

Response: July/August 2014 Issue

Responsively Yours: Pass On the Legacy

by Harriett Jane Olson



Phylis Newton of Indiana surveys photos and stories of women honored on the Assembly Timeline.

We've been thinking a lot recently about our path-breaking, risk-taking, difference-making foremothers. Certainly this is related to the passing of several United Methodist Women luminaries over the past year—women like Theresa Hoover, Elaine Gasser, Ethel Born, Lois Dauway and others who have graduated to life eternal and left a legacy of service, courage and excellence in organizing for mission with women, children and youth. In obituaries and eulogies, we give witness to their work and leadership. United Methodist Women members often recall their signature accomplishments that undergird and inspire the work that we do today.

In 2019 United Methodist Women will reach the milestone of 150 years in mission. The next five years leading up to this anniversary is a time for celebration! It is also a time for reflection, a time to ask, "What will our legacy be?" How can we be as creative and effective as our foremothers were in leaving a strong women's mission organization and the means to provide for the needs of women, children in youth long after we're gone?

Gathering and telling the story of United Methodist Women is one way to celebrate and pass on this great legacy of mission. Every telling of the story is an invitation to some woman to join us in mission.

Giving to The Legacy Fund is another way.

The Legacy Fund is a forward-thinking permanent endowment with income dedicated to strengthening United Methodist Women. Recently a small group of retired deaconesses and former staff and directors have led us to establish a five-year fundraising plan for The Legacy Fund. The total program of United Methodist Women is mission. United Methodist Women service, advocacy and transformative learning opportunities equip members to be agents of change and promotes the empowerment of women that is essential to address the root causes of so many conditions harming women, children and youth. The Legacy Fund will provide for administration of United Methodist Women's grants, scholarships and mission personal and finance technological updates like operating systems for data and communication, and more. Ensuring a regular source of support for these core expenses will free future generations to budget Mission Giving to connect directly with the needs of women, children and youth. It will allow our successors to promote Mission Giving in a totally different way.

You will hear more about this campaign through your Conference United Methodist Women. We invite every member to contribute to The Legacy Fund monthly or annually between 2015 and 2019. We also invite every member to name The Legacy Fund in her will or as a beneficiary of an insurance policy or pension. And, we will continue to tell the story and invite others to participate.

We have a great legacy, and every one of us is part of extending that legacy to those who come after us. I can't wait to see what we can do as a part of this celebration.

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