



The ILIFF Reporter

DENVER, COLORADO

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DECEMBER 31, 1971

Gerald L. Schlessman Dies



Gerald L. Schlessman, Mr. Ralph B. Mayo, at that time president of the Board of Trustees of The Iliff School of Theology, and Mrs. Florence M. Schlessman, preparing to lay the cornerstone of Schlessman Hall on December 1, 1962. By vote of the Trustees, the residence building was named for the Schlessmans in recognition of the "gifted and creative leadership" Mr. Schlessman had given to the School. In a standing vote and continuing applause, the Trustees "paid tribute to the one probably more than any other in recent years, who had shouldered the responsibilities of a Board member and moved forward vigorously and with high purpose toward accomplishing the goals of the Board."

The End of An Era

The passing of Gerald L. Schlessman seems to end another era in the history of The Iliff School of Theology.

To some, it is the passing of the Third Generation. In the beginning, Mrs. Elizabeth Iliff Warren was surely the primary and dominant figure. Without her, the School would not have been. Then came her daughter, Miss Louise Iliff. Until her death in April of 1966, Miss Iliff was a powerful influence upon the School.

Gerald Schlessman surely ranks as a third giant in his significance for the School. He will be greatly missed.

To many of the Iliff community, Gerald Schlessman was only a name. As one said, "I never had an opportunity to know him well. Perhaps he was not the kind of man one came to know easily." To those who were privileged to know him well, his skill as a businessman

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Gerald L. Schlessman, churchman, prominent civic and business leader, and a central figure in the contemporary history of The Iliff School of Theology, died in Denver on December 21. He was 76.

He was vigorous and active all his life. He became ill with flu in mid-December, and only five days before his death gave up on plans to have dinner that evening with the Executive and Finance Committees of the Iliff Board of Trustees. That day he entered the hospital for further tests. Complications arose, then an aneurysm. He died following early morning surgery on the 21st.

Funeral services were held in Denver on December 23.

Mr. Schlessman had been a trustee of Iliff since 1942 and was president of the Iliff Board of Trustees from 1950 to 1957. Currently, with E. Warren Willard, he shared the significant task of guiding Iliff's investment program.

He was active in Park Hill United Methodist Church in Denver. He served on the General Board of the National Council of Churches and the General Board of Lay Activities of The Methodist Church.

Mr. Schlessman was born March 27, 1895, in Crestline, Kansas, and in 1907 his family moved to Colorado. He attended public schools in Calhan and Colorado Springs and was graduated from Colorado College in 1917 with a degree in business administration and banking. He entered the Army in October, 1917, and was commissioned a second lieutenant on November 11, 1918, a month before his discharge.

He then came to Denver and returned to his pre-war job as a bill clerk with Armour and Company. Four years later, he began work selling municipal bonds. His success in that field led to a thirteen-year involvement in bonds and securities in Brown, Schlessman, Owen and Company. He joined Greeley Gas Company in 1944, and became its president in 1946. At the time of his death, he

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was minor compared to his sweetness of spirit, his depth of commitment, and his greatness as a human being. Those who did not know him well perhaps should hear now a few things about him.

In terms of material things, he began with nothing. As a boy, he rode horseback some 33 miles on weekends from school in Calhan to his father's sheep-ranch near Kendrick, Colorado. He worked to put himself through Colorado College, and he never forgot how hard it was. In that memory was born his desire to help others through school. That desire is fulfilled in part by the Schlessman Scholarship endowment at Iliff. In May of 1962, Mr. and Mrs. Schlessman pledged \$100,000 for a scholarship endowment, and they gave regularly and consistently until the pledge was paid in full.

Knowing his record as a churchman, no one should be surprised that he wanted to help ministers through school. If he fussed about the products of that schooling, it was likely to be because they were not good enough as preachers.

Mr. Schlessman knew the joy of giving and helped others to find that joy. His own giving will be remembered because Schlessman Hall, the Schlessman Floor of the Library building, and the Schlessman Scholarships at Iliff, and the Schlessman Branch of the YMCA in Denver, all bear his name. Not so easily remembered, but of great importance, are the hours he gave making calls on behalf of Iliff, asking others to give and successfully challenging them until they did.

A decade ago, one reporter said, "he has never lost the common touch." It was true to the end. Unassuming, modest in appearance, yet distinguished.

Certain things about him were dependable. His appearance more youthful and colorful than the young of today might expect. His concern to help students, especially young preachers. His insistence on sound economics, good business practice, a balanced budget. His passion for a strong endowment—to guarantee the future.

For a trustee of a school of theology, such qualities are very important. Iliff is a better and stronger institution because Gerald Schlessman brought these qualities to its life.

Some could easily assume that a self-made and successful business man would be conservative (when they mean that word as a criticism). Gerald Schlessman was conservative in some ways that are important—for example, in insisting on proper care and good use of money. In this sense he was a good steward. He was also open and liberal (when those words are spoken as compliments). His support of the church and of the seminary was unwavering, and his record of good causes and good deeds will never be fully known.

Perhaps he was shy. Some have considered that quality to be a clue to the ease with which he managed money and the unobtrusiveness with which he stepped aside in a crowd.

Perhaps his religious faith was simple. If the theological sophistication of a graduate school went over his head at times, or seemed to go in directions he might not approve, he still never lost his confidence in the School or wavered in his service or his devotion to its future.

What more can we ask of a man than Gerald Schlessman embodied? Only little things here and there. The things that really count—courage, faith, generosity, service, example, leadership—these and many others were natural to him. Because they were embodied so naturally and fully in him, Iliff is a strong school and a better school.

We who are part of Iliff today can face our future with more confidence because Gerald Schlessman has been so significant in our past. For his faithfulness, let us long be grateful.

What brings our tears in the presence of his death is the loss of his warm personal friendship so graciously offered, and the loss of his wisdom and experience which he freely gave and which we do not easily give up.

If our voice could sing well, the text would be, "For all the saints, who from their labors rest," and the spirit would be one of thanksgiving to God for this man and of confidence that his place is now with that "fellowship divine." Yet, we shall miss him.

GERALD L. SCHLESSMAN DIES —

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was board chairman and chief executive officer of the Greeley Gas Co., which serves customers in Colorado, Kansas, and Minnesota.

His experience in business, banking, and finance was wide and varied. At the time of his death he was board chairman and controlling stockholder of Key Savings and Loan Association in the Denver Area, and Anchor Savings Association in Kansas City, Kansas, and president of Anchor Industrial Bank in Northglenn, Colorado. He was a director of the Central Bank and Trust Company, Central Investment Company, and Capitol Life Insurance Company.

Mr. Schlessman was active in the YMCA, serving in leadership positions for some 30 years. The Schlessman Branch of the Denver YMCA, 3901 East Yale Avenue, was named in his honor. He was a trustee and vice president of the Scottish Rite Foundation from 1953 until his death; district grand master of Kappa Sigma from 1925 to 1934. He was finance chairman and treasurer of the Colorado Republican Party from 1947 to 1949. Active in Masonry, he received an honorary 33rd degree in 1947 and served as potentate of El Jebel Shrine Temple that same year. He was a member of Knights Templar, Scottish Rite and Shrine.

He is survived by his widow, Florence, whom he married in 1924, a son Lee, of Denver, and a daughter, Mrs. Susan S. Duncan, also of Denver, and two sisters, Mrs. Van Cleve Burnett of Colorado Springs, and Mrs. Marguerite Adams of Albuquerque. He is survived also by five grandchildren, Michael and Steven Frederick, and Gary, Sandra Lynn, and Cheryl Sue Schlessman, all of Denver. Mrs. Schlessman lives at 888 Logan Street in Denver.

Gerald Schlessman did not send flowers when others died, and it was appropriate and fitting that the family suggested no flowers for him. The family suggested memorial contributions to The Iliff School of Theology, the YMCA, or Colorado College.

The greatest supporters of the Memorial Fund at Iliff have been Gerald and Florence Schlessman. Frequently and regularly, a check came from them as a memorial to some friend.

Such giving was another form of Gerald Schlessman's concern for people and of his stewardship of money.

Lecture Week Daily Schedule is Changed

Because of schedule problems among the leaders, the daily schedule for the Iliff Week of Lectures has been changed from the preliminary announcement.

No change has been made in the content of the program or the personnel.

The significant changes are these:

—Dr. Littell will give his second lecture on Tuesday morning and his third lecture on Tuesday night.

—Dr. Lamers will give his lecture on Tuesday morning and lead his workshop on Tuesday afternoon.

—Dr. Potthoff and Dr. Galvin will give their second pair of lectures on Wednesday morning.

—The time schedule for the Potthoff-Galvin series has been tightened in order to permit discussion and a brief forum with the audience.

The Historical Society banquet will feature an illustrated lecture by Dr. J. Alton Templin, associate professor of historical theology and church history at Iliff. His topic will be, "Denver Methodism as Bishop Warren Knew It." Mrs. Bonnie Jones will sing.

The Alumni Association banquet will feature the presentation of "Alumni of the Year" awards and a concert by the Iliff Choir. President Jameson Jones will speak briefly on the state of the seminary.

The annual membership meeting of the Methodist Ministers Credit Union of the Rocky Mountain Conference will be held at breakfast, 7:00 a.m., Wednesday, February 2, in the cafeteria of the University of Denver Student Union.

Trustees of Pine Crest will meet at the same time and place on Tuesday, February 1.

All women present or participating are invited to a tea sponsored by the Denver District Parsonage Circle from 1:30 to 3:30 P.M., Tuesday. The tea will be at the home of President and Mrs. Jones. Mrs. Fred Venable of Littleton is in charge of arrangements.

A "Meet the Authors" autograph party will be given in the Iliff Bookstore from 9:45 to 10:25 a.m. on Wednesday. Authors to be present include Dr. Littell, Dr. Snyder, and Dr. Potthoff of the program; Dr. Eric Baker, a visiting lecturer at Iliff; and Dr. Walter G. Williams, Dr. Oliver Read Whitley, Dr. Thomas B. Robb, Dr. B. F. Jackson, Jr., and Dr. Clyde H. Reid of the Iliff faculty.

PROGRAM 1972 ILIFF WEEK OF LECTURES

Monday, January 31

- 1:30- 2:10 p.m. Opening Session: Worship
- 2:15- 3:00 p.m. Lecture I by James Galvin, M.D.:
"Changing Life Styles in Contemporary Society"
- 3:00- 3:40 p.m. Coffee Break and Fellowship
- 3:45- 4:30 p.m. Lecture I by Harvey H. Potthoff, Th.D.:
"Changing Life Styles from a Theological Perspective"
- 4:30- 5:00 p.m. Reactions and Discussion
- 5:30 p.m. Banquet, The Iliff Alumni Association
The Iliff Choir
Alumni and Student of the Year Awards
"The State of the Seminary" address by President Jameson Jones
- 8:00 p.m. Lecture by Franklin H. Littell, Ph.D.:
"Christian Faith and Counter Culture—
1. The Appeal of the Communes"

Tuesday, February 1

- 7:00 a.m. Pine Crest Board of Trustees
University of Denver Student Union
- 9:00-10:00 a.m. Lecture by William C. Lamers, Jr., M.D.:
"Understanding and Helping With Grief, Bereavement
and the Funeral"
- 10:00-10:40 a.m. Coffee Break and Fellowship
- 10:45-11:45 a.m. Lecture by Franklin H. Littell, Ph.D.:
"Christian Faith and Counter Culture—
2. Christianity and Revolution"
- 1:30- 3:30 p.m. Tea for all women, given by the Denver District Parsonage Circle at the home of President and Mrs. Jameson Jones, 2716 South St. Paul Street, Denver
- 2:00- 5:00 p.m. WORKSHOPS
 - 1. "Creating a World in Which to Live Our Meanings,"
Ross Snyder, Ph.D.
 - 2. "Methods and Problems in Pastoral Counseling,"
John D. Spangler, Ph.D.
 - 3. "Understanding and Helping with Grief and Bereavement,"
William C. Lamers, Jr., M.D.
- 5:30 p.m. Banquet, Rocky Mountain Conference Historical Society
Illustrated Lecture: "Denver Methodism as Bishop Warren Knew It" by J. Alton Templin, Ph. D.
Music by Mrs. Bonnie Jones
- 8:00 p.m. Lecture by Franklin H. Littell, Ph.D.:
"Christian Faith and Counter Culture"
3. Remembrance and Personal Authenticity"

Wednesday, February 2

- 7:00 a.m. Membership Meeting
Methodist Ministers' Credit Union
University of Denver Student Union Cafeteria
- 9:00- 9:45 a.m. Lecture II by James Galvin, M.D.:
"Changing Life Styles in Contemporary Society"
- 9:45-10:25 a.m. Coffee Break and Fellowship
- 9:45-10:25 a.m. "Meet the Authors" Party and Autographing Session,
Iliff Bookstore
Honoring Dr. Littell, Dr. Snyder, and Dr. Potthoff of the
Week of Lectures Program. Honoring also Dr. Walter G. Williams, Dr. Oliver Read Whitley, Dr. Thomas B. Robb, Dr. B. F. Jackson, Jr., and Dr. Clyde H. Reid of the Iliff Faculty; and Dr. Eric Baker of England
- 10:30-11:15 a.m. Lecture II by Harvey H. Potthoff, Th.D.:
"The Church in Relation to Changing Life Styles"
- 11:15-12:00 noon Reactions and Discussion
- 1:30- 4:30 p.m. WORKSHOPS
 - 1. Continuation of "Creating a World in Which to Live
Our Meanings," led by Ross Snyder, Ph.D.
 - 2. Continuation of "Methods and Problems in Pastoral
Counseling," led by John D. Spangler, Ph.D.
- 4:30- 5:00 p.m. Closing Session: Worship

News of Faculty and Alumni

Westerners International recently awarded "The Elmo Scott Watson Prize for Historical Publishing" to the Denver Westerners who "have carried forth faithfully the tradition which he (Watson) established . . . of authentic historical research and for writing history interestingly; this is exemplified by the silver anniversary edition of the hard-bound **Brand Book**, ably edited by **Dr. Martin Rist**." Dr. Rist is emeritus faculty and an alumnus of Iliff.

* * *

Claude M. McClure (B.D. '22), who died last year, has been honored by Gobin Memorial United Methodist Church, Greencastle, Ind., with the hanging of a portrait and a memorial tablet mounted near the pulpit. The tablet reads: "In loving memory of Claude M. McClure, minister of this church, 1936-1941" and the Micah 6:8 text. His widow Inez lives at 311 East Drive in Franklin, Ind.

* * *

Dr. Henry W. Gaylor, Jr. (Th.M. '57) is now executive director of the Community Economic Opportunity Center, Imperial Beach, California. He received his Ph.D. from United States International University in San Diego earlier this year. His field of study for the doctorate was human behavior. During the past five years he has been engaged in the professions of clergyman, marriage, family and child counselor, and social work administrator. He did the research and proposal writing which led to funding of \$750,000 for a crisis clinic, a child development center, and community service clinic in Imperial Beach. His current address is 520 Country Club Lane, Coronada, California.

* * *

Eric Talla (M.Div. '69) and Judy welcomed a second son, Aaron Nils, on November 9. They are now at 703 5th Street, Arapahoe, Nebraska.

* * *

Loren Nelson (3rd year M.Div.) and his wife Jean welcomed a daughter, Pamela Dawn, born December 18.

* * *

Gordon Wiegrefe (1st year M.Div.) and his wife Madge welcomed a daughter, Shawn Rebecca, born December 9.

Answers About the Week of Lectures

The typical letter of inquiry about the Iliff Week of Lectures usually asks for the following information.

No housing is available at the School. All of the School's accommodations are filled with students. Persons who come must make their own housing arrangements. A list of housing ideas in nearby motels is available on request to The Iliff Week of Lectures Committee.

There is no meal ticket for the entire time. Persons are responsible for their own meals. At noon on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, a sandwich snack lunch is available in the lounge

on the first floor of Iliff Hall, at a cost of 50c or 60c.

Everyone, alumnus or not, is invited to the Alumni Association banquet and program on Monday, and the cost is \$2.00. Everyone is invited to the Historical Society banquet on Tuesday, and the cost is \$2.50. Other meals are "on your own" wherever.

The only set cost is a registration fee of \$4.00. Part-time registration fee is \$2.00 per day.

At present, there are no plans to publish the lectures or to make any of the material available on a mass basis.

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS REGISTRATION FORM, CLIP AND RETURN TO: Registrar, The Iliff Week of Lectures, The Iliff School of Theology, 2201 South University Blvd., Denver, Colorado 80210. Please use this address for mail sent to you during the week. You are encouraged to register now even though you are still undecided as to your attendance as this will expedite registration on Monday, January 31. Registrants can be reached during the week on the Iliff telephone, (303) 744-1287.

REGISTRATION FORM Iliff Week of Lectures Jan. 31 - Feb. 2, 1972

Name (please print) _____

Home Address _____

Is your spouse attending? Yes _____ No _____ First Name _____

Please indicate your classification:

Trustee _____ Minister _____ Layman _____

Student _____ Faculty _____ Other _____

Registration Fee (wives complimentary) \$4.00 _____

The Iliff Alumni Association Banquet (Monday, January 31, 5:30 p.m.) \$2.00 _____

Women's Tea sponsored by the Denver District Parsonage Circle at the home of President and Mrs. Jameson Jones (Tuesday, February 1, 1:30 P.M.) _____

The Rocky Mountain Conference Historical Society Banquet (Tuesday, February 1, 5:30 p.m.) \$2.50 _____

Total _____

Check enclosed (payable to: The Iliff Week of Lectures) _____

I will pay on arrival for these reservations _____

From

THE ILIFF SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
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The Iliff Reporter is published four times yearly in April, July, October, and December by the Iliff School of Theology, 2201 S. University Blvd., Denver, Colo. 80210.

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