergency medical assistance to Guatemala City where she passed away unexpectedly on April 11, 1994. Her body was not returned to Belize for burial according to Belizean custom. That stirred up a furor carried in the press creating an opportunity to proclaim the Faith nationally. Her daughter, Joy, wrote a poignant and illuminating letter to the newspaper explaining the Bahá'í burial laws and the desire of their beloved Mrs. Bernice to adhere to them. The memorial service performed in her honor at the Bliss Institute was filled to capacity. In addition to prayers and a eulogy, the service was an inspiring tribute that included performances of a play, readings of poetry, and presentations of other artistic works created by Mrs. Yorke. Another tribute to her honor was the renaming of Cinderella School as the Bernice Yorke Institute of Learning.

Suzi Mickler

CARMEN BURAFATO ?—1994

Our hearts were saddened on learning of the passing of dearly loved Carmen de Burafato. The news came to us during the National Convention from one of the delegates, and the gathering had the opportunity to pray for the progress of the soul of this long-time, dedicated maidservant.

Sra. de Burafato was very much a part of the United States community from where she left for Mexico as a pioneer during the Ten Year Crusade. We are the beneficiaries of her untiring services that will continue to bridge the physical borders



Carmen Burafato

that exist between our communities. Please convey our condolences to her family whose loss we share.

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States to the National Spiritual Assembly of Mexico

Little is known of Carmen Burafato's early life. She became a Bahá'í in the San Francisco Bay area in 1948. Two years later she married Sam Burafato, an American veteran. After her declaration she wrote to the Guardian asking him what she could do for the Faith. The Guardian replied that she should return to Mexico, so the Burafatos moved in 1957—Carmen as "a true pioneer to her own country." Sometime later Sam declared his faith.

The Burafatos earned a living by operating a bakery and later were wholesalers of flowers. They also bought and sold real estate in San Miguel Allende where they lived, and it has been said that they "virtually lived by their wits." In San Miguel

Allende they built and donated a Bahá'í center to the local community.

Carmen Burafato was one of the first Latin American women appointed in 1964 as an Auxiliary Board member. She supported the work of the Hand of the Cause of God Dr. Ugo Giachery in Mexico, Central America, and the Antilles. In 1967 she attended the International Conference and the laying of the foundation stone of the Panama Temple. During this time she hand delivered banquet invitations to the embassies and consulates. Five years later she returned for the dedication of the Temple.

In 1968 she was appointed by the Universal House of Justice as a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors for the Americas, serving that institution until 1985, a period of seventeen years. Traveling extensively she was an inspiring speaker, especially when the topic was the equality of men and women. She represented the international Bahá'í community as a panelist consulting on the role of religion at a special session of the tribune of nongovernmental organizations—a parallel event to the First World Conference on Women held in Mexico in 1975.

A friend remembers:

She had a remarkable gift of insight that allowed her to see past the superfluous to the essence of an issue or an individual. She was quite a direct person, and you could count on her for an honest answer. She also, as evidenced by her service in the Institute of the Learned, had the ability to focus.

Soon after she completed her service as a Counsellor, she was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Mexico and served it from 1986 to 1992. She continued to serve on the Local Assembly of San Miguel Allende until her passing on April 14, 1994, in Celaya. Her

funeral was held the following day in her hometown.

The Universal House of Justice cabled the National Spiritual Assembly of Mexico on April 18th:

DEEPLY SADDENED LOSS OUTSTANDING PROMOTER FAITH CARMEN BURAFATO. HER EXTENSIVE TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES, CROWNED BY HER MANY YEARS AS COUNSELLOR IN THE AMERICAS, ARE UNFORGETTABLE. MAY HER EXAMPLE INSPIRE THE MEXICAN BELIEVERS NEW HEIGHTS OF DEDICATION. ADVISE HOLD MEMORIAL MEETINGS MEXICO. OFFERING FERVENT PRAYERS PROGRESS HER NOBLE SOUL ABHÁ KINGDOM. KINDLY CONVEY HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES HER HUSBAND, RELATIVES AND FRIENDS.

SUSAN MCKECHNIE 1901–1994

On November 22, 1948, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles cabled the Guardian that Ada Williams from Manchester had pioneered to Glasgow thereby opening to the Faith the west of Scotland. A month later Adib and Zarin Taherzadeh from Iran followed Ada, and on March 26, 1949, Susan McKechnie became the first Glaswegian to accept the Faith.

Susan was born on May 4, 1901. Some six years earlier her sister, Annie Parker, had been sent by the British Government to Canada as a child to work as a farm laborer. Annie settled permanently in Canada, married William Harrigan, and in 1937 became a Bahá'í. Annie began to trace her natural family in Scotland



Susan McKechnie

and through correspondence introduced them to the Bahá'í Faith. She eventually wrote to the British National Spiritual Assembly asking for someone to contact her sister Susan. When Glasgow became a goal town during the British Six Year Plan (1944–1950), Susan was visited by a traveling teacher and National Spiritual Assembly member, David Hofman. She was also visited by some of the pioneers and later by traveling teachers from the first goal town in Scotland—Edinburgh. Among the latter was Luṭfu'lláh Ḥakím, who became a regular visitor, and who said how very much “at home” he felt with the family.

From the outset Susan showed tremendous courage and dedication. Living in a sprawling council estate that was strictly divided into Catholic and Protestant areas, on the day following her declaration she placed a poster in the window of her house inviting inquiries about the Faith. There followed a period of intense teaching activity. Her sons Alex and Thomas accepted

the Faith in April 1950—Alexander being the first Bahá'í youth in Scotland. When Dick Backwell pioneered from Edinburgh to Glasgow, the formation of the Assembly and the triumphant conclusion of the Six Year Plan were assured. Susan and her son Thomas were among the native Scots on that first Assembly.

Susan's brother, Tommy Parker, was concerned that his two sisters, Susan and Annie, had become Bahá'ís and had divided the strongly Catholic family. He consulted his priest and taught his children to pray for the souls of their aunts. His daughter Ann, about five years old, told her teachers, and they and the priest all promised to pray for them. Tommy, however, despite weak eyesight and with only gaslight in the house, studied Bahá'í books, sometimes for four or five hours at night, standing under the light so as to be able to read. A final altercation between Tommy and the priest was so loud that it woke Ann from her sleep. Tommy explained to her that the Bahá'í teachings were true, and the next day he told Susan he wanted to become a Bahá'í. This was in 1952. Tommy and Susan were very close, and there was great joy when the Parkers moved from their tenement room to a council house in 1955. Susan helped with the move, and Kathleen Hornell, a Bahá'í traveling teacher, came with a Wedgwood tea set as a housewarming present, which Susan and Tommy were able to use when they invited their neighbors in to tell them about the Faith.

Susan and her family, badly hit by unemployment and living in a small council house, continued to extend loving hospitality to all the Bahá'ís who came to Glasgow, and she was indefatigable in her dedicated service to the Faith, without which Glasgow would not have developed in the way it did. Her loving spirit attracted many to the Faith in those early years.

From her home it was some six to seven miles to Glasgow, and frequently Susan did not have enough money for the bus fare to attend the meetings in the center of town, and it became a subject of debate whether she, her daughter, and niece Ann should walk there and take the bus back. She never failed to attend the meetings.

Although her sister, Annie Harrigan, had introduced Susan to the Faith in the later 1940s, they did not meet until 1957, when Susan traveled to Canada.

When she was on her deathbed, Susan's son Frank read Bahá'í prayers and her favorite *Hidden Words* to her. She passed away on May 2, 1994, at the age of ninety-three. She was buried with a most moving and dignified funeral in the Alexandria Cemetery, Dunbartonshire, near the banks of Loch Lomond. On May 4 the Universal House of Justice sent its condolences to the National Assembly of the United Kingdom:

SADDENED NEWS PASSING MAID-SERVANT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, SUSAN MCKECHNIE. SHE CONTRIBUTED GREATLY ESTABLISHMENT BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY GLASGOW EARLY YEARS BRITISH SIX YEAR PLAN CULMINATING FORMATION FIRST SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY THAT CITY. THE SERVICES SHE RENDERED WITH SELFLESS AND LOVING DEVOTION ARE FONDLY REMEMBERED. PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HER RADIANT SOUL. CONVEY LOVING SYMPATHY MEMBERS HER FAMILY.

From an article by Phillip Hainsworth

EBRAHIM SADJED

(Ibráhím Sájid)

1907–1994

GRIEVED NEWS PASSING PROFESSOR EBRAHIM SADJED, DEVOTED SERVANT OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH FAITHFUL PROMOTER HIS CAUSE. PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS SOUL ALL WORLDS GOD. EXTEND LOVING SYMPATHY MEMBERS FAMILY.

Universal House of Justice
May 12, 1994

Mr. Ebrahim Sadjed was born in a Bahá'í family on January 14, 1907, in Káshán, Iran. His grandfather, Mírzá Hášim, was an early believer who had the honor of receiving Tablets from Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, one of which bestowed upon him the title of "Ghayúr" (zealous or fearless). His father, Mírzá Sha'bán, also received a Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Mr. Sadjed lived with his parents for some time in Iráq. This was at the time when Hájí 'Arab was accused of burning a copy of the Qur'án and was martyred. Of that event, he said:

One day they closed the shops and the city went into an uproar. We were so scared that we did not leave our house. They were saying that Hájí 'Arab-i-Bábí had burnt a Qur'án and he must be killed. Poor Hájí 'Arab, he did not know anything about this. He had left town for business. A woman came to our home one day, perhaps to borrow something, and she stayed for a short time. About an hour after she left, thousand[s] of people, shouting "Yá 'Alí", rushed toward our home. Apparently, the woman had told them that Hájí 'Arab was hidden in our



Ebrahim Sadjed

home. There was a knock on the door and the head of police entered. He said, "We will not harm you, but we have received a report that Hájí 'Arab is hidden in your home." My father told him that this was not true. The head of police asked if they could search the house, to which my father agreed. In a second, our home was filled with outraged, prejudiced people. They were searching the house while swearing at us and breaking everything in sight. A mullah demanded from the head of police that my father should be whipped until he revealed the hiding place of Hájí 'Arab, but the head of police did not pay attention to him. They left and returned after a few hours. The head of police said that the neighbors were not satisfied and they wanted to search every corner themselves. They barged in again and looked everywhere. They even examined the inside of flour barrels and broke them when they found out that there was no one hiding in

them. There was such a turmoil! That night, the Bahá'ís gathered and said that the people had decided to kill us the next day. So my father decided that we should leave the city immediately. We escaped that night and arrived in Hamadán at the home of a Hájí Raḥím who was my father's trading partner. From there we went to Tíhrán.

After finishing his elementary education at the Tarbíyat School, Mr. Sadjed finished his secondary schooling studying science. He continued his education in mathematics and obtained his diploma. He was then called to military service and became an artillery officer.

Mr. Sadjed had a special love for classical Persian music. He completed studies to learn the tar (lute) in Darvish school in 1932. He also studied music under the renowned Mírzá 'Abdu'lláh who was a maestro at the court of Naşirí'd-Dín Shah. He was able to pay for his education by giving calligraphy lessons. Mr. Sadjed gave a number of concerts to large audiences to raise funds for the Faith and for the Tarbíyat School, performing mostly music he had composed. During the celebrations of the Centenary of the Declaration of the Báb (1944), he gave concerts in Qazvín and directed an all-girl choir.

He married Mr. Ibráhím Vaḥdat's daughter, and the fruits of the marriage were four children who are all under the shadow of the Cause and are living in Austria and the United States. Mr. Sadjed worked as a high school teacher and an inspector for the Ministry of Education and Culture in Tíhrán and in other cities. For his services he received many medals from the ministry.

He was a member of various committees in Iran. He pioneered with his family to Túsirgán, where they stayed for two

years before returning to Tíhrán. When the call to pioneer came from the beloved Guardian to the believers in Iran, Mr. Sadjed requested early retirement and left with his family for Austria, settling in Linz. For a while the entire family lived in a small hotel room because his pension would not allow them more. After some time they managed to buy a small house. When his benefits were cut entirely, he started a business selling Persian carpets, which provided him with opportunities to meet people and to teach the Faith. One of his clients said that it seemed that Mr. Sadjed was more interested in talking about religion than selling carpets. During the time he lived in Linz, Mr. Sadjed was a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly, and he gave a number of fund-raising concerts for the Faith.

Mr. Sadjed had a long-lasting friendship with Mr. Faydí from the time they were in school together. During one of the trips Mr. Faydí made to Austria, Mr. Sadjed was seriously ill, and there was no hope that he would live. Mr. Faydí offered a healing prayer on his behalf and asked for his recovery. Mr. Sadjed soon regained his strength and always credited his health to Mr. Faydí's supplication.

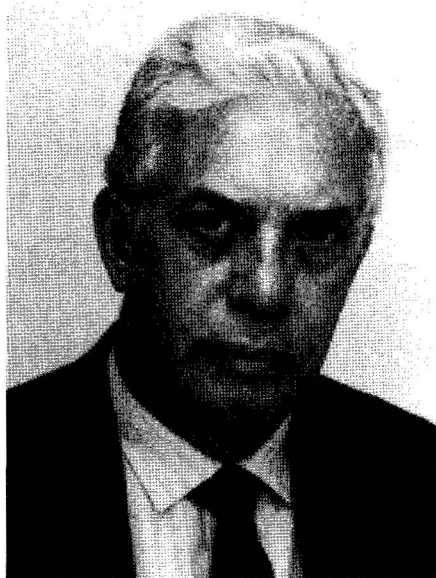
Mr. Sadjed was engaged in teaching the Faith until his last days. He passed to the Abhá Kingdom in Linz on May 6, 1994, at the age of eighty-seven.

Adapted from an article by Huschmand Sadjed (Translated from Persian)

LUIS AUGUSTO SÁNCHEZ
1933–1994

The Universal House of Justice was grieved to receive the news of the passing of Mr. Luis Sánchez. It recalls with affection his steadfast, persevering and dedicated services to the Cause of God in Colombia, including many years as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly. A bountiful reward assuredly awaits him in the Abhá Kingdom. The House of Justice will offer prayers in the Holy Shrines for the progress of his noble soul and for the solace of his dear family.

Department of the Secretariat
May 30, 1994



Luis Augusto Sánchez

Luis Augusto Sánchez Bernal was born in Bogotá on August 4, 1933, and passed away in the same city on May 26, 1994. He was born to Luis Augusto Sánchez Cuervo and Aura María Bernal de Sánchez, who also had a daughter by the name of Gloria.

In 1942 the Sánchez couple, ignited by a strong spirit of search, found Gerard Sluter, the first pioneer to Colombia, who was then taking advantage of his business trips from the United States to search for opportunities to promote the Faith. The Sánchezes heard him speak to a Theosophical group, and in this manner ten-year-old Luis started to receive the revitalizing breezes of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. The task of his spiritual education was especially carried out by his mother, "Mamita Aura" (Mummy Aura), the first Bahá'í in Colombia to whom much reverence and consideration was shown and to whom attentive care was given until her passing in August 1985.

After graduating from high school Luis traveled to the United States where he was qualified as an electronic engineer specializing in radio, TV, and communications. He returned to Colombia in 1958 and married Dorys Bretón the following year. Theirs was the second Bahá'í marriage in Colombia, and for it to take place it was necessary to have the permission of the religious authorities. In response the bride and the groom were excommunicated from the Catholic Faith. This ignited the flame of love and steadfastness in their home, which was blessed with three children who were raised under the shadow of the Faith.

Luis's devotion and steadfastness were clearly demonstrated when he preferred to resign from his job in a prestigious company instead of participating in the fraudulent acts his employers had proposed to him. His courageous action manifested the reality of the expression "The sword of a virtuous character and upright conduct is sharper than blades

of steel."⁹⁴ His job crisis ended when he was appointed as a production manager at Motorola–National Panasonic where both colleagues and employees benefited from his innocent kindness, impartiality, and sense of justice—qualities which earned him admiration as a Bahá'í.

Luis first served on the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Bogotá in 1959, and he was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Colombia in 1967, serving on it until his passing. At different times he was its chairman, treasurer, or secretary. In 1985 he assisted in the delivery of the "The Promise of World Peace" statement to prominent individuals in Colombia, personally handing this important document to the magistrates of the Supreme Court of Justice. As a member of the National Spiritual Assembly, he participated in the election of the Universal House of Justice on three occasions. He and Dorys were also in charge of the construction and direction of the Aipe Institute in Huila.

His friends remember him as a person of elegant demeanor who was decisive and restrained in his manners, having a strong and unhurried tone of voice denoting authority, yet possessing a great sense of humor. He had a great sensitivity for beautiful things.

He was generous and ready to respond to the needs of the poor and, above all, to the needs of the Bahá'í Fund to the point that Dorys, who managed their domestic budget, would sometimes ask him if a shortage did not worry him. He would respond, "What can I do if my pockets always have holes?" He never did anything without consulting with his wife, whom he

helped with the household chores. He also distinguished himself as a good cook.

He took the news of his diagnosis with serenity. He bore with stoicism and radiant acquiescence the hardships of pancreatic and liver cancer without complaint. It was he who asked the visitors at his bedside to keep up their spirits and not to suffer because of his imminent passing. He understood the significance of the Hidden Word "I have made death a messenger of joy to thee. Wherefore dost thou grieve? I made the light to shed on thee its splendour. Why dost thou veil thyself therefrom?"

Dorys recounts that he had coordinated the arrangements of his funeral, had identified appropriate prayers and quotes, and had even selected the readers. He passed away at the age of sixty.

Translated from an article written in Spanish and submitted by The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Colombia

ARTHUR IRWIN

?–1994

The Universal House of Justice has received your email messages . . . and was saddened to learn of the death of dear Arthur Irwin. His services, particularly in the field of native teaching, have won him an enduring place in the annals of the Cause in Canada. Kindly assure the members of his family of the loving prayers of the House of Justice in the Holy Shrines for the progress of his soul.

Department of the Secretariat
June 23, 1994

From the time of his declaration in 1947, Arthur Irwin dedicated his life to Bahá'u'lláh. In 1948 he was a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Montreal.

⁹⁴ *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1988, 2001 printing), p. 29.

Before the beginning of the Ten Year Crusade, the Guardian urged Arthur and his wife, Lily Ann, to teach among the First Nations and Inuit peoples of Canada. In 1955 the Guardian advised him to accept an appointment to the Ministry of Northern Affairs and Resources of the Canadian government, overseeing the development of the petroleum and mineral resources in the lands of the First Nations people—a job that brought Irwin in close contact with native leaders over a twenty-one year period.

In 1956 Arthur and Lily Ann began teaching the Faith on the Peigan Reserve in Alberta, encouraged and assisted by a number of the Hands of the Cause and by many others. They planted the seeds of the First Nations Bahá'í community in Canada, opening the Blood and Blackfoot Reserves to the Faith and assisting the teaching efforts on many other reserves before the end of the Ten Year Crusade.

Arthur's skill in teaching the natives has been described as follows:

Angus [Cowan, later a Counsellor] had invited the Bahá'ís from Regina to Asham's Beach [Pasqua Reserve] and told them there would be a great big meeting. When the Bahá'ís got there, there weren't any people on the beach and they began to question Angus. But pretty soon a wagon drove up, then an old car, and people began to gather . . . Doug Crofford of Regina chaired the meeting and introduced the two Indian speakers, Noel Crowe and John Anaquod . . . Angus remembered that they joked a lot and told stories on each other's tribe. Then they called on Arthur Irwin to speak. He spoke on the beauty of the Indian religion and its similarity to the Bahá'í Faith. Later one of the Bahá'ís from Regina questioned



Arthur Irwin

Arthur's approach and said to Angus, "wasn't it a shame, here there were all these people and Arthur had a chance to tell them about the Bahá'í Faith and he never told them?"

Angus reflected on this later: "When Arthur spoke to the friends that day, he told them about their own faith. He built a bridge from the Indian faith to the Bahá'í Faith. And he knew what he was doing, and the reason I know that is because pretty near all those people who were at that meeting that day have become Bahá'ís. I'd meet them many places afterwards and they'd become Bahá'ís, and I'd say, 'where did you first hear of the Faith?' And they'd say, 'at that big meeting that day down on Asham's Beach.' You see, it doesn't take much. Well, Arthur really must have done a very wonderful job that day."⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Pat Verge, *Angus: From the Heart; the Life of Counsellor Angus Cowan*, Springtide Publishing, Cochrane, Alberta, 1999, p. 58.

Later, when the Irwins moved to Ottawa, they continued to teach on reserves across Canada, and Arthur served on committees for indigenous people.

Sociologist and Bahá'í scholar Dr. Will van den Hoonaard, drawing upon "Early Native Teaching," an unpublished memoir written by Arthur in 1983, noted:

The importance of reaching the native population of Canada was repeatedly emphasized by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1916 . . . It took another 32 years before the Bahá'í Community embarked on the work of teaching the Bahá'í Faith to the native people. When the Canadian Bahá'í Community formed its own administrative body in 1948 it was given a goal [by the Guardian] which called for "the participation of Eskimos and Red Indians in membership to share administrative privileges in local institutions of the Faith in Canada." At that time there were only three native believers in Canada.

Very few Bahá'ís, however, thought of undertaking Bahá'í work among the Indians until 1953 . . . Bahá'í efforts to be of service to native people, with the dual purpose of promoting the Bahá'í Faith through social action, were often undertaken through the establishment of organizations involving Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís alike . . . Between 1960–63 the first surge of large-scale enrollments of native believers took place.⁹⁶

One such organization was the Yukon Indian Advancement Association established in Whitehorse in 1956 at the suggestion of Arthur and Lily Ann. It was followed

by the Native Society of Edmonton and the Indian Friendship group in Calgary. In his memoir, Arthur wrote:

In the fall of 1960, Lily Ann and I consulted with our Indian friends, Dorothy and Joe Francis and with Indian acquaintances through my work with Indian Affairs, on the formation of a social club where Indians and non-Indians could come together. At this time, there were strong prejudices among most non-native Calgarians expressed against the Indians. They were excluded on racial grounds from some of the hotels and restaurants, and qualified Indians had difficulty finding employment. By early 1961 the club, later known as the Native Friendship Club, attracted gatherings of 50 to 150 people, more or less equally divided between Indians and whites. We met monthly for dances, speakers, movies, addresses, and just visiting. Meetings were held in Calgary or on one of the three nearby Indian Reserves: Sarcee, Blackfoot, and Stoney. Through this club we became friends with many lovely Indian people, a few of whom became Bahá'ís. Notable amongst these were Counsellor Ed Many Bears and his wife, Jean, of the Blackfoot Band, the first Bahá'ís of their Band.⁹⁷

In 1974 Arthur and Lily Ann had an opportunity to teach in Central America where the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) assigned him to a position with the government of Belize as an adviser on petroleum policy.

Following his retirement from government service in 1977, Arthur engaged in long traveling teaching trips by motorcycle to the First Nations peoples across Canada.

⁹⁶ Will C. van den Hoonaard, "Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Canadian Bahá'í Community," Department of Sociology, University of New Brunswick, June 5, 1991.

⁹⁷ Cited by Verge, *Angus: From the Heart*, p. 309.

He also made traveling teaching trips in Belize and in three of the Windward Islands by motorcycle.

In 1981 Arthur had helped to establish the first Carib Indian Spiritual Assembly in Dominica. A year later he returned to deepen the community and to teach in St. Lucia. He was accompanied by Earl Healy of the Blood Reserve. Together they also spoke in schools about the history and tradition of the Canadian Indians.

In 1983 he pioneered for seven years to St. Lucia where he served in village teaching and administration. In 1988, with the approval of the National Assembly, he initiated a mobile institute program.

After his return to Canada he continued to teach on the Peigan and Blackfoot Reserves, and he was instrumental in developing Bahá'í literature for those with low literacy.

Arthur Irwin passed away on June 10, 1994, after a debilitating illness. He was teaching until his last breath, encouraging the interest of hospice workers who attended him.

GERT VAN DER GARDE 1922-1994

Gert van der Garde passed away on June 12, 1994, at the age of seventy-two years in Culemborg, the Netherlands. The Universal House of Justice wrote to the National Spiritual Assembly of that country on June 16:

DISTRESSED NEWS PASSING GERT VAN DER GARDE. HIS DEVOTED SERVICES TO THE CAUSE OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH IN THE NETHERLANDS ARE WARMLY REMEMBERED. ASSURE PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES FOR PROGRESS HIS SOUL ALL WORLDS OF GOD AND FOR

CONSOLATION MEMBERS HIS BEREAVED FAMILY.

Gert was a sincere and courageous man who strove for perfection. Coming from a very orthodox Protestant background that, as a young man, he could no longer endorse, he set out on an intensive quest. With a strong sense of deep personal need and sincerity, he investigated Judaism, Catholicism, and the beliefs and practices of the Jehovah's Witnesses. With Zoroaster he found some clues, but it was not until January of 1961 that he found what he was looking for. That was when he and his wife, Mas, became followers of Bahá'u'lláh. Gert was like a torch and driven to do everything in his power to fulfill, as perfectly as possible, the goals that had been set.

The propagation of the Bahá'í Faith in the Netherlands had barely begun with the end of the Second World War. There was no national administration, and there were only two Local Spiritual Assemblies, one in Amsterdam, the other in The Hague.



Gert van der Garde

The lives of Gert and Mas, and those of a handful of fellow believers at that time, were closely associated with the development of the administrative institutions of the Faith.

The van der Garde family lived in Arnhem, one of the European goal towns of Shoghi Effendi's Ten Year Crusade. From the time of its establishment, Gert served as a member of the Spiritual Assembly of Arnhem. For many years he served as chairman and stimulated the community through his personality and position. In those early years technical provisions at Bahá'í events were limited. It was Gert who drove through city and countryside with his audio equipment. He was never too tired to render his services at activities around the country from which he acquired much experience.

He turned his hobby into his profession and established his own recording studio. In the course of time he helped to make historic recordings at international conferences, such as at Palermo, Frankfurt, and Langenhain. He was an animated speaker, contributing his skills to newspaper interviews and radio broadcasts.

Gert was a member of the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Netherlands elected in 1962. A recording made by him of the first National Convention has been preserved. The next year he participated in the first International Convention in Haifa and the election of the Universal House of Justice. He also served for many years as a member of the Auxiliary Board, supported in this difficult and time-consuming work by his wife and two children. His was a close family deeply committed to family values.

After many years in Arnhem, Gert and Mas went to live in Culemborg to be close to their beloved daughter, Ineke, their son-in-law, and grandchildren. Two years before

his passing his illness began to reveal itself. He was forced to consider undergoing critical surgeries, operations that eventually sapped him of all of his strength. In a family as close as theirs, the passing of a husband, father, and grandfather was a severe loss. Only after his ascension did the Dutch Bahá'í community learn the degree to which he had quietly helped and assisted so many others—people within whom the memory of Gert van der Garde will assuredly live on.

Mas van der Garde

VERNON GOODALE VOELZ 1920-1994

Be assured of the ardent prayers of the Universal House of Justice in the Holy Shrines for the progress of the soul of Mr. Vernon Voelz throughout the worlds of God. Kindly also assure his dear family and friends of its prayers for the consolation of their hearts. The services which Mr. Voelz rendered as a pioneer in Brazil and also in the United States are warmly remembered.

Department of the Secretariat
July 14, 1994

“Sculptor Vernon Voelz Molded His Messages” was the caption to the article that appeared in the *Sarasota Herald Tribune* announcing his passing on July 11, 1994. He died at the age of seventy-four in Gainesville, Florida, where he had resided for the last eight months of his life. For forty years he lived in Sarasota, Florida, where he and his wife, Mary, helped to establish the first Bahá'í Assembly in the area. For many years Vernon served as its chairman. In addition to his wife he is survived by three daughters and five grandchildren.

In the sophisticated arts community of Sarasota, he became a well-known and highly respected artist and metal sculptor—"an artist's artist." While most of his works are in private collections, a number form a permanent part of public buildings in the area. In addition to numerous Florida cities, his work has been exhibited in Washington DC and New York City. He also lectured and gave demonstrations in colleges and universities. He was known as a Bahá'í, and each of his works not only bore his insignia but also the Bahá'í year in which it was created.

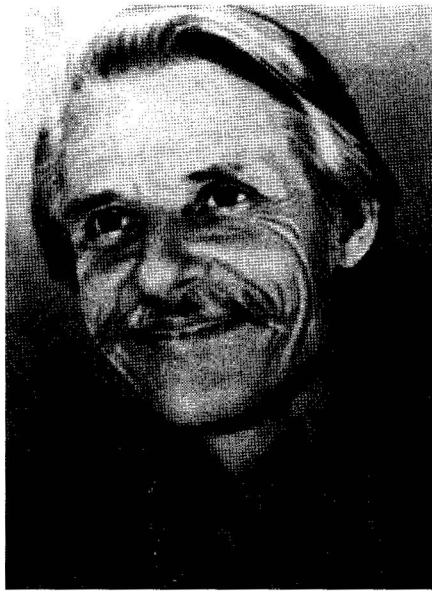
During the Ten Year Crusade he and his family pioneered to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Vernon assisted in the purchase of Brazil's first Ḥazíratu'l-Quds, and he helped establish the Bahá'í Publishing Trust there. He also held art classes and exhibited silver designs.

Born on January 16, 1920, in Kenosha, Wisconsin, he was the youngest of five children of Louis and Genevieve Voelz.⁹⁸ His mother and maternal grandparents became believers in Chicago, Illinois, where the Faith was first mentioned in the West,⁹⁹ while his father and paternal grandmother became Bahá'ís in the city of Kenosha, the second oldest Bahá'í community in America. All his parents and grandparents became believers within the first ten years of the Bahá'í Faith in America. His paternal grandmother, Mrs. Emma Voelz, married Henry Goodale, a Bahá'í from Chicago who served on its first Spiritual Assembly.

In 1912 Henry and Emma Goodale invited 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Kenosha, offering

⁹⁸ See "In Memoriam," *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XIX, p. 637.

⁹⁹ The building in which the name of Bahá'u'lláh was first mentioned in America in 1893 at the Colombian Exposition during the Congress of Religions is the same that now houses the Art Institute of Chicago from which Vernon graduated.



Vernon Goodale Voelz

the upper apartment of their home to the Master and His party, which they occupied for a day and a half. The Goodales vacated their quarters during this time; however, Emma returned to cook for the Master and the other guests. Vernon did not know any of his grandparents as all were deceased prior to his birth, Emma passing away one month earlier.

Throughout the years Vernon's parents maintained a high level of Bahá'í activity that resulted in the complete devotion of all their children. Of his childhood Vernon wrote:

The years of education through grade and high school were years that gave me a tremendous consciousness of the world. Our home was frequented by people of all walks of life. Among them were scholars, writers, artists and architects; and it was during that time that I had contact with Horace Holley, Mark Tobey and Charles Morgan, three Bahá'ís outstanding in the field

of writing, painting and architecture. The impressions made upon me by these men assumed great importance in orienting my thinking toward art.

Vernon showed an artistic ability in his early years. As a youth he began to make plaques of the Master's profile. After serving in World War II, while married and with one child, he enrolled in the Art Institute of Chicago from which he graduated in 1952 receiving a Foreign Travel Fellowship which enabled him to go to Mexico.

In 1968 the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States requested Vernon to make the awards that were presented at the Bahá'í Human Right Awards Banquet held in Washington DC. The design he created was very unique, offering visually the concept that as God has ordered the universe and permitted man to be sustained within it, "Human Rights are God-given Rights." Over the next few years the National Spiritual Assembly asked Vernon to make additional awards.

An art writer for the *St. Petersburg Times* (Florida) wrote in 1963:

Voelz assumes an almost unique position in contemporary art. In a period which has been called "The Age of Anxiety" he insists upon expressing personal joy. In an age without faith he still discerns positive forces which can bring "an era of peace and justice."

About the same time, an art writer for the *Sarasota Herald Tribune* noted:

Voelz long noted for his extra-ordinary inventiveness and technical ability has a unique outlook regarding his work. He is a very serious sculptor, and he works extremely hard in exploring new avenues of expression through form and through experimentation with

materials. Subjects are important to him and he has a close affinity to nature and its manifestations in movement and in the abstract qualities of natural form. But he has a finely developed sense of humor and is capable of exercising it at no expense to the seriousness of his purpose.

A professor of art at Brandeis University wrote:

In the case of Vernon Voelz's sculptures, I believe I can say I know why I like them. They are doing something rather rare and valuable. In Mr. Voelz's sculptures we have a sophisticated expression of feeling about things outside art, a skilled and original comment on the World around us. It can enhance the scope of our visual experience.

In a number of his pieces Vernon used kinetics and introduced the element of sound.

Lauretta Voelz

IRENE JACKSON WILLIAMS 1920–1994

According to her husband, Victor, Irene had expressed no interest in traveling before the Ten Year Crusade appeal of the Guardian. When Shoghi Effendi asked for pioneers for Australasia, Irene determined to arise and go, choosing Portuguese Timor. Because of political turmoil there at the time, she was advised not to go. Fiji was suggested to her instead, and so with Fiji as her destination she boarded a Tasman Airways Sunderland seaplane in New Zealand.

I had no idea of the work expected of me, or how long I had to stay, what the situation was like in Fiji, and whether



Irene Jackson Williams

I would be able to cope, or would I be like the other white people working there and consider myself superior and keep aloof. I had the ideals, but what about the practice of them in my own life? These were my fears and thoughts as I flew overnight by flying boat via Noumea and then on to Laucala Bay, Suva. The Guardian had written that he wanted the pioneers to be at their posts by 21st March, 1954. I arrived at 4 PM on that very day.¹⁰⁰

Irene took up residence in a boarding house for expatriates on Desveaux Street. She soon found employment in accounting for the Department of Public Works and then with the Fiji Broadcasting Corporation, a job she kept for twenty-two years. She was warned against "mixing with the locals," and her movement was somewhat restricted. It was said that she

had to ask her bosses for permission to go to other towns and villages. "Why would she want to go?" they wondered.

When Austin Bowden-Kerby visited her in 1975 and later in 1978, it was a different story. Austin recalls:

Irene kept me moving. When I was leaving, she told me that I was the only travel teacher who had ever come and gone all over Fiji. I was surprised. I thought everybody did it—I was only following her example. She trained me how to be a travel teacher.

Irene spent all the time she could visiting villages. She would go everywhere. She would never just sit around on the weekend—she would think where she could go. During all this time, she did not have a car. She did all this traveling by bus or on foot. She walked in the mud. Nothing stopped Irene. I have heard from others that even after her bus accident, she was still going out—with strict orders for everyone to keep hands off as she picked a trail.

She did not tell me what to do. She showed me what to do. She insisted that it should be Fijians who enrolled other Fijians. Enrolling was not the job of travel teachers or pioneers. They should be stimulating the local believers.

Irene never let any materials go to waste. Pictures from an out-of-date calendar got pasted on a new sheet with a quotation and given as a gift to whatever family she visited.

According to her passport Irene Frances Jackson was born in Loxton, South Australia, on December 3, 1920. Her father was a sea captain from England, whom she described as being "hard and stern." Her mother, on the other hand, was an Australian—a "very gentle, very kind woman."

¹⁰⁰ Irene Williams quoted in Graham Hassal's, "The Bahá'í Faith in the Pacific," January 2000.

Life was not easy for the Jackson family. They lived on a fruit farm in Paracombe Hills in Adelaide, and her mother "went through hell" trying to raise their eight children on so little money. One year the children, trying to be helpful, picked the fruit, but it had not matured, and all of it had to be thrown out. The mother "cried buckets, but never said a thing about it."

It was Irene's fair-minded sense of justice and lack of prejudice that led her to the Faith. Irene's family belonged to the Brethren Church. When she was in her early twenties, one of the ministers spoke disparagingly of the Prophet Muhammad. Irene determined to discover the truth for herself and started reading all the books she could find. In the course of her research she came across the Bahá'í Faith. She declared in 1948, crediting Merle Heggie as being her spiritual mother.

Merle remembers:

Irene and I were aware of each other while students in 1940 at the Adelaide Teacher's College, but being in different years of study we never got to know each other at that time. In 1943 I had been posted to Kapunda High School and Irene was there also, as the Commerce teacher. We became close friends; she introduced me to many people and helped me to settle in this South Australian country town. As an isolated Bahá'í, I arranged two public meetings to which I sent, with Irene's help, invitations to local professionals, businessmen and many others. After the meetings some of the teachers, and particularly the Principal, would bring up the subject of Bahá'í for discussion, but in retrospect, not Irene. However, our friendship grew and we had lots of fun together, laughing so much that we both fell off her bicycle.

I do not recall Irene voicing any interest in the Faith—not to me. To my amazement, my Aunt Rose Hawthorne,¹⁰¹ a very early Bahá'í in Adelaide, directed me in no uncertain terms to hurry up and offer some literature to Irene, who had obviously expressed her interest to Rose sometime that year.

Irene lost no time in becoming an active Bahá'í, deepening, teaching and pioneering on the homefront, as she did in Whyalla and Clare and then overseas to Fiji.

We both left Kapunda at the end of that year and I saw her occasionally. Rose became her teacher, supported and encouraged her.

Irene's persistence and perseverance brought her to the Faith, and once she embraced it, she was persistent in serving it. Victor later recalled that she fought "tooth and nail" for a Bahá'í section in the Nasinu cemetery. When she finally met with the man who had the authority to grant the request, he asked, "How many Bahá'ís are there in Fiji?"

"Not more than two thousand," she replied.

"That many?" he asked. Irene just nodded.

"Oh, all right," he said and granted the section. When Victor was recalling this story, the section was nearly full.

Irene met Victor in 1962 when he was being taught the Faith. They married in 1965 and took up residence in the Bahá'í Centre on Pender Street in Suva. Later they moved to Nasinu.

While living in Suva, Irene was a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly and

¹⁰¹ See "In Memoriam," *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XX, pp. 914–16.

served as its secretary for many years. She was elected to and served as secretary to the Regional Spiritual Assembly of the South Pacific, which was established in 1959. As a member of this institution she attended as a delegate the election of the first Universal House of Justice in the Holy Land in 1963. The following year the jurisdiction of Regional Assembly was divided between the South West Pacific Ocean based in Honaira, Solomon Islands, and the South Pacific Ocean based in Suva, Fiji. Irene was elected to and served as secretary when Fiji formed its own National Spiritual Assembly in 1970. She was also an Auxiliary Board member for many years, retiring in the 1980s.

After a night's illness, on July 14, 1994, Irene passed to the Abhá Kingdom. Her funeral service was held at the Bahá'í National Cemetery, attended by a multitude of believers and friends. On the same day, the Universal House of Justice wrote to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Fiji Islands:

We are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Mrs. Irene Williams who served the Faith in the Fiji Islands for a period of four decades as a pioneer from Australia. Her distinguished contributions to the development of the Fijian Bahá'í community included service as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly and as its Secretary for many years, and later, as an Auxiliary Board member. She will long be remembered for her strenuous endeavours in the establishment and operation of the Fijian Bahá'í Publishing Trust, and for her total commitment to the promotion of the interests of the Faith. You are advised to hold memorial meetings

in her honour in Fiji. Kindly convey our condolences to her family and friends, together with our assurance of prayers at the Sacred Threshold for the progress of her luminous soul.

Based on articles provided by Merle Heggie, Idris Hussein, Austin Bowden-Kerby, and Victor Williams

JANET N. WARD 1904–1994

Born Janet Nundy in 1904,¹⁰² she first heard of the Bahá'í Faith in 1922 while a student at Cornell University. It was introduced to her by her husband-to-be Nairne Forsyth Ward¹⁰³ and the Bahá'í community of Ithaca, New York. Janet became a Bahá'í shortly before her marriage in 1926.¹⁰⁴ She had said, "From a little girl, I was looking for a religion that accepted ALL people—even though they never heard of Jesus Christ."

Forsyth's career in academia and later industry found the Wards moving across the country. Janet served on the Spiritual Assemblies of Berkeley, California, and Richmond Beach, Washington, and she helped form the Assembly of Tempe, Arizona. She was also on the Geyserville Summer School Committee and the American Indian Committee. During their many years in Berkeley, she worked in statistics for the US Department of Commerce and taught mechanical drawing at the Bentley School.

¹⁰² December 6, 1904, Westfield, New York. Her parents were Charles H. Nundy and Bertha M. (Fowler) Nundy.

¹⁰³ See "In Memoriam," *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XV, pp. 451–53.

¹⁰⁴ July 17, 1926, in Westfield, New York.



Janet N. Ward

In 1959, after their three children were grown and married¹⁰⁵ and Forsyth had retired, they decided to pioneer to Africa. Their personal property was disposed of, and five trunks of necessities were shipped to East Africa. En route to Uganda they visited the Holy Land, having been granted permission for pilgrimage. Then providence offered them the most unique and honored privilege of their years of service. The Hands of the Cause of God residing in the Holy Land invited them to remain in 'Akká as custodians of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh and the Mansion of Bahjí, a post they accepted and served with devotion. Thousands of Bahá'í pilgrims and visitors to Bahjí remember how lovingly and graciously they were served by the Wards.

In 1969 Janet and Forsyth, because of his illness, planned to return to the United States. Again providence intervened. Forsyth quietly died while walking

¹⁰⁵ Nairne Forsyth Jr., Alicia Nundy, and Roderic Charles.

in the gardens at Bahjí and was laid to rest in the Bahá'í Cemetery in Haifa. Instead of returning to her homeland, Janet went on to assist in the formation of the National Spiritual Assembly of Trinidad and Tobago and then travel taught in Belize, Taiwan, the Caroline Islands, and the British Isles. She pioneered to Bermuda and later to the Bahamas.

She returned to California, and while the last years of Janet's life were filled with pain and physical suffering, yet she persevered in attracting souls, serving on the Local Assembly of Santa Clara, keeping her home open to firesides, and performing volunteer community work. A dedicated Bahá'í of almost sixty years, Janet N. Ward passed away in Santa Clara, California, July 20, 1994. Upon hearing the news of her death, the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih *Khánum* wrote to the family:

I was sorry to hear of the passing of Janet. She was a woman with much personality and such capacity for making permanent friends. I always remember when she and Forsyth were in Bahjí and what an asset they were when they served at the World Centre.

Janet will be remembered by people the world over for her generous heart, her radiant spirit, and her life of pure and faithful service to the Cause of God.

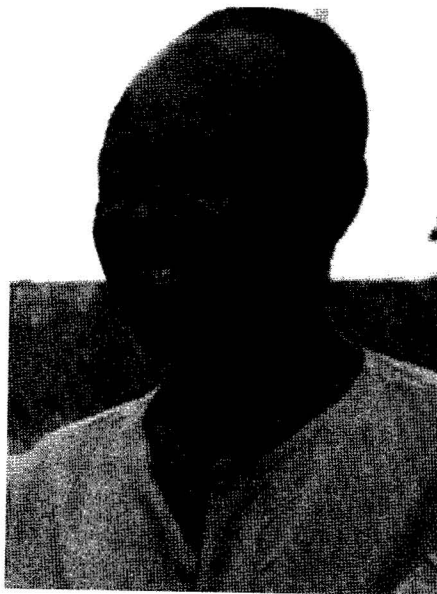
Mary Ann Gorski

SUNDAY AYUDIMBA ?–1994

The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of 5 December 1994 regarding the passing of . . . and Mr. Sunday Ayudimba . . . The House of Justice asks that you convey its loving sympathy to the relatives of these two friends and to assure them of the prayers of the House of Justice for the progress of their radiant souls in the heavenly realms of the spirit.

Department of the Secretariat
January 2, 1995

Sunday Ayudimba died on July 26, 1994, after being in a coma for four months. He served on the first National Spiritual Assembly of Equatorial Guinea (1984) and on the National Assembly of Gabon. Until his hospitalization, he was the custodian of the National Bahá'í Centre in Libreville, Gabon. During the last days of his active



Sunday Ayudimba

life, he was a member of the first teaching team engaged in the Entry-by-Troops Project in Fougamou, a small town in Ngounié Province.

GUY MARTAIL 1927–1994

The Universal House of Justice was saddened to learn of the passing of dear Mr. Guy Martail who had the distinction of being among the earliest believers in the Caribbean area. Rest assured that the House of Justice will offer ardent prayers in the Holy Shrines for the progress of his soul in all the worlds of God.

Department of the Secretariat
August 8, 1994

Guy Martail, the first native of Martinique to embrace the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, took his flight to the Abhá Kingdom on August 3, 1994. Over one hundred people attended his funeral and listened to the prayers and Sacred Writings that were read during the religious ceremony.

In the mid-1950s Guy visited French Guiana and met Knight of Bahá'u'lláh Eberhard Koechritz Friedland,¹⁰⁶ a Bahá'í of German origin who taught him the Faith. Guy married my Aunt Meline in 1959, and two to three years later she joined the Cause.

At a time when no Bahá'í institution had yet been established, Guy and Meline were pillars in the Martinique community, receiving Bahá'í visitors including some of the Hands of the Cause of God. After having been a member of the Assemblée spirituelle nationale des Antilles françaises, Guy

¹⁰⁶ See "In Memoriam," *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XX, pp. 1025–26.



Guy Martail

was elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of Martinique at Riḍván 1984.

Guy's first job was as a carpenter/joiner. He later taught himself to become an artistic photographer and specialized in beauty-portrait touch-up. "I have changed my working method," he said to me one day while I was his apprentice, "since I read the *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*." Being a perfectionist he would seek ways to improve his skills, eventually earning a reputation as being one of the best photographers on the island, once mentioned as such in a radio broadcast.

As a mystic my uncle had a very particular way of talking of spirituality. His friends used to call him "the wise one," as he knew how to listen and comfort those in need with simple yet divine words.

As a firm and trusting believer he was very interested in the Holy Writings. Just as he had shared his knowledge of photography with me, he also gave me the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, and for the few

years I lived near Guy (1971–1972) I was deepened by him. When some of the passages from the writings seemed complex to us, we would take advantage of the knowledge of the more erudite visitors such as the Hands of the Cause Dr. Ugo Giachery and Dr. Varqá.

The remains of Guy Martail were interred in the cemetery of Trabout, Fort-de-France, in Martinique, near his parents who became Bahá'ís after their son.

I am convinced that when the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh will have set the world ablaze, many believers will not hesitate to come and meditate at the grave of the first Bahá'í of Martinique.

Translated from an article in French written by Daniel Dispagne

ÁQÁ MUḤAMMAD-ŞÁDIQ MUNJADHIB (Aqa Sadeq Munjazeb) ?–1994

It is with broken hearts that we announce the ascension of the courageous soul, Aqa Sadeq Munjazeb who carried along the torch of the Faith from the most difficult period of Bolshevism to our present time of openness and freedom of the Faith, on 14th August 1994.

On behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Uzbekistan

Mr. Munjazeb is buried in Sháh-zindih Cemetery in Samarkand next to the resting places of two other early believers: his mentor, Mr. Tamḥíd, who was a prolific poet, and Mr. Míraḥrár. It is in the same cemetery that two other prominent figures in the history of the Faith are also buried: the Letter of the Living Mullá 'Alí Bajistání



Áqá Muḥammad-Šádiq Munjadhib

and Dr. At'ullāh Khán-i Afghání, the first declared believer in Samarkand through Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl.

Mas'úd Rawshan

On October 17, 1994, the Department of the Secretariat wrote:

Your message, pertaining to the ascension of the beloved servant of Bahá'u'lláh, Áqá Muḥammad-Šádiq Munjadhib, was conveyed to the Universal House of Justice by Mr. Mas'úd Rawshan.

The House of Justice was grieved by this news and prayed in the Holy Shrines for the progress of the noble soul of that zealous believer.

Mr. Munjadhib was truly devoted to the promotion of the Faith throughout his entire life and raised the banner of the most great guidance in those regions. Furthermore, imprisonment, exile, and severe hardship did not deviate him from

the path of devotion. The believers and especially the friends and family of the deceased will undoubtedly follow in his footsteps and will rise up in service with the same fervour. It is hoped that a monument will be built for him, so that it may remind the friends of the degree of sacrifice endured by that essence of perseverance.

The Universal House of Justice will pray in the Holy Shrines for the Munjadhib family, so that they may, more than ever, be rendered successful in the arenas of service and devotion. The House of Justice will also pray for Mr. Niját Munjadhib.

EDNA CAROLENA FORD 1900–1994

DEPLORE LOSS EDNA CAROLENA FORD WHOSE LONG RECORD SERVICE AS PIONEER MEXICO AND MEMBER NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY THAT COUNTRY ADDS LUSTRE ANNALS FAITH WESTERN HEMISPHERE. SPIRIT HUMILITY, CONSTANCY TEACHING ACTIVITY THIS FAITHFUL, LUMINOUS HANDMAIDEN BAHÁ'U'LLÁH SET WORTHY EXAMPLE SUCCEEDING GENERATIONS. ARDENTLY PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HER VALIANT SOUL ABHÁ KINGDOM.¹⁰⁷

Universal House of Justice
September 27, 1994

¹⁰⁷ The Universal House of Justice, in a separate message to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Mexico, also advised "that memorial gatherings of a devotional character be held throughout your national community in her honour."

Edna Carolena Ford was born in Washington State, in the town of Republic, on March 29, 1900, and in her ninety-fourth year, on September 12, 1994, she left us for the Abhá Kingdom.

At the age of nineteen she went to work for the Bell Telephone Company in Spokane, Washington. In 1932 she moved to Glendale, California, and continued working for the phone company for the next twenty-five years.

In 1952, while enduring severe tests and difficulties, a friend to whom she had turned for help invited her to a fireside and lent her books on the Bahá'í Faith. This gave her great comfort, and in October of that year she made her declaration of faith.

In 1957, after serving on several committees and being on the Glendale Assembly for six years, Edna decided to pioneer. This meant that she would be taking an early retirement after having worked thirty-eight years at the telephone company, making it necessary for her to pioneer to a country where she could live on her reduced pension. After many prayers she decided the place to go was Mexico. She sold all of her possessions, got on a bus for Mexico City, went to the National Spiritual Assembly, and said, "Here I am. Where do you want me to go?" All of this without knowing a single word of Spanish.

Her first post was the city of Puebla, where she stayed for five years. She had very little success in teaching because of the pressures exerted by the other religions. Shortly after leaving Puebla in 1962 she arrived in Mérida, which became her "home base" until 1989. In that year ill health overtook her, and she returned to the United States to live with Joseph and Sara Wilmar in Glendora, California.

During her thirty-two years in Mexico she taught in many cities, towns, and small villages including Campeche, Chiapas, San



Edna Carolena Ford

Cristobal de las Casas, Isla Cozumel, Isla Mujeres, Cuatla, Tabasco, and Tamaulipas, to name just a few. She also visited Belize, Guatemala, and the Dominican Republic. She became a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Mexico in 1963, and as a member of that institution, she participated in the first four elections of the Universal House of Justice. For many years she was given the official title of "Travel Teacher" by the National Assembly and was the only person who set up a scheduled tour and regularly visited all the states in Mexico.

Many people did not know that Edna was a timid, frugal, and cautious Victorian lady who played the piano, loved singing and classical music, and delighted in beautiful things. Who would have suspected that such a delicate woman could have accomplished so much. But armed with the love of the Word of God and secure in the power of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, she marched forward and conquered the dragons of ignorance. By her constancy of

effort, in spite of very limited funds, which caused her to deny herself all but the most basic necessities, and by focusing every thought she could muster on the needs of the community, she guided and led the way. She sought the most inexpensive way to travel, often taking night buses so there would be no hotel bills. She seldom bought new clothing but spent hours patching the used items she had purchased, until it seemed that only patches were holding together the patches.

When returning to America for her annual month's "vacation," she would spend her limited resources on vitamins, shoes, clothing, and medicines for her extended "family" in Mexico, keeping little for herself. Somehow she managed to keep looking, as any proper Victorian lady should, neat and elegant. Though she never learned how to drive, Edna bought two jeeps for the teaching work in remote areas, and through her deputization a Bahá'í was given the bounty of going on pilgrimage. She was ever cheerful and constant in encouraging others to be their best. She listened to others with great sympathy, love, and patience until they emptied their cups of sorrows, and then she filled them with the love of Bahá'u'lláh.

Edna often remembered with great joy her trip to the Great Centenary Jubilee in London in 1963, but she told several friends that the most momentous occasion in her life was the International Teaching Conference in Mérida in February of 1977, one of eight such conferences held around the world. The National Spiritual Assembly of Mexico had worked for two years in preparing for this event that was attended by more than two thousand Bahá'ís from forty-four countries. After the Hand of the Cause Dr. Raḥmatu'lláh Muhájir had introduced the many dignitaries who had worked long and hard for the Faith, he

suddenly asked Edna to come forward. Poor Edna! Completely unsure of what was taking place, she dutifully went up onto the stage, and Dr. Muhájir proceeded to praise her work in Mexico and called her "The Angel of Yucatan." He also reminded the audience that if Edna had not come to the Yucatan Peninsula and had not worked so diligently for the Cause, there would never have been this conference in Mérida.

In many parts of Mexico, especially in the Yucatan, there are many girls and young women named Edna, a name not common in the culture. What a beautiful legacy for a special handmaiden of Bahá'u'lláh.

Sara M. Wilmar

JOHN S. MCHENRY II 1907–1994

GRIEVED NEWS PASSING DEVOTED FOLLOWER BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, COLONEL JOHN S. MCHENRY II. KINDLY CONVEY LOVING SYMPATHY HIS SON, JOHN MCHENRY III, AND OTHER MEMBERS HIS FAMILY. PRAYING HOLY SHRINES HIS SOUL ALL WORLDS GOD.

Universal House of Justice
September 21, 1994

John S. McHenry served the Faith with devotion and a unique enthusiasm for sixty-five years until his passing on September 17, 1994. His resourcefulness, sense of humor, and perseverance in serving Bahá'u'lláh will always be remembered by those who knew him.

Born in Virginia, Illinois, on October 12, 1907, he graduated from the University of Illinois, and in 1929 he married Elizabeth Butler, whom he had known since grade school. During the depths of the Depression (around 1931), he



John S. McHenry II

was guided to the Faith when he purchased the home of the outstanding servant of the Cause Zia Baghdadí¹⁰⁸ in Wilmette, Illinois. John often expressed his gratitude for having been blessed with such marvelous souls who taught him and Elizabeth the Faith. Howard Colby Ives (author of *Portals to Freedom*) became his first teacher, instructing him downstairs in the house, while Mabel Ives taught the Faith to others upstairs.

His other teachers included the Hand of the Cause Corrine True and her daughters Kathryn, Edna, and Arna; the Hand of the Cause Horace Holley and his wife; and Stanwood Cobb.

While struggling through the Depression, John and Elizabeth had two sons, John (III) in 1932 and Peter in 1937. With the entry of the United States into World War II in 1941, John was taken in the Army Air Corps and served as a pilot

¹⁰⁸ See "In Memoriam," *The Bahá'í World*, vol. VII, pp. 535–39.

until the war's end in 1945. Although he had gone through ROTC training at the University of Illinois and became commissioned as an officer before he became a Bahá'í, he was always grateful that he was able to maintain a noncombatant role in the military in conformity with the teachings of the Faith.

During most of the war John was assigned to Tinker Air Force Base near Oklahoma City. There he and Elizabeth promoted and taught the Faith during the first Seven Year Plan. Most memorable to them were the times when the Hand of the Cause Louis Gregory stayed in their home and spoke at meetings and firesides. It was during this time that the indomitable traveling teacher Mabel Ives passed away in Oklahoma City.

Returning to civilian life after the war, John and Elizabeth went back to Wilmette where they continued to open their home for firesides as well as offering accommodation to the believers who visited the Mother Temple from other lands. They also opened their home to a family who needed a home for a year or so.

In 1945 the family moved to Ontario, California, where John established an insurance agency. Firesides continued in their home, and many were attracted to the Faith. Then when the Korean War broke out in 1950, John was taken back into the Air Force; and a new chapter in his life began, taking him to Korea, Japan, and Europe for the next twenty-one years. Even though circumstances during the war did not give him the opportunities to teach the Faith easily, he found indirect ways of promoting the Cause. Once, when serving as the presiding officer at a court-martial, the defense lawyer attempted to ignore a Korean woman who was a key witness by claiming that she was unqualified to testify because she was a Buddhist and

therefore could not swear on the Bible to "tell the truth." John immediately took the opportunity to validate Buddhism, dismissed the defense lawyer's objections, and insisted that the woman testify, making sure that the trial proceeded on the merits of the testimony and evidence.

John also helped to form a Boy Scout troop of Korean boys and furnished them with uniforms.

After completing a tour of duty in Korea, he was sent to Tachikawa, Japan, but he continued to fly back and forth to Korea. He took the opportunity of inviting Don Witzel to accompany him, and together they gathered the newly enrolled Korean Bahá'ís and seekers in small meetings. (Don Witzel, who later served as a Counsellor in South America, had enrolled the first Korean believer in 1951.)

In 1953, when Shoghi Effendi wrote to the friends in Tokyo¹⁰⁹ asking them to find Sachiro Fujita, who had served in Haifa with 'Abdu'l-Bahá as well as the Guardian and who had been sent back to Japan before WWII for his own safety, John, who spoke only English, and David Earl¹¹⁰, who spoke Japanese, set off by automobile in the Kansai area to find Fujita-san. They had an incomplete address which even the Japanese postal service could not locate. Undeterred they searched the countryside for days until they found him. While waiting for the processing of passports and visas, a process that took several months, Fujita lived with John and Elizabeth in Tachikawa. Before Fujita left for Haifa John arranged for his much-needed dental work.

The Japanese translation of Esslemont's *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* was completed

about this time, and John found a way to take a sizeable number of copies to the believers in Taiwan, where many could read Japanese. Somehow he arranged to lead the first squadron of United States Air Force F-86 fighter planes being given to the Taiwanese Air Force to Taipei. While the rest of the planes were fully armed, John removed the machine gun ammunition from his plane and filled the space with the new copies of *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*. When the planes arrived in Taipei, there was much fanfare as they were turned over to the Taiwanese. What was not foreseen was that the Taiwanese wasted no time in repainting and renumbering all of the planes. When John went back to retrieve the books, there was no way of identifying the plane he had flown. With perseverance he found them and was able to present them to the Bahá'í friends.

Returning from Japan about 1955 John tried to reestablish his insurance agency. He encountered many difficulties and subsequently decided to finish out his career with the Air Force. He was sent to Chateaux, France, where he and Elizabeth lived until about 1963. John had been given permission by Shoghi Effendi to make a pilgrimage with his family, but circumstances prevented this. Then came the unexpected passing of the Guardian in 1957, followed by the abortive attempt for leadership and opposition to the Covenant by Joel Marangella and Mason Remey. The National Spiritual Assembly of France was swayed until the Custodians in Haifa sent the Hand of the Cause A. Q. Faizí to France. The marvelous way that Mr. Faizí was able to rescue most of the believers of France led John to renew his application for pilgrimage. In the winter of 1960-61 he took most of his family to Haifa and fulfilled his cherished hope.

By now John was a full colonel nearing the end of his career. Although he was scheduled for an assignment in the United States, he managed to be posted again to Korea for his final tour of duty. He was given the responsibilities of a commander of an organization in Taegu, Korea, in 1964. He and Elizabeth arrived in time for the wedding of their son John to Ok-Sun Pak.

With characteristic resourcefulness and energy John promoted the teaching work for the next seven years in Korea. After his retirement from the Air Force, he and Elizabeth moved to Seoul. He bought a secondhand VW microbus so that the newly enrolled believers and recently formed Spiritual Assemblies in the villages around Seoul could be visited on a more regular basis. With the help of a number of young Korean Bahá'ís, they were able to visit several villages in one evening. John served on the National Spiritual Assembly of Korea from about 1966 to 1971. He was instrumental, in collaboration with Kim Young-yun and others, in the acquisition of the National Bahá'í Center in Seoul. When others were ready to give up the negotiations for purchasing the Hazíratu'l-Quds because of the complexity of the proceedings, multiple ownerships, and liens on the property, John convinced the others that this was a golden opportunity. Thus it was bought at thousands of dollars below the market value. He then spent months remodeling the third floor of the building so that it could be rented out to provide income to the Fund.

For family and health reasons John returned to the United States in 1971, settling in Placitas, New Mexico. There he continued to serve the Faith and traveled to towns and cities in New Mexico giving talks and firesides. Even during his last days and in failing health, he always found a way

to tell those he met about the Faith—his physician, plumbers, a clerk at a hardware store. His unfulfilled hope was to share the Message of Bahá'u'lláh with the Pueblo Indians of the Rio Grande Valley. He made attempts to meet with some of the Pueblo leaders—efforts that, since his passing, are now being continued by the Bahá'ís of Albuquerque.

John McHenry III

ABDU'L RAHMAN ZARQANI
Knight of Bahá'u'lláh
1923-1994

DEEPLY GRIEVED PASSING STEADFAST KNIGHT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH ABDU'L RAHMAN ZARQANI. HIS DEVOTED SERVICES UNFORGETTABLE. URGE BEFITTING MEMORIAL GATHERINGS HIS HONOUR THROUGHOUT COUNTRY.

ASSURE BELOVED MEMBERS FAMILY HEARTFELT SYMPATHY FERVENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS SOUL ABHÁ KINGDOM.

Universal House of Justice
September 26, 1994

Abdu'l Rahman Zarqani was born on October 16, 1923, in old Delhi, India, the eldest child of Muslim parents. His father was Abdul Wahid Sidiqqi and his mother Qadeer un Nissan. As a youth he was a seeker after truth. Somewhat disillusioned by certain aspects of institutionalized religion and eager to find lasting solutions to the problems that he felt beset his world, he investigated briefly the Communist movement but found that it was grounded on materialistic principles only.

When he was about twenty-five years of age, a Bahá'í acquaintance gave him an

¹⁰⁹ John and Elizabeth McHenry were elected to the Local Spiritual Assembly of Tokyo in 1953. They left Japan in September of that year.

¹¹⁰ See David Earl, pp. 345-46.



Abdu'l Rahman Zarqani

invitation to a lecture on the Faith that was given by Mr. Mani Metha.¹¹¹ Abdu'l Rahman's interest was immediately awakened, and he felt inspired. Over the next few years he studied the Bahá'í Faith in great depth. To his astonishment he could find nothing with which he disagreed. Each of his questions was answered, and his troubled soul found solace at last. His new life and journey were about to begin—a journey of trials and suffering, of challenges and victories.

His father was strongly opposed to the Faith, but this did not deter Abdu'l Rahman from openly declaring himself a Bahá'í. Driven away from his home at knifepoint and refused any financial assistance to further his education, he stayed with some friends while he continued his work in a clerical office. He was educated at St. Stephen's High School for Boys where he completed his "O" levels. A solid

educational foundation would serve him in good stead in the years to come.

Abdu'l Rahman served the Faith with great devotion. As a member of the National Youth Committee of India, his lectures and organization skills took him from place to place. At a summer school held at the New Era High School in Panchgani, he met his future bride, Munira, a Burmese of Iranian descent whose roots dated back to the earliest disciples of Bahá'u'lláh.

In 1952 at the age of twenty-nine, he became the youngest secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of his native land. He carried these onerous responsibilities on his youthful shoulders with unswerving devotion and efficiency. In January of the same year he and Munira were wed. Their first daughter, Farida, was born in November. Then came the launching of the Guardian's Ten Year Crusade, which was destined to profoundly alter the course of his life.

He worked tirelessly toward the planning and execution of the New Delhi Conference in 1953. And then the memorable event was over. On December 15, 1953, he expressed his dilemma in a letter to the beloved Guardian. His "overwhelming desire for pioneering" and to answer the Ten Year Crusade call of the Guardian was hampered by the increasing workload at the National Headquarters and by the particulars of his domestic situation. The divine response to his letter came two weeks later on December 30:

APPROVE PIONEERING, URGE PROCEED PROMPTLY WHEREVER FEASIBLE, PRAYING SUCCESS. SHOGHI

On January 8, 1954, just a week later, he sailed to the Seychelles Islands bound for the Chagos Archipelago, leaving behind his young wife who was to give birth to their second daughter, Fauzia, in February. Many

pioneers had attempted to settle in the Chagos, but they were unsuccessful because of the difficulty of finding employment there. Abdu'l Rahman therefore established himself in Victoria, the capital of the Seychelles, and he soon called for his family to join him, efforts that earned for him the distinction of Knight of Bahá'u'lláh. (The Guardian's wish was fulfilled in 1968 when the Seychelles sent two local pioneers to open the Chagos Islands.)

Before six months were over the first Seychellois¹¹² accepted the Faith, and the first Bahá'í group was formed. From then on victory followed victory in quick succession in spite of growing opposition from the clergy and their supporters. Rocks were sometimes thrown at Abdu'l Rahman's old car, which was known in Bahá'í circles as the "Bahá'í donkey."

A little over a year later, in July 1955, the first Local Spiritual Assembly was formed in Victoria. The second and third largest islands, Praslin and La Digue, were opened to the Faith in 1956 and 1957 respectively.

One of the greatest miracles in those early pioneering days was the passage, in 1957, of the Bill of Incorporation of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Victoria by the Legislative Council. The bill was hotly debated and denounced by certain members closely allied to the Catholic Church, which represented the majority of the population. They were days of intense prayer and suspense. The bill was passed by majority vote and paved the way for the incorporation of the National Spiritual

Assembly in 1972. Abdu'l Rahman's joy at that time knew no bounds.

In 1966 he sought an interview with the broadcasting manager of the radio service. By 1969, after untiring efforts, the Seychelles was the first Bahá'í community in the Indian Ocean to have regular airtime on national radio. The initial broadcasting time approved was ten fifteen-minute programs annually. This was later extended to ten minutes fortnightly.

The sweetest victory was still to come. By Riḍván 1971 the original goals of the Nine Year Plan were won. One can only imagine the exhilaration in everybody's heart when the Universal House of Justice announced in 1972 that the Seychelles was ready to elect its own National Spiritual Assembly. Following the First National Convention that Riḍván, Abdu'l Rahman was elected secretary of the National Assembly—a post he held, along with that of secretary of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Victoria, for almost a decade. (By the end of the Plan in 1973, the goal of five Local Spiritual Assemblies was met with the achievement of eight.)

Abdu'l Rahman's life during that significant period of Bahá'í history was one singularly lacking in leisure and comfort. He had to raise and educate a family of six. Four more children were born at his pioneering post: Marion in 1956, Sarah and Sandra in 1958 and 1959 respectively, and his only son, Kamal, in 1961.

Starting as a shipping clerk at Jivan Jetha and Company, Abdu'l Rahman later became shipping manager at the United Lighterage Company. Working long hours by candlelight at correspondence courses in order to better his life and that of his family, he finally qualified as a member of the Chartered Institute of Secretaries and joined the public service as an accountant in various ministries of the government.

¹¹² The first pioneer and Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Seychelles was Kamil Abbas who arrived in 1953. He was able to stay only five weeks, but he is credited with teaching the Faith to the first Seychellois to become a Bahá'í, a local teacher, Marshall Delcy. ("Festivities exceed expectations," Victoria, Seychelles January 12, 2004, Bahá'í World News Service)

¹¹¹ See "In Memoriam," *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XI, pp. 512–15.

When he suffered a stroke at the age of sixty, he had been promoted to Chief Accountant in the Ministry of Health. A perfectionist by nature he was highly reputed for his meticulousness, his diligence, and his strict sense of fairness at work. He was also well liked by his colleagues for his warm and extroverted temperament.

In 1983 Abdu'l Rahman Zarqani suffered a coronary thrombosis that left him partially paralyzed and affected his powers of speech for almost ten years. By December of that year the Faith had spread to seven islands of the archipelago and the number of Local Spiritual Assemblies had reached nineteen. Despite his ailing health he took keen interest in the progress of the Faith in his last years and was present in his wheelchair at the most important events, including the Golden Jubilee celebrations in Haifa and the placing of the Roll of Honour, illuminated with the names of the Knights of Bahá'u'lláh, in the Shrine of the Best Beloved in May 1992.

True to his wish, when the long-awaited call of his Beloved came on September 25, 1994, Mr. Zarqani's body was laid to rest in the main cemetery overlooking the quiet town and harbor of Victoria where he had come as a youth those many years before.

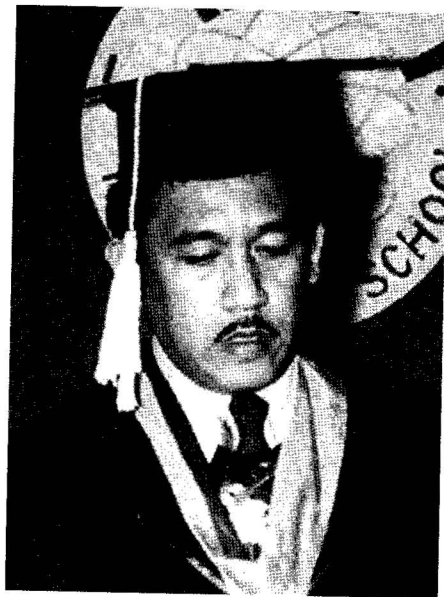
Marion Zarqani-Gendron

WALTER MADDELA 1953-1994

As you are aware, Mr. Maddela has served the Cause for years with unwavering devotion and boundless zeal—in his native land, and as a stalwart and much-loved pioneer in Kiribati and most recently in your region. No matter the capacity or community in which he laboured, it was clear that Mr. Maddela was a

pillar of strength, earning the commendation of the Bahá'í institutions and the admiration of his fellow believers, and his untimely passing is without question a great loss for your region and indeed for the Bahá'í world. All can take comfort, however, in knowing that, aside from the souls he is responsible for bringing to the Cause, he has won, by his example and character, many friends for the Faith, and these seeds will no doubt come to glorious fruition through great spiritual victories. To this end will the Universal House of Justice offer prayers at the Sacred Threshold on his behalf.

By copy of this message to the National Spiritual Assemblies of Kiribati and the Philippines, the House of Justice requests those Assemblies to assure his friends and loved ones of its prayers in the Holy Shrines on behalf of this dear servant of the Blessed Beauty, for



Walter Maddela

the progress of his precious soul in the Abhá kingdom.

Department of the Secretariat
October 10, 1994

Louisito Lacar Maddela Jr. was born June 9, 1953. "Walter," as he was fondly called, was the grandson of the distinguished first Filipino Bahá'í, Felix R. Maddela. I could say that Walter was the only one among the many grandchildren of Lolo (Grandfather) Felix who dedicated his life for the Cause. Even in childhood a manifestation of a "true Bahá'í" was evident in him. I remember a story about Walter that was told to me by an aunt. When he was about six years old, he would choose the role of 'Abdu'l-Bahá during children's class presentations in the Bahá'í gatherings. He would put on a robe and turban and paint his chin and the sides of his face with charcoal as a beard. He was never quarrelsome, and it is said that he was a little boy with the views of an adult.

Walter was a consistent honor student. He quit college to pioneer and resumed his studies after his return, earning his diploma as a teacher.

Walter was very active in youth activities; he taught children's classes, was a member of the youth committee, and became the youngest member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Philippines.

In one of his visits to the Philippines, the Hand of the Cause of God Dr. Raḥmatulláh Muhájir asked Walter to go to the mountains of Mindoro. Uncomplaining he packed his things, went, and taught in the tutorial school. Thus began his pioneering work. He later went to Kiribati (formerly the Gilbert Islands), Samoa, Fiji, Malaysia, and finally Russia.

People who knew Walter knew of his humor. He was a contributor to the "Laugh In" section of the *Philippine Free*

Press. During a Bahá'í radio seminar at the National Bahá'í Center, he and some friends presented a skit so funny that the friends laughed until their stomachs ached. Walter had written and directed the skit.

With regard to his non-Bahá'í activities, Walter was admired by his colleagues and students at the technical school where he served as an administrator. He never missed an opportunity to inject Bahá'í principles into his work. His attitude for giving high quality education was remarkable. This may be one of the reasons why the school became the best in the region. He motivated students to academic excellence and was a source of encouragement in extracurricular activities. He coached chess and refereed volleyball games at interschool competitions.

Walter was a prominent figure in the community. A politician once urged him to be his running mate. This he naturally turned down and instead offered his services to governmental organizations whose laws and principles were not in conflict with those of the Faith.

Walter was a brother, father, friend, and counselor rolled into one. When I received news of his passing, memories of him flashed in my mind. Forty-one years of his earthly life were spent worthily; he lived a life which he tried so hard to pattern after the qualities of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

In January 1995 I received a seven page letter from Walter that he had written two months before he passed away. It was the longest he had ever sent to me. He wrote, "I will be back in October 1994, probably on Daddy's birthday." Our father's birthday is October 10, the day we received news of Walter's passing. He passed to the Abhá Kingdom on October 8 while pioneering in Krasnoyarsk, Siberia, but he was with us in spirit on October 10.

Messages of love and sympathy poured in from the Universal House of Justice, the

International Teaching Centre, the Hand of the Cause of God Rúhíyyih Khánúm, the Continental Board of Counsellors, National Assemblies, and individuals. To quote portions from those messages:

Mr. Maddela has served the Cause for years with unwavering devotion and boundless zeal in his native land and as a stalwart and much-loved pioneer in Kiribati.

The sad news of the untimely death of our much-loved and admired Walter has cast a deep pall on all our hearts; his uncomplaining acceptance and hardships, physical and economical, was a lesson to all.

The seeds of love and unity planted by Walter's pioneering service will now be literally planted in that far-off soil as a permanent reminder of the historical ties that must hence indissolubly bind the spiritual destiny of Russia to that of the Philippines; the Local Assembly of Krasnoyarsk, in a telephone conversation, informed the National Spiritual Assembly that Siberia will be blessed that the remains of Walter will be with them forever.

Dear Walter is gone, but he left behind a legacy of selflessness, strength, and determination to move for the Faith, whatever the odds.

Joy L. Maddela

**MARGARET "PEGGY"
MORRIS MASOUMI**
("Tawala Peggy")
1947-1994

Peggy Morris was born April 16, 1947. After graduating from California State University at Long Beach, she toured Europe and Mexico and then took up teaching. She joined the Bahá'í Faith when she was twenty-five. Four years later, after listening to a talk by the Hand of the Cause, Dr. Muhájir, Peggy offered to pioneer to Venezuela.

She arrived in December 1976 and began working as a teacher of English as a second language in Maracaibo, where the National Assembly had asked her to live. She served the Faith in this hot and dusty area dedicating herself to work with the Guajiro Indians, who called her "Tawala (sister) Peggy." She developed radio teaching programs and children's class materials in the Guajiro language.



Margaret "Peggy" Morris Masoumi

Peggy married Bahman Masumi [Masoumi], and they had one child, Lua Bahiyyih. At times she was a member of the Spiritual Assembly of Maracaibo, the National Teaching Committee, and the Regional Teaching Committee. She taught children's classes. She also had the honor of making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

After twelve years Peggy was obliged to return to the United States for health care. She was diagnosed as having a form of cancer which, at first, was thought to be treatable. Peggy and Bahman tried to return to Venezuela but were unable to find jobs. After consulting with the National Assembly of the United States and asking the Universal House of Justice for guidance, they decided to pioneer on the homefront. On the eve of Peggy's trip to investigate job possibilities in the southern United States, she became ill again, and it was determined that the cancer had spread. This time little hope was offered.

When word reached Venezuela, several of the Guajiro friends traveled to Maracaibo to record a message for Peggy. This cassette brightened her last days and gave her a sense of fulfillment for the services she had rendered. In essence the Guajiro friends had said to her, "Peggy, we will never forget you, and we want you to know that we are trying to take your place. Where before, you had to come and pull us out of our hammocks and make us go out with you, now no one has to do that. We have taken the reins of service to the Faith into our own hands. We know what we have to do."

The movement from place to place stretches the boundaries of our hearts and our countries. The northern border of Venezuela easily reached out to include California, and Peggy continued to feel a part of the Venezuelan community. "When the phone rings at 3:00 AM I always know

it is Venezuela calling," she said. (People often forgot the four-hour time difference.)

During Peggy's last few months she suffered a great deal of physical pain and anguish for the ten-year-old daughter she would leave behind. At the same time that she searched for acquiescence, she was concerned about teaching the Faith. She said several times to her husband, "We must be careful. People know we are Bahá'ís, and they are watching to see how we bear up under these difficulties."

Her home in Maracaibo was seldom without overnight guests, as was her home in California. "We must be more hospitable," she said in her last weeks. "We must make people feel welcome." Often she woke from a semiconscious state with the name of Bahá'u'lláh on her lips or a prayer she had memorized. She showed in her inner and outer life her devotion to the Faith.

Peggy passed away October 15, 1994. One of the Guajiro friends offered this tribute:

Peggy never seemed like a stranger. No matter where you took her, she never seemed to feel out of place. No matter what she was offered to eat, she received it with thanks and accepted to be one of the family. She was a very simple person, not hard to please. She was a Wayu (Guajiro), like us.

At her funeral Bahman spoke of how Peggy had always struggled to improve herself, and someone said to him afterward, "I thought she was just born a saint. You mean she had to work on it? Then there is hope for me also." Several weeks after the funeral Bahman met a person who worked at the hostel where Peggy passed away. "Oh," the person said, "That was your wife. What a wonderful woman, always smiling."

Memorial services for Peggy were held in places as diverse as Los Angeles, California, Tabríz, Iran, and Maracaibo, Venezuela. At her funeral messages were read from the National Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, the National Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Venezuela, the Bahá'í International Community, the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Maracaibo, and friends who were unable to attend, including one young adult who had belonged to her children's class in Maracaibo. The Universal House of Justice sent the following message on October 23, 1994:

GRIEVED TO LEARN OF THE PASSING OF MRS. PEGGY MASOUMI WHO HAS SERVED THE FAITH WITH VALOUR ESPECIALLY IN THE PIONEER FIELD. OFFERING PRAYERS IN THE HOLY SHRINES FOR THE PROGRESS OF HER SOUL AND FOR THE HEALING AND COMFORT OF HER FAMILY.

The children of the Glendale, California, public school system, where she taught briefly before her death, named their newly completed park "Peggy Masumi's Park" and inaugurated it on Earth Day. A Latino teaching campaign in her name was organized in Los Angeles, and the Assembly of Maracaibo gave six months' contributions to the Arc Fund in her name.

Diane Huff

MURIEL AUBLE MIESSLER
1901-1994

Muriel Auble was born November 6, 1901, in Forest, Indiana, the fifth child of Sarah Emma Hattings and George Sears Auble. A primary school teacher, she



Muriel Auble Miessler

taught for over twenty years in Frankfort, Indiana.

Muriel was introduced to the Bahá'í Faith by Edmund Miessler.¹¹³ Edmund's family had been taught the Faith by Dorothy Baker, and he had been an active Bahá'í since 1933. His first wife Elma passed away in 1934, leaving him with three children, Bob, Margot, and Carol. After Elma's death, he took his children and pioneered to Columbus Grove, Ohio.

In 1943, after six months of sincere study, Muriel, a devoted Christian, accepted Bahá'u'lláh. She and Edmund wed in Columbus Grove in the first officially recognized Bahá'í marriage in the state. Together they served on the Louhelen (Davison) Bahá'í Summer School Committee and the Regional Teaching Committee for Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky.

At the opening of the Guardian's Second Seven Year Plan launched in

¹¹³ See "In Memoriam," *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVII, pp. 430-31.

1946, Dorothy Baker, then member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, encouraged the Miessler family to arise to pioneer in Latin America. Muriel and Edmund arrived in Brazil in October of 1946, and after a short stay in Rio de Janeiro they helped form the first Local Assembly in São Paulo in 1947. Muriel served as its secretary.

Margot, who had recently finished high school, and her brother, Bob, joined them in 1947, and the Miesslers became the first Bahá'í pioneer family with children to leave the United States for Latin America. The youngest daughter, Carol, died in 1945 in a tragic auto accident while going to the Louhelen Bahá'í School. Muriel considered her to be the family's "guardian angel."

Muriel, often feeling inadequate for the tasks before her, rose to each challenge and was confirmed with assistance from on high. Pioneering in Brazil for nearly fifty years, she was dedicated to both teaching and administrative activities. In 1961 she was elected to the first National Assembly of Brazil, and she served it for more than twenty years, often as secretary of international correspondence. She participated in the election of the first Universal House of Justice, and she attended three more International Conventions in Haifa. She was present at the first World Congress in 1963 and made her only pilgrimage in 1984 at the age of eighty-three.

Her numerous traveling teaching trips included Argentina, Portugal, Madeira, and most of the states of Brazil. After the passing of her beloved husband, Edmund, in 1977, Muriel lived alone in the National Bahá'í Headquarters in Rio and continued with her teaching activities.

When she was no longer serving on the National Assembly, she wrote her book *Pioneering in Brazil—Our Glorious Spiritual Adventure*, published in English

in Brazil in 1986. Autobiographical, it is also a history of the Faith in that country.

In 1988 Muriel left her apartment on Avenida Paulista, where so much Bahá'í activity had taken place and where the first National Assembly of Brazil had been elected, and went to live with her daughter, Margot Malkin, in Bauru, a three-hour drive away. There she served on the Local Assembly until 1992 when she broke her hip. Her memory of this physical existence progressively released her from attachment to her surroundings, and she passed away on October 18, 1994. She was laid to rest in the local Bahá'í community vault that she helped to build in the Cristo Rei Cemetery. Upon hearing of her death the Universal House of Justice wrote on October 20, 1994:

SADDENED NEWS PASSING MUCH LOVED MAIDSERVANT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH MURIEL MIESSLER. HER NEARLY HALF CENTURY DEVOTED PIONEER SERVICES BRAZIL IN BOTH TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE FIELDS UNFORGETTABLE. PRAYING FERVENTLY PROGRESS HER RADIANT SOUL WORLDS OF GOD. OUR HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES TO HER FAMILY AND MANY FRIENDS.

Margot J. Malkin

AUDREY RAYNE
1928-1994

GRIEVED TO LEARN PASSING AUDREY RAYNE, FAITHFUL SERVANT CAUSE FOR OVER 50 YEARS WHO WAS FIRST BAHÁ'Í YOUTH IN NOVA SCOTIA. ASSURE FAMILY, FRIENDS HEARTFELT PRAYERS

SHRINES PROGRESS HER SOUL
WORLDS OF GOD.

Universal House of Justice
October 23, 1994

*God makes all things free from each other,
that they may be sustained by Him alone.*¹¹⁴

Audrey Rebecca Hubley was born on May 15, 1928, in Hubley, Nova Scotia, a community named after her great-great grandfather. Audrey was the youngest of seven children; Muriel, her only sister, was the oldest. Muriel had a dream when she was a young child about "a large coach coming in the sky," to use Muriel's words, "which had nine men on it." The coach stopped outside the family home, and down a shaft of light came a man who bowed to her and said, "Bob."

It was years later at a fireside that Muriel attended through the invitation of Beulah Proctor, a pioneer to Halifax in the late 1930s and early 1940s, that she heard again the name "The Báb" and realized the meaning of her dream. Muriel brought *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* home to her mother, Rebecca Grant Hubley, who claimed that this was what she had believed all her life. Doris McKay¹¹⁵ visited shortly afterward, and Rebecca became a Bahá'í in 1942.

Audrey was touched by her mother's declaration, so she studied the Faith, went to firesides and Holy Days, and became a Bahá'í in 1943 when she turned fifteen. She was the first Bahá'í youth in Nova Scotia.



Audrey Rayne

Annie Romer,¹¹⁶ an early pioneer to Halifax, was with Audrey when she made the decision that would propel her along her life path. When Audrey spoke of Annie, it was with great emotion, as she remembered how slight a woman Annie was and yet how mighty was her absolute faith in what she was doing. Audrey was struck by the certainty wherewith the early pioneers set out to do the bidding of the Guardian.

Audrey remarked on how it was the women of the family who became Bahá'ís; the men all turned away and stayed Christians. For their decisions Audrey and Muriel suffered ostracism from their brothers for the rest of their days. This did not stop them, however, from visiting and making efforts to stay in touch.

Audrey and her mother used to celebrate Holy Days and Feasts together; they would observe the Fast together, and whenever there was a Bahá'í event in Halifax,

¹¹⁶ See "In Memoriam," *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XIV, pp. 375-77.

they would find a way to get to it, cars being few back then.

Some of the early Bahá'ís who lived in the Maritimes and who came to teach were Willard McKay, Jean Smeltzer, Muriel and Ed Bellefleur, Rita and Ernest Marshall, Lloyd Gardner, and Jamie Bond. Among them was Irving Geary,¹¹⁷ whom Audrey considered to be her spiritual father.

Audrey married Earle Kitchener Rayne in 1946, and together they had six children: Pamela, Stephen, Timothy, Cynthia, Christopher, and Alan.

She was a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Halifax. She moved away with her young family to Germany for two years (1955-1957), but when she returned, she took up where she left off and served on the Halifax Assembly for another fifteen years (1957-1972).

For some time the Local Assembly struggled to stay alive with only nine members. Then it fell to six, and they decided to concentrate on a particular section of the city, blitzing it with hand-delivered invitations to firesides and public meetings. Three new Bahá'ís came out of this creativity, and the Assembly never went below nine after that. It was a turning point in the history of the Bahá'í Faith in Halifax. (This would have been in the early 1960s.)

There was a feeling among them that they had all been members of the Assembly for so long that they did not know what it was like to be members of the community. They would not learn that aspect of administration until there were more declarations. They realized that they had to stop waiting for important speakers from other parts of the world to come and present the Bahá'í Faith to the public and that they had to get busy working together on their own

teaching goals. That is when they started to see results.

They were constantly trying to come up with new ideas of how to present the Faith. They would go through the telephone directory and choose names randomly to whom they sent invitations to one of the many public proclamations and firesides. Countless press releases appeared in the papers. They made many friends for the Faith and found new Bahá'ís as well.

The Atlantic Bahá'í community was so small that Audrey once held a regional conference in her home in Halifax. Twenty-three Bahá'ís attended. Over the years the Hands of the Cause John Robarts, Enoch Olinga, Hasan Balyuzi, and 'Alí-Akbar Furútan were guests in her home, and her children had the benefit of meeting people of diverse backgrounds. Her home was open to all, and many felt that Audrey and Earle were family away from home.

Audrey served on the first Maritime Teaching Committee (1952) and then on the Regional Teaching Committee. She served as an Assembly resource person and an assistant to an Auxiliary Board member, traveling throughout Nova Scotia assisting new Assemblies to grow into their administrative roles. She did all of this while maintaining a home and caring for her children. She found ways to do it all.

Audrey's real education came through her Faith and the work she did for it. She never considered herself to be a public speaker or a teacher, but when she realized there was a need for her to become one, she gathered her courage and spoke. She was inspired by the words "Look at the people, love them, and turn your heart to 'Abdu'l-Bahá."¹¹⁸ There was no doubt that

¹¹⁸ *Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas, vol. II* (New York: Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1915, 1940 printing).

¹¹⁴ This statement, handwritten in Audrey Rayne's prayer book, is attributed to the Báb, but it is, as yet, unauthenticated.

¹¹⁵ See Doris McKay, pp. 30-32.

¹¹⁷ See "In Memoriam," *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XIX, pp. 652-53.

people felt love when she addressed them.

She remembered rather wistfully how quite often, back in the early days, it would seem perfectly natural for a group to stop whatever they were doing and say, "Let's have a prayer." No matter who was around, there was no embarrassment in this for them. Prayer was important at any time, and she and her companions consistently relied on it.

Wishing to pioneer to far-off places, she had to content herself with homefront pioneering to Sackville, where she served on the Assembly. Later she went to Kentville and Hantsport.

Audrey also served as a "team teacher" before the term was popular. Teams would travel to the black communities such as Africville, Lucasville, Preston, and Beechville. They also visited native communities such as Shubenacadie, Chapel Island, Membertou, and Eskasoni. They traveled and set up booths at exhibitions, gave firesides, and hosted public meetings. Audrey joked that when they were working at one end of the province, they would get a response from the other. She took part in a plan to bring the Faith to prisoners, joining with other Bahá'ís who went into the Halifax jail to socialize with the inmates.

She loved music and would often sing prayers to gather her courage while on her way to meetings at which she would speak. When she had problems, and she was not without them throughout her life, she would pray and lay them in the hands of Bahá'u'lláh, trusting that they would be taken care of. And they always were.

Audrey loved to laugh, and she was down to earth in her spirituality. She believed in encouraging Bahá'ís, especially the newly declared. She remembered to invite a stray daughter to the Naw-Rúz celebrations or to put a tape of the "Songs of the Ancient Beauty" into her hands.

Audrey also taught through the example of small gestures, and these things did not go unnoticed. We never know when or how we are going to touch someone's heart.

Her ardent desire was to travel teach, especially to Russia, and this she wanted to do when she recovered from the illness that finally took her from us. She passed away on October 20, 1994, the Anniversary of the Birth of the Báb. Mysterious? Remember it was hearing the name of the Báb through Muriel's dream so many years before that brought her to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

In her well-worn prayer book she had written:

Rejoice, for the heavenly table is prepared for you. Rejoice, for the angels of heaven are your assistants and helpers. Rejoice, for the glance of the Blessed Beauty, Bahá'u'lláh, is directed upon you. Rejoice, for Bahá'u'lláh is your Protector. Rejoice, for the everlasting glory is destined for you. Rejoice, for the eternal life is awaiting you.¹¹⁹

If you wish to call upon the assistance of Audrey in your teaching efforts, may I suggest you sing "Allah-u-Abhá" to her. I feel certain she will hear you. In fact it would cheer the hearts of her children if you would do this; she had wanted us to sing this to her as she was passing from this world, but that time made us strangely quiet.

Pamela Rayne-Wiersma

¹¹⁹ *The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912*, rev. ed. (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 2007), p. 299.

RUHOLLAH KHAMSI 1915-1994

Sorrowfully we announce the loss of devoted co-worker Ruhollah Khamsi on November 1, 1994. Ruhollah was an outstanding member of the Sadat Khamsi family of which five brothers embraced the Faith at the beginning of the century, and all became devoted servants of the Cause of God. He was the grandson of one of those brothers, Siyyid Nasrollah Bagharof, a prominent Bahá'í during the time of the beloved Master. Ruhollah's father, Mr. Aminollah, was a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran and served on many national committees for several decades.

Ruhollah completed his primary and secondary education in Tíhrán, earned his degree in engineering from Tíhrán University, and was engaged as an engineer in a state railroad organization. During that period he was actively involved with Bahá'í youth and served on their committees.

He and his wife, Samin Javid Khamsi, and their three children pioneered to Switzerland to fulfill a goal of the Ten Year Crusade. Through the guidance of the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland, the family pioneered to the city of Basel, and for thirty-seven years they steadfastly remained at their post, involved in many Bahá'í activities.

Known for his honesty and integrity, Ruhollah was a well-respected businessman. He was a source of encouragement and assistance to both Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís alike, especially when they were in difficulties. His noble personality and trustworthiness attracted many people.

In the early 1980s he was of great assistance to the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland in its collaboration with the Swiss government to resettle a contingent



Ruhollah Khamsi

of Bahá'í refugees from Iran. Ruhollah traveled to Pakistan and was instrumental in interviewing refugees and facilitating their migration. He served for several years as a member of the Committee for Persian Affairs, where he continued to assist the newly arrived friends in the manifold aspects of their integration into their adopted community.

In 1991 Ruhollah was appointed as a representative of Ḥuqúqu'lláh for Switzerland, and he carried out this honorable task with detachment and with a spirit of utmost dedication.

Interested in the Sadat Khamsi family, the blessings conferred upon it by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and the bounties of faithfulness to the Covenant it received, Ruhollah, over the course of his life, collected Tablets and documents relating to the family history. The materials he gathered were compiled and edited under his guidance by Mr. Rúhu'lláh Mehrabkhani who worked on the book for over two years. *Khánidán-i-Sádat-i-Khams*

was in press at the time of Ruhollah's passing.

Ruhollah is survived by his beloved wife, three children, and six grandchildren, all very dedicated Bahá'ís. His son, Mr. Amin Khamsi, has been a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland for a number of years, while Mrs. Roya Blaser-Khamsi, one of his two daughters, serves the Cause as an Auxiliary Board member.

Informed of the passing of Ruhollah Khamsi, the Universal House of Justice sent the following message on November 1, 1994:

GRIEVE PASSING DEARLY LOVED STALWART SERVANT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH RUHOLLAH KHAMSI. HIS LONG RECORD DEVOTED SERVICES FAITH IN IRAN AND SWITZERLAND, HIS SELFLESS AND LOVING NATURE ARE FONDLY REMEMBERED. PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS RADIANT SOUL. CONVEY OUR LOVING SYMPATHY HIS BELOVED WIFE AND MEMBERS FAMILY.

Submitted by The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Switzerland

CAROLE WOODARD
1939–1994

GRIEVED PASSING CONSECRATED PIONEER FAITH CAROLE WOODARD. HER LONG YEARS SELFLESS RADIANT SERVICE UNFORGETTABLE. PRAYING PROGRESS HER SOUL IN ABHÁ KINGDOM. KINDLY CONVEY HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES HER DEAR FAMILY AND MANY FRIENDS.

Universal House of Justice
November 7, 1994



Carole Woodard

Carole Woodard was fifteen years old when she and her mother, Marjorie Greenway, enrolled as Bahá'ís in 1954.¹²⁰ At the time of her passing, Carole and her husband Dr. Weldon Woodard had been dedicated pioneers in Venezuela for twenty-eight years, having arrived in 1966. Carole was a member of the National Assembly for many years. She served on many national committees, including the National Family Committee, assisting in the preparation and delivery of seminars for Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í groups during the International Year of the Family (1994).

Carole's work as a traveling teacher was phenomenal and included the establishment of many Local Assemblies in the Barlovento area, Falcón state, and Tuy Valley during Riḍván 1993. She undertook this work while suffering from a worsening heart condition.

Carole also was an assistant to an Auxiliary Board member and a member

¹²⁰ Her date of birth is given as October 8, 1939.

of the Regional Teaching Committee. In her last letter to the National Assembly she suggested that her son Thomas replace her on the committee.

One of Carole's outstanding qualities was courage. In spite of a lifelong heart condition, she raised a Bahá'í family of servants of Bahá'u'lláh, became a registered nurse, and later a physician working in a clinic for the poor. She made health service trips to Bahá'í communities during her last vacation and had arranged to make a trip to Guyana to serve the Faith in a medical capacity. A week before her planned departure, she was hospitalized and underwent two operations.

Her firmness and steadfastness in the Covenant and her constancy and perseverance were exemplary in the face of illness. She tried to do the "Bahá'í thing" and to be the kind of Bahá'í who lived the Bahá'í life. Carole was a brilliant example of the teachings, an example that left an impression on the lives of Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís alike. She was a great mother and marvelous friend. Carole served the Faith constantly, even while ill and in great pain.

At 3:00 AM, Saturday, November 5, 1994, Carole Woodard passed on to the Abhá Kingdom as a result of cancer. Of her immediate family she leaves daughters, Holly, Deborah, and Janet; and sons, Thomas and Daniel; grandchildren, Riaz and Leili; Weldon's father, Dudley Woodard; and son-in-law, Ehsan Hemmat—all pioneers in Venezuela.

*From information provided
by Donald R. Witzel*

ISIDRO JACHAKOLLO
CA.1922–1993

ANDRÉS JACHAKOLLO
1921–1994

Isidro Jachakollo Condori was born in the village of Kollana-Wilakollo, Pantaleón Dalence province, in the department of Oruro, Bolivia. He was a sensitive seeker at an early age, having been prepared by his grandmother Manuela Choquecallata de Jachakollo. Isidro remembers:

She knew what was going to happen during our grandchildren's time. When I was fifteen years old I started to understand what my grandmother had been talking about. She said that since olden times until now, we have been suffering because we had no one to teach us truth, justice, or education. She said that we, the indigenous peoples, were living like animals in our own land, like the fox and the vicuna of the field, because the Spaniards and the white people had taken our belongings, our gold, our land, etc., leaving us with customs, prejudices, and diseases. All the indigenous people depend on only one God, the Almighty Creator. We must never forget our Creator and must continue to seek freedom, education and justice, and the true unity of humanity. My grandmother was seventy-five years old, and I have never forgotten her words.

As a young man Isidro traveled to Calacala Bustillos to trade in wool, potatoes, and other crops, during which time his search intensified, and he was influenced by Hilarión Cuellar and Toribio Miranda.

It was impossible to have peace, either in one's material or spiritual life,

because the landowner masters caused the indigenous people to suffer, taking their livestock, capriciously taking their sheep from the pens, beating and mistreating the owners, killing them for no other reason other than that they sought education, respect, and justice. How many times did we remember our great-great-grandparents, the Incas, saying that these people from the city would finish us, the Kollasuyo Indians, just as they did the Incas. Only God, our Creator, could save us . . . all the indigenous people must worship one God.

I continued to meditate on the words of my grandmother and of Hilarión Cuellar and continued to humbly investigate in my heart what, and where, was true justice for the indigenous people. It was my custom in the mountains, the deserts, and the highlands to recite the prayers of Moses in Aymará at daybreak, removing my sandals and kneeling, getting my trousers muddy right on the pathways. Meditating, I thought, "Why were the children of God divided and deceiving each other on this one earth instead of humanity living as one family, reconciled, with universal education, bringing peace and justice to the entire world?"

In 1956 his brother Andrés took him to the home of a Bahá'í in La Paz. From the pioneer Angel Garcia, Isidro learned of the Faith. Angel and another pioneer, Elton Smith,¹²¹ were invited to Wilakollo, where the community gathered to hear the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. The next day, Isidro had his first village teaching experience in Bomba. Andrés continued

to teach Isidro, and in 1957 Isidro enrolled as a Bahá'í. "I didn't know enough, but I taught," Isidro said. After attending a month-long course with Estanislao Alvarez in La Paz, Isidro, Andrés, and Carmelo Jachakollo began to teach more seriously, enrolling new believers and opening up new communities in Sak'ani and Jankuyo, for which they received a congratulatory letter from the National Assembly of South America.¹²²

With the help of visitors, Estanislao, Athos Costas, and Massoud Khamsi, the first Local Assembly was formed, and Isidro served from time to time as its chairman or secretary.

Isidro never rested. He was soon asked by the National Assembly to make more extensive teaching trips to four departments in the north of Potosí province. His efforts resulted in entry by troops, and some seventy Local Assemblies were established.

And so the new Bahá'ís began to come once again to my house in Wilakollo to learn more and more about the Bahá'í Faith and . . . my wife, Justina Mamani de Jachakollo, sacrificed so many years, day and night, to attend to the visitors . . . five to ten Bahá'ís at a time; and giving or loaning bedsheets, ponchos, until everything was worn out; consuming potatoes, potato starch, flour, corn—so many loads of food were eaten . . . While I taught in the countryside, my wife attended to both jobs . . . She labored with all her faith, taking care of her livestock. When I didn't have fare money, she would sell lambs, potato starch,

¹²² The National Assembly of South America comprised the communities of Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Bolivia from 1957 until 1961 when the National Assemblies of each of those countries was established.

¹²¹ See "In Memoriam," *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XV, pp. 504-5.



Isidro Jachakollo

potatoes, etc., for my fare. She took care of the house, and worked on the farm. My two children, Valeria and Daniel, helped their mother. Being poor, we made sacrifices.

Isidro wanted to leave behind the old customs and spoke to the authorities. He wanted to see the emergence of a Bahá'í-inspired campesino civilization.

And so I wrote an explanatory document and delivered it to the magistrate and right in the middle of the plaza during festival he read it. That letter was for the well-being of the community. When the people heard it, they beat me and kicked me, in public, until I was bloody . . . One of them persecuted me, wanting to kill me with a revolver . . . When he came to know of this, the Sub-Prefect congratulated me saying, "Isidro, with all the activities you are doing which are for the future, you should guide your community for their

own good. One day they themselves will remember you. It is true that unity is strength."

Isidro continued to travel teach, sleeping at times in caves by the rivers. He remembers a time when the miners were on strike and the government declared a state of emergency; the National Assembly encouraged them to continue holding classes and conferences. "We had to go through the bullets, guns firing like popcorn." His teaching work took him into Chile.

In the 1960s the National Assembly appointed him as native pioneer for Challapata Huari responsible for the teaching work in many provinces. For twenty years he traveled throughout the departments by bicycle, avoiding transportation expenses. In 1970 he and his family moved to Huari.

Singing was essential to the teaching work.

I would make up Bahá'í songs in Aymará and Quechua and Spanish. With these songs more and more Bahá'ís were raised up . . . [In order to promote] the teachings, LSA functioning, the Covenant, and about the Nineteen Day Feasts, native song has always been the model. The recorded songs were sent all over. These songs were sung with flute, moceñadas, penkilladas, even with a band. They achieved much success. When I attended the national, regional, and local conventions, I would bring musical groups . . . because [they] were so important for attraction . . . It really was a conquest throughout our country, so important were the traveling teachers, Bahá'í musical groups, and the songs.

Isidro had another son, Mehdi, who was four years old when Justina died in 1973. At times the children helped in the

teaching work. Isidro served on the national and regional teaching committees and continued to travel teach.

Isidro was hospitalized for a few months, during which time he was elected to the National Assembly, and about 1981 he was asked to serve as the coordinator of the Obbadi Oruro Institute. He continued to teach although his health had not recovered. "When I could no longer talk, the tape player taught from my bed . . . And soon, as sick as I was, I went out to teach in the countryside . . . where there were roads I traveled by bus and minibus. I almost died several times on that teaching trip."

He attended international conferences in Cuzco, Peru; Otovalo, Ecuador; and Bahía-Salvador, Brazil, and made a two-month teaching trip to Ecuador. In Oruro he was instrumental in establishing several local Bahá'í centers.

At the Obbadi Oruro Institute he oversaw the training classes and the "mother's center's classes." "There are always Bahá'í women in these courses," he noted, "and a few have enrolled . . . We noticed that the women had more faith—they always seek unity." Some years there were more than two hundred enrollments at the Institute.

Isidro's soul ascended to the Abhá realm on June 29, 1993. He was proud that his children grew up to be teachers of the Cause. On July 2 the Universal House of Justice cabled:

DEEPLY SADDENED TO LEARN OF PASSING MR. ISIDRO JACHAKOLLO, INDEFATIGABLE TEACHER CAUSE. HIS OUTSTANDING RECORD DEVOTED SERVICES OVER SEVERAL DECADES, INCLUDING HIS MANY YEARS AS MEMBER NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY BOLIVIA, LOVINGLY REMEMBERED. KINDLY

CONVEY OUR SYMPATHY HIS DEAR FAMILY AND ASSURE THEM OF OUR PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES FOR PROGRESS HIS RADIANT SOUL THROUGHOUT DIVINE WORLDS. ADVISE HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERINGS HIS HONOR.

Adapted, in part, from a translation from the Spanish of a transcription of a narration given by Isidro Jachakollo in February 1988

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Andrés Jachakollo Ticona was born on November 10, 1921, in Villakollo, Oruro, Bolivia. Oruro is also known as the Altiplano (high plains) of the Andes, populated by the Aymara people. In 1956 Andrés was involved in an indigenous spiritual movement promoting freedom and the investigation of truth. One day he was visiting the city of La Paz when he saw a poster advertising the Bahá'í World Faith. Inquisitive, Andrés rang the bell of the rooming house of Yvonne de Cuellar¹²³ that was used as the Bahá'í Center. Two indigenous friends were with him, and they were invited to learn about the Faith. For three days pioneers Elton Smith and Angel Garcia explained the teachings. When Andrés understood the Bahá'í Faith taught that the religion of the ancestors was good, he accepted it, becoming the first indigenous Bahá'í. Andrés invited Elton and Angel to Villakollo, where most of the community accepted the Faith including his brother Isidro and cousin Carmelo. Andrés, Isidro, and Carmelo Jachakollo became well-known traveling teachers, and they opened many indigenous communities, both in Oruro as well as in the north of Potosí.

¹²³ See, "In Memoriam," *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XIX, pp. 619–22.

During Riḍván of 1957 Andrés attended, as an observer, the first National Convention for the region of South America, held in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He must have been inspired by it because a few months later he sent a list of forty new declarations.

Encouraged by what was happening pioneers moved from Argentina to Bolivia, and in 1960 Andrés began to travel with them to visit indigenous communities; most of the time they went on foot. The Hands of the Cause in the Holy Land noted in the Riḍván message that year:

The rapid spread of the Faith among the Indians of South America in recent months has rivaled the extraordinary progress made in the heart of the African continent and the islands of the Pacific, and may well foreshadow a parallel process of mass conversion in the New World. In Bolivia, a seven-fold increase in the number of Indian believers has occurred since last Riḍván bringing the total to over the one thousand mark, drawn from almost a hundred different localities. As many as twenty-five new all-Indian Local Spiritual Assemblies may be formed in this country alone during the current Riḍván period.¹²⁴

In 1961 the National Spiritual Assembly of Bolivia was established, and Andrés was elected to it. Two years later, as a member of that institution, he was a delegate to the International Convention electing, for the first time, the Universal House of Justice. As did so many other delegates, he went on to the World Congress in London. Many Bahá'ís remember when Andrés, dressed in indigenous clothing, rose at the World Congress and with a powerful voice said, "Why have we come? We have come to

¹²⁴ *The Ministry of the Custodians: 1957–1963* (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1997), p. 189.



Andrés Jachakollo

remember the centenary of the declaration of Bahá'u'lláh calling for the unity of all nations and all races." Andrés' stentorian voice echoed through the Albert Hall, and his words were received with great applause.

In 1972 Andrés was appointed to the Auxiliary Board, a service he performed to an advanced age. In 1983 he was a member of a "Trail of Light" team, a group of South American natives that visited and taught in indigenous communities throughout North America.

On November 18, 1994, two days after Andrés' death, the Universal House of Justice cabled the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Bolivia:

DEEPLY SADDENED LOSS OUTSTANDING PROMOTER FAITH ANDRES JACHAKOLLO FIRST BOLIVIAN INDIGENOUS BELIEVER AND FIRST CHAMPION CAUSE GOD AMONGST HIS COUNTRYMEN. HIS UNIQUE RECORD HISTORIC CONTRIBUTIONS TO GROWTH

AND SPREAD BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S TEACHINGS IN BOLIVIA AS WELL AS MEMORY HIS PARTICIPATION FIRST WORLD CONGRESS LONDON ARE IMPERISHABLE. MAY PRESENT GENERATION BELIEVERS INSPIRED BY EXAMPLE HIS LONG YEARS OF SACRIFICE ARISE ACHIEVE FRESH TRIUMPHS FOR FAITH. ASSURE FERVENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES FOR PROGRESS HIS SOUL KINGDOM ON HIGH. URGE HOLDING MEMORIAL GATHERINGS IN HIS HONOR VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS. KINDLY CONVEY OUR LOVING CONDOLENCES HIS FAMILY AND BEREAVED FRIENDS.

Adapted from an article written in Spanish by Athos Costas

VIVA ELISA CARLSTEIN LISMORE 1901–1994

Born Viva Elisa Carlstein in Paraguay in 1901, she later married Major Francis I. Lismore. She served the Faith in Paraguay, Sweden, Cuba, and Canada. Since 1990 she had been living in Paris with her daughter Cynthia. She died suddenly on November 29, 1994. Learning of her death the Universal House of Justice wrote to her daughter on December 7:

SADDENED NEWS PASSING ILLUMINED HANDMAID OF THE FAITH VIVA ELISA LISMORE. HER DEDICATED LABORS BOTH EUROPE AND THE AMERICAS ARE WARMLY REMEMBERED. PRAYING FERVENTLY PROGRESS HER SOUL ABHÁ KINGDOM. LOVING CONDOLENCES TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY.

NARGUESS BAGHDADI 1918–1995

REGARDING YOUR FAX LETTER OF 2 FEBRUARY 1995, ASSURE RELATIVES FRIENDS PRAYERS PROGRESS SOUL DEVOTED MAIDSERVANT CAUSE OF GOD NARGUESS BAGHDADI.

Universal House of Justice
February 3, 1995

Our mother, Narguess Taeed, was born in 1918 in Káshán, Iran, into a Bahá'í family whose father, Esshagh Taeed, and mother, Mrs. Mehrihiz, were the first Bahá'ís in a large family with Jewish origins. The second of seven children, Narguess grew up under the inherited banner of the Faith and the care of her dear parents, whom she often remembered with cheerfulness and enthusiasm.

When she was fifteen years old, she married Mr. Rabi Baghdadi, the son of Ismaél and Sarah Baghdadi, also of Káshán. Before the marriage, Mr. Baghdadi, an active Bahá'í in Tíhrán, had a dream one night in which 'Abdu'l-Bahá appeared to him and said, "You will go as a pioneer, and you will succeed in your task."

The five children born of their union, four sons and one daughter, dedicated a significant portion of their lives as pioneers. The union also gave birth to ten grandchildren of the people of Bahá. The keystone of this family was total obedience to the Faith, respect for the Institutions, and Bahá'í behavior.

Their pioneering began with pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1953, initiated by our mother. It was during a time when the beloved Guardian was urging the Bahá'ís of Iran and the American continent to go out into the world to encounter thirsty hearts. During their memorable pilgrimage, the Guardian knew intuitively of our



Narguess Baghdadi

father's unspoken desire and unformed question, and turning to him he said, "I have sensed that you would like to be a pioneer. It would be desirable for you to go to Algeria to found the first Local Spiritual Assembly there."

The Guardian's words stirred our parents' hearts in such a way that in less than six months all their worldly goods including house and furniture were sold and their work as merchants suspended.

On January 1, 1954, the Baghdadi's three young children—aged three, eight, and thirteen years—were reunited with their parents in Algiers, after a month-long stay in Marseilles. We knew neither the language nor the customs of this country. We were joined by four other pioneer families who, with hearts beating to the rhythm of Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá,¹²⁵ united to form the first Local Spiritual Assembly.

In October 1957, as a result of the civil war in Algiers and the wisdom of the

Guardian that believers of the same origin should not stay, our parents and their three children left Algiers to settle in Montpellier, France, where their eldest son and other Bahá'í friends were already located. And so the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Montpellier was formed, and since this date the institution has formed each year.

The life of Mr. Baghdadi was inseparable from that of Narguess. They were two bodies with one spirit, and for more than sixty years, they shared a life of service to the Faith, making their home a center of attraction. Their house was called "The Haven of Peace." The company was sometimes so numerous that we had to press together to accommodate more. Visitors would always receive a warm greeting, a smile, attention, kindness, sincerity, and a joyful offering, which would give dignity and prestige to the Faith. And that was indeed what Mr. and Mrs. Baghdadi had always wished.

Mr. Baghdadi attained the Abhá Kingdom with calm and deep acceptance on July 29, 1991, after an incurable disease. Narguess, resigned and smiling in spite of the pains of illness that she endured for more than four years, flew away to join her companion and the other angels of the Malakút-i-Abhá on February 1, 1995.

Adapted from an article written in French by the four sons of Rabi and Narguess Baghdadi

¹²⁵ See Khodabakhch Attar-Hamedani, pp. 104–06.