

Memorial Service

Edith Rachel Merritt Seville Schaeffer

November 3rd, 1914 – March 30th, 2013

PRELUDE

Cheryl Stewart & Bryonie Moon

WELCOME

*Jock McGregor
Rochester L'Abri*

OPENING PRAYER

*Larry Snyder
Former Director, Rochester L'Abri*

OPENING HYMN

'The God of Abraham Praise'

OLD TESTAMENT READING - Isaiah 55

*Mrs. Kaye Peng
Rochester Minnesota Chinese Church*

HYMN

'For All the Saints'

REFLECTIONS

Larry Snyder

MUSICAL TRIBUTE

*Cheryl Stewart, violin
Bryonie Moon, piano*

Sonata in F Major
Adagio
Allegro

Tomaso Albinoni
(1671-1751)

Meditation

Jules Massenet
(1842-1912)

HYMN

'I Know Whom I Have Believed'

NEW TESTAMENT READING - 1Cor 15:1-26, 50-58

Mrs. Dorothy Prentice

'The Gold, Silver and Precious Stones...

Jerram Barrs

...that Edith Built on the Foundation of Christ'

Francis Schaeffer Institute

CLOSING HYMN

'One Day He's Coming'

BENEDICTION

Rev. Chris Harper

Trinity Presbyterian Church

POSTLUDE

Cheryl Stewart & Bryonie Moon

- Please join us for a tea reception immediately following the service -

Hymn - *'The God of Abraham Praise'*

Trinity Hymnal #34

Hymn- *'For All the Saints'*

Trinity Hymnal #358

Hymn- *'I Know Whom I Have Believed'*

Trinity Hymnal #705

Hymn- *'One Day'*

Trinity Hymnal #327

EDITH SCHAEFFER : 1914 - 2013

Ranald Macaulay

Every generation produces individuals who seem larger than life. Like meteors they blaze into life and become something of a wonder to those looking on. 'What remarkable talents,' we say, 'what energy, what achievements!' This is what Edith Schaeffer was like and for 17 years Rochester was her home.

Like many coming to the Mayo Clinic, the reasons for her arrival were hardly auspicious. Her husband, Francis, had just completed filming in Switzerland for his second major documentary series called, *Whatever Happened to the Human Race*. At the end of a grueling day on the slopes

near their alpine home, his dramatic weight loss over the previous week led Edith to telephone a medical friend at Mayo to seek advice. ‘Get him here as quickly as possible’ he said. So on October 9th, 1978, Edith and Francis arrived in Rochester. Within hours he had been diagnosed with lymphoma and put on chemotherapy. It was to be the beginning, for Edith certainly, of a long association with the city and its people. Happily, Francis responded well to treatment and continued to be active and influential throughout the world for another seven years. By then Edith had moved their home from Switzerland to Rochester and it was there, on May 15th, 1984, that she heard his last quiet words... “from strength to strength” – taken from the sentence ‘they go from strength to strength till each appears before God in Zion’ in Psalm 84:7. Her days as the wife of one of the world’s most significant evangelical leaders in the 20th century had come to a close.

However, her surprise at finding herself living in Rochester was hardly her last! She seemed to specialize in surprises in fact. The next one came within weeks of her husband’s death and through what had been the major part of her life’s work, namely L’Abri Fellowship. She and her husband had founded this Christian work in Switzerland in 1955 and one of its half-dozen branches (now ten world-wide) had moved from California to Rochester to provide, amongst other things, practical support for them in their medical need. Not long after the funeral in Rochester came the new surprise - a Steinway grand-piano no less. This was a gift to L’Abri in memory of Francis Schaeffer and it held pride of place in her gracious living room. But the surprise contained yet another surprise and one which opened up a new chapter in her life. For what she quickly realized was that the actual piano involved, discovered not far from Rochester incidentally, had been manufactured the same year as her marriage – and came into her home July 6th, 1984, 49 years exactly after the very day she and Francis had their wedding - July 6th, 1936! This piqued her already vibrant curiosity. So the next time she was in New York she arranged to call at the Steinway factory. Quite unexpectedly she found herself in the midst of a red-carpet-welcome and all because the company’s senior piano-voicer, Franz Mohr, had for many years been one of her avid readers and admirers.

The visit began a lasting friendship and even resulted in a new book called *Forever Music*. Amongst other things it was a paean to the wonder of God’s creation. It also provided her with a medium to express one of the leading characteristics of her life, namely her delight in anything and everything beautiful. She herself was a beautiful woman and always dressed impeccably. When she provided meals it became an occasion not just for good food but for a ‘work of art’ – hence the title of another of her books, *Hidden Art*. But *Forever Music* also described how God works into our individual lives – in this case via the biography and conversion of Franz Mohr himself. This in turn led to a concert with the Guarneri Quartet in Alice Tully Hall at the Lincoln Centre, New York, and to personal friendships with some of the world’s most illustrious musicians like Rudolf Serkin, Vladimir Horowitz and Yo Yo Ma.

Her ongoing life continued to be part of the ‘Rochester L’Abri’ for more than a decade and it enabled her to put her gifts of teaching, hospitality and creativity to good use. Many, for example, were the musical soirees in her living room around the Steinway. She spoke regularly at the annual Rochester L’Abri Conferences in February. But she also served as an international Trustee of L’Abri until 2001 making a grand total of 46 years within the life of the Fellowship. She also went on with her writing. Already she had completed nearly a dozen books, some of

which, like *The L'Abri Story*, *The Tapestry*, and *Christianity is Jewish* had sold almost as successfully as her husband's – as they still do. The scope of her activities went well beyond Rochester, though, both within the United States and abroad. For example, she had been instrumental in the formation of the Francis Schaeffer Foundation based in New York and Switzerland and also in the Francis Schaeffer Institute in St. Louis, an adjunct of Covenant Theological Seminary. Her speaking itinerary was extensive.

Then followed another major surprise when she returned, now aged 80, to the very place in China where she had been born. Once again she found herself the subject of an official red-carpet welcome laid on, believe it or not, by the secular city dignitaries! The third and last of three daughters born to missionary parents, she was only five when they returned to the United States. Like all her memories, however, her recollections of China remained vivid and these she put into a children's book bearing her Chinese name 'Mei Fuh'.

For all her fizz and sparkle, however, and despite frequent displays of energy and creativity, even in old age, which left her younger colleagues in L'Abri breathless, the time came for her to return to her beloved Lac Lemán in Switzerland. There she lived in a flat in a small lakeside village beside Vevey where she and her husband had spent many happy years. In due course she needed more care and one of her daughters, Mrs. Debby Middelman, with her husband, Udo, graciously provided a home in the mountains not far from where she and Francis had first founded L'Abri Fellowship in 1955. There, after a long decline in health, she died on the 30th March 2013 - aged 98.

It was a long and remarkable life – truly meteoric. But when all is said and done the best thing about Edith was who she was as a person: she never became big-headed because of her successes; she was always generous (even to a fault!); she consistently, and however inconveniently, treated all who came within her ambit with a gentleness and love both radiant and deeply genuine. In short, she was 'real' - a true Christian lady whose first desire was to glorify her Maker and Saviour. What she and her husband took as their life-long goal was to try to demonstrate and declare to all they met that the Bible really is true and that the Judeo-Christian God is a kind and gracious Saviour to those who come to Him. She never swerved from that object. Nor, right until the day she died, did she ever flinch from the costliness of that call. She obeyed the apostolic summons to 'present your body as a living sacrifice to Christ' (Romans 12:1). And now she is with Him. Hallelujah!

Ranald Macaulay MA Cantab
(Son-in-law of Edith Schaeffer)
The Round Church, Cambridge.
<http://www.christianheritageuk.org.uk/>

A Tribute to my Mother:

Sue Macaulay

My mother. Edith Rachel Merritt Seville Schaeffer. How to speak of her fittingly? There are so many true aspects of this nearly century-old, so-dear-to-me woman.

She loved life...often shined with life, actually. And she loved the great giver of life, Jesus. She enjoyed telling, writing, and singing about and to Him. And like her Lord, she loved people...she cared.

You know that she met my father at the young age of 17...and the passion for the Lord, the truth of his Word, its relevance to the whole of life, was their shared "core focus". They brought their children into this life. Being four of us spread over 15 years...we each have our earliest memories in different chapters, as their lives evolved under God's hand.

My clearest early memories are in St. Louis during the Second World War. My mother made a warm, safe home for us...cooking wonderful meals from a kitchen where I'd be enjoying her bursts of song as we'd sing along to the radio. Some of the choruses we sang then, and in the children's classes they held in our basement after school, we sang together right up until last summer. In that childhood kitchen, I remember the warm happy fun atmosphere as we sang and she'd even twirl in a little dance! In church, she'd always point out the words in the hymn book.....and she and I, when together or on the phone throughout her long life, would go on singing to the Creator, Saviour and Lord. One of her favourites, sung with gusto, she'd lead in the Summer Bible School sessions in St. Louis. I remembered that infectious glad enthusiasm picked up by all 500 of us kids there as we belted out "When the Saints Go Marching in...Lord I want to be in that number, when the saints go marching in."

Next chapter...sailing away to a still war-torn Holland in 1948. (You can read her letters to her mother in the book *From Edith with Love*.) Several of us have been reading them again regularly to her over the last years, sometimes when caring for her or visiting, others over the phone or on skype. She remembered and enjoyed so, so many of the small details...and even as short-term memory broke up...listening to the letters, or to the book *L'Abri* or *The Tapestry*, etc. would bring her back to the place and time. It was wonderful to share so much...not only people, places, happenings, but to once again thank the Lord over answers to prayer, wonder at the marvel of His providence, and also laugh at amusing bits.

In early March of this year, John Sandri was with her on one of his two afternoons a week with her, and read about Champerty, the "new birth" of Mr. Exhenry, and all that flowed out of that chapter. Although she could not talk, her eyes were shining; she was alert and living it with all appreciation. Reading out loud to us when we were children: poetry, stories, books. Reading to Dad through his illness...and also always seeing the stories in life, in people, and then writing herself. This too was ERS!

She was a hard worker, with amazing energy. A hospitable person, ready to welcome anyone who turned up. Practical, knowing that providing meals, making a homey atmosphere, fixing a hot water bottle, being kind and listening, is basic to life. Of course, this is what later on became the treasure of L'Abri. She served her husband and others as much as she was able.

Another aspect of mother's "core" was prayer. It was an early passionate belief. Prayer matters. It was commanded and when we call, "he answers". Maybe one of the deepest realities for her was the awareness that at all times in all places we are before him. (As she is now!!) Whether bowed down with sadness or perplexities, bubbling with thanks or joy...mother would pray. Long, (sometimes very long) or short. Singing hymns was prayer. Maybe somebody in this Memorial Service has been with her in the kitchen in Melezes, Chardonnet, Greatham or Rochester and, as something or somebody had been in the conversation... she paused, wooden spoon in hand, and said, "let's pray about it". In the last day or two before she died, my brother was on skype with her. He has written that he thanked her for her prayers...and asked, "are you still praying?". She nodded. And when I'd call, she would always pray with me after we'd finish singing two or three things. First I'd pray, then she would. In the last months, without speech for it, when I'd pray she'd always join in with a very audible, "mmmm". As we age, we all forget many details, but she would always pray, sing, enjoy being "fed" with Bible reading or Christian books...and then smile. Wonderful smiles. Warm. Real.

She and my dad believed that it was practical to "walk by faith". They were deeply taught and encouraged to do so early on by the example of Hudson Taylor. Although mother did not know him from an earlier generation, as a little four-year-old in China, she knew his successor, Dr. Host. This Leader of the China Inland Mission believed leadership was to spend 4 hours in prayer every day naming each missionary and their children ...the areas of work, etc. as he walked up and down that Shanghai garden. My mother liked to join him, and he'd hold her hand as they walked to and 'fro (he stopping for a quick cup of tea on some laps!). A little four year old? To her, a happy memory and influence.

Later on, as L'Abri was about to be given, after that winter of confused experiences that led them to trusting prayer...they had, as older 'mentors in the faith', Amy Carmichael and George Muller. And as my parents had worked together as a team until then, as they felt led to ask the Lord to lead them step by step without knowing what that would look like ahead, they were very much a team of two. They complemented each other in many ways.

As you are meeting in Rochester, my mother would so wish not to be lifted up in praise, but rather would wish that the whole of the story of her life, their life...would reflect the Truth of God's revelation, his Love, his Life so abundant. "The Lord of All of Life". He saw her through her long years. Often not easy, but amazingly varied and interesting. Never narrow.

And she anticipated the chapter she has now entered with joy and confidence. A few years ago she'd say, "...the old grey mare ain't what she used to be". But some of my happiest memories are in the long periods we had together in the years after my father died. Even while she said, "I don't feel at home in this world anymore", and "heaven is my home"...she'd enjoy cups of tea in nice places, good books, evensong in Ely Cathedral, small children at her side, and our little dog. Plus so much more, I cannot list it all!

She followed with interest her grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. She loved to be part of L'Abri conferences, right here in Rochester...or visit branches of L'Abri. She remained an active trustee in L'Abri until I needed to retire 12 years ago, and I persuaded her to step down with me by saying, "we'll retire together and make room for some younger folk."

When in Switzerland, she enjoyed her little studio apartment by the lake, and was still writing there. Her niece, Becky and husband, Rodman, would take her to the English church in Vevey, and sometimes back for lunch. Later, when I'd care for her there and would push her wheelchair to church, she'd say, "usually Rodman comes for me."

She also much appreciated going to services that Udo Middelman would lead in a tiny village, Les Posses. And she'd say, "Udo is my pastor".

In the end, she was no longer able to spend her weekends with John and Prisca Sandri in their chalet in Huemoz. She looked forward to the relaxed, warm atmosphere there...the company, meals with grandchildren and great grandchildren.

In the last chapter of all, my sister, Debby Middelman and Udo wonderfully were able to locate American Christian women who were companion-carers, living with mother in her little apartment high in the lovely village of Gryon. I was thankful to be able to take part in the rotas too until recently. And when there was a gap, Debby filled it in.

Thus mother had dear women from Arizona, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, St. Louis, etc....who enjoyed her, created a warm atmosphere, laughed and sang...put on wonderful music, etc. Debby always had recommended books mother would enjoy. So she had read to her book after book...loving re-visiting old friends like *Emily of New Moon*, Amy Carmichael...Winnie-the-Pooh. I take this occasion to salute this group of persons with thanks, gratitude, and hopes for your days ahead.

In the last two years, I was unable to carry on in this caring routine, so sadly. But it was such a comfort to telephone regularly and visit that way....reading over the phone, singing and praying

together that way. And those of us who could not, we prayed and believed that the Comforter was right there.

Easter! Always my mother's favourite. And that is when she slipped away in her sleep so that we heard the news of her death as we turned to celebrate the resurrection.

We used to sing together...

*"...if you get there before I do,
Tell all my friends I'm coming too...
I'm a-marching, I'm a-marching,
Going to make heaven my home."*

Susan Schaeffer Macaulay
May 6th, 2013
Cambridge, England.