

Shining on so many for so few

Monday, Sept. 11, 1989

Daily News-Sun **C1**

Volunteer Bureau president lived life of helping others

By DOUG DOLLEMORE
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Charlotte Langsdale wanted to go to Montana in the summer of 1938. She didn't know why, but she had to get there.

"I had a teaching contract for the next year in Illinois, but for some reason, I felt like I had to get to Montana," she said. "I don't know what drove me to go there, but God works in mysterious ways."

So Langsdale, a music teacher, headed to Missoula intending to study for her master's degree at the University of Montana. She didn't make it. Instead, she took a job as substitute teacher in Hot Springs, Mont., in September 1938.

There, she met Ray Farmer, the superintendent of the Hot Springs school district. A week later, they were married.

"I was out of my mind and he was, too. I didn't know him and he didn't know me," she said. "I called him Farmer because I didn't know him well enough to call him Ray."

The marriage, which endured 48 years until Ray died three years ago, shaped much of her adult life.

"He was the kindest, gentlest man you'd ever want to know," Farmer said. "He was always looking for ways he could help others."

"Because of his occupation it gave me more opportunities to be of service and to have enriching experiences with students, with faculty and with commu-

nity organizations than I could have dug up myself."

But friends and relatives say Farmer is quite capable of making her own opportunities.

"Charlotte is a very loving person," said Elizabeth Langsdale, Charlotte's sister who also lives in Sun City. "She's very concerned about other people. She's very unselfish."

"She's a great gal," said Russell Hammar, a fellow Quaker. "She represents the Quaker philosophy with a capital F as in Friends. She represents the highest order of what any Quaker would want to be. She's a great inspiration."

Farmer is president of the Volunteer Bureau of the Sun Cities Area, a organization that matches volunteers with agencies who need help. She also is a volunteer at the Westside Food Bank.

"I like to organize," Farmer said. "If things aren't going right and I can do something about it, I'll do it."

"It's my philosophy to be of service. That's why I'm here on Earth."

Farmer, 73, was born in Highmore, S.D., and was raised in Lexington, Ill. She studied piano at Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington, Ill. After she graduated, she taught music in public schools in Omaha, Ill., for a year and then moved to Montana and met Ray.

"I met him on a Monday and married him the next Monday," Farmer said. "He was the catch See Quick, C2

FARMER, CHARLOTTE

OVER

Quick marriage lasted long

—From C1

of the town, but I wasn't interested. Then we went out horseback riding and he said, 'Maybe we should get married and spend the rest of our lives together.' Well, I like a joke as much as anyone so I said, 'Sure.'

"The next day he showed up at my door and said, 'Well, are you ready to go get married?' I still thought it was a joke. But that night we went to a preacher."

After she married, Farmer and her husband moved to Lewistown, Mont. Later the couple worked at Fairleigh Dickinson University in Rutherford, N.J.

Beginning in 1943, the Farmers were directors of a summer camp for disabled children in New York.

"It was an experimental camp for handicapped kids," Farmer said.

Once, for example, a child dumped some of the camp counselors' suitcases into one of the outhouses.

"We didn't know it until one of the counselors came out of the outhouse and said to my husband, 'Dean Farmer, I think I just saw my suitcase floating down in the toilet.'

"Well, Farmer had a great sense of humor and that night he asked who wanted to go fishing. So he and a bunch of the kids ended up going on a fishing expedition down at the outhouse."

The couple operated the camp for nine years. In 1952, the couple moved to Las Vegas, N.M., where Ray became a business professor at New Mexico Highlands University.

In 1956, the couple became Quakers. Later, they started Friends churches in Las Vegas

'I like to organize. If things aren't going right and I can do something about it, I'll do it. It's my philosophy to be of service.'

Charlotte Farmer

and Las Cruces, N.M., and in Sun City.

"There's no clergy. There's no middle man," Farmer said of her faith. "You have the opportunity to commune straight up. I like that my giving doesn't go for expensive windows, soft seats or choir robes. Your giving goes directly to whatever you want. You don't have to give to missionaries. We do, but I can give to whomever I want."

In 1963, the couple operated a motel in Las Vegas. Later, Charlotte worked as activity director at a state hospital and a nursing home. In 1969, the couple retired.

In 1976, they moved to Bisbee. A year later, they moved to Sun City.

She has worked at the Volunteer Bureau since 1983.

"I want to be of service to others because I have been so blessed in my life," Farmer said. "I want to make people feel as happy as others have made me."



Daily News-Sun photo by Mollie J. Hoppes

TOP HELP — Charlotte Farmer loads food boxes at the bank when it was located in 1982 and she says she works Westside Food Bank. She started volunteering at the food when things need to be done.

Nature inspires SC artist

When I caught up with Genevieve Fassler last week, she was all smiles and full of stories about her recent trip to Hilton Head, S.C., and the Caribbean.

Genevieve spent a month on the beach and in the water, swimming, collecting shells and feeding dolphins by hand.

But don't think returning home has quelled her quest for fun.

At 80-something, Genevieve is an exercise enthusiast, writer, volunteer and member of her church choir.

A three-mile walk or an early-morning tennis match are part of her daily routine.

She is also committed to protecting the environment — specifically animals.

"I love animals, and I am a great naturalist," she said. "The beauty of nature inspires me."

About 30 years ago, it inspired her to pick up a paint brush and begin capturing images of animals, wild and domestic, in pastel.

"I had no formal training. I just love animals, so I began."

Ten years ago, a collection of her works was displayed in Royal Oaks. The life-care center had just opened its doors in Sun City, and Genevieve was among its first residents.

"I've threatened to take my paintings down, but people say no. They like to show them to people who visit."

Having her works accepted by others has been one of Genevieve's greatest joys, she said.

"It really is a great sense of accomplishment," she added.

It certainly isn't her only one, however.

She once dabbled in writing children's songs, which were published in "Child Life" and "Grade Teacher" magazines.

"They took as many as I could write. They were just little, short things, but they appealed to children."

Her most unique accomplishment?

"It was way back in 1929. I won an extemporaneous-speaking contest. The title was, 'Making Friends with Russia.' I thought that was kind of a strange topic back then."

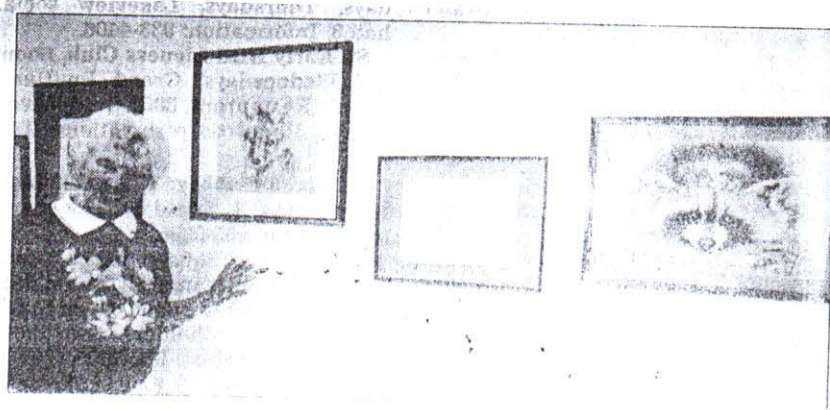
The grand prize was a two-year college scholarship. Genevieve was unable to use it, however; her family moved, the stock market collapsed and the Great Depression began.

Despite hard times, she went on to develop a successful career as an executive secretary in Chicago. She and her husband, now deceased, retired to Sun City 20 years ago.

When she moved into Royal Oaks, she became a dedicated volunteer. She has handled public relations for its 10th anniversary and is chairwoman of the Royal Oaks Beautification Committee.

"My big, big job is coordinating our Christmas decorations every year. I have 13 different trees decorated in different ways, and our dining room looks like a fairyland. But it's fun, and I really enjoy it."

FASSLER, GENEVIEVE



Melissa J. Hoppen/Daily News-Sun

Genevieve Fassler said nature inspired her to paint a collection of pastel prints featuring animals, which are on display in the lobby of Royal Oaks Life Care Center in Sun City. Her works include a fox pup, a kitten and a raccoon.

DOERS PROFILE

Genevieve E. Fassler

Vita Attended Northwestern University. Retired from the Chicago Title and Trust Co.

Hometown Gilbert, Minn.

Valley home Sun City, 20 years.

Marital status Widow.



Self-portrait I'm good-natured and I have a good sense of humor. I'm creative. Sometimes I'm a little sensitive about some things. But I try to laugh at myself and some of the crazy things I do.

Motto May I never forget to be kind.

Greatest feat Seeing my paintings accepted by others. The fact that other people enjoy them is a great source of achievement for me.

Walter Mitty fantasy To be a figure skater or an opera singer.

Inspiration I'm a great naturalist and environmentalist. The beauty of nature inspires me to do things. And my children are so supportive. They are with me every inch of the way.

Good/bad habits I am committed to good health and fitness. Sometimes I procrastinate.

Favorite food/drink Seafood and fruit juices. But at a celebration of some sort, I like bourbon with ice.

TV programs Public broadcasting, such as programs about nature, National Geographic specials and operas and ballet.

Books at bedside Nature magazines.

Vacation spot/luxury Cape Cod and Hawaii. Living in Royal Oaks is a luxury.

Key to longevity Exercise and keep busy with constructive activities.

Last words May the good Lord take a liking to you -- but not too soon!

LH 27-EX (P) 5/15/98

Monday, June 19, 1989

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Sun Citian makes mark in mental health



DOCTOR OF MIND — Dr. Robert Felix pioneered work in the development of a national mental health system. Colleagues

praise Felix, founding director of the National Institute of Mental Health, as having altered public perception of mental illness.

News-Sun photo by Mollie J. Hoppes

FELIX, DR. ROBERT

OVER

By DOUG DOLLEMORE

News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — When Robert Felix said he wanted to be a psychiatrist, his friends thought he was crazy.

"They said, 'You're going into something that nobody knows anything about. Why don't you go into surgery where you can do something worthwhile,'" Felix says. "But I was intrigued by psychiatry simply because of that reason. Nobody knew much about it. You couldn't get the answers out of books. You had to look to your patients for the answers."

By the time he retired in 1974, Felix had many of those answers and had done pioneering work in the development of a national mental health system.

Felix, now 85, was founding director of the National Institute of Mental Health, and helped alter the public's perception of mental illness, says Dr. Bertram Brown of Chincoteague, Va., who was director of NIMH from 1970 to 1978.

"He is one of the greats of mental health," Brown says. "He brought mental health care to the forefront of medicine. Before him, mental health care was something that was relegated to the back wards in state hospitals."

"He personally launched many of the training programs that have been used to train the psychiatrists we have now."

Felix graduated from the University of Colorado Medical School in 1930, and completed his residency in psychiatry in 1933. One of his teachers was Adolf Meyer.

Meyer, best known for his concept of psychobiology, was one of the first physicians to link psychological problems to chronic physical illnesses.

"Meyer was virtually the founder of modern psychiatry," Felix says. "Before him, people had the notion that psychological disorders had no connection to organic causes. He taught us to look at the organic side."

Still, when Felix began practicing he had few guidelines.

"When I was a young fella starting out in this our tools were few and primitive," Felix says. "It's a wonder we did as well as we did."

Most of the drugs used to control psychosis were unknown, but Felix and other psychiatrists did have their patients.

"When I look back I realize how much I owe my patients," Felix says. "They taught me so much about mental illness."

When he was a resident, one of his first patients was a teenager who had schizophrenia.

"I couldn't break through to him at all. Nothing worked," Felix says. "But he was a state

'When I was a young fella starting out in this our tools were few and primitive. It's a wonder we did as well as we did.' —

Dr. Robert Felix

champion chess player. So one day I walked into his room with a chess board, set it up, and made a move. He sat there for a moment not paying any attention to me. But then, he made a countermove. We made two or three moves after that. Then I deliberately made an obviously wrong move to see what he would do. Well, he flipped the board up in the air and walked out of the room.

"He had a clear mind when it came to chess. But in almost every other aspect of his life, he was a vegetable. After I started playing chess with him, I managed to break through."

In 1933, he was commissioned as an assistant surgeon in the U.S. Public Health Service and assigned to the Medical Center for Federal Prisoners in Springfield, Mo. Two years later, he was appointed clinical director at the institution.

In 1937, Felix became chief of psychiatry at the Public Health Service Hospital in Lexington, Ky. The hospital was the gov-

ernment's primary treatment center for narcotics addicts. For Felix, it was a frustrating job.

"To be frank, we didn't find anything that was successful. It was discouraging," Felix says. "About 95 percent of the addicts we treated in Lexington ended up coming back to the facility. We didn't seem to be able to get through to them."

And Felix says the situation hasn't improved.

"I don't see anything dramatically different today," Felix says. "You still have 90 percent to 95 percent of people unable to break their addiction. But I think some one will eventually find a way to break addictions because they're working so hard on it."

In 1941, Felix received a Rockefeller Foundation grant and studied at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. A year later, he earned a master's degree in public health and became a psychiatrist at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Conn.

Three years later, he was appointed chief of the mental hygiene division of the U.S. Public Health Service. In that role, he was instrumental in lobbying Congress to pass the National Mental Health Act in 1946, according to Current Biography.

The act allocated funds for research into the causes and prevention of mental illness. It provided assistance to states to develop mental health programs and provided money to train more psychiatrists.

The act also provided for the establishment of the National Institute of Mental Health, which opened in 1949.

Felix was NIMH's first director. He was an able administrator who also was politically savvy, Brown says. In 1959, for example, the Surgeon General recommended that the institute be dismantled. Felix fought that recommendation.

"I first visited NIMH that year, and I sat in on a staff presentation where Dr. Felix spoke," Brown wrote in a 1979

article. During his presentation he pointed to his left arm and said, 'This is training. Cut it off.' He pointed to his right arm and said, 'This is service. Cut it off.' Then he pointed to his head and said, 'This is research. Cut me by the neck. It will leave me with only my heart. But believe me, as long as the heart is there — as long as I'm alive — NIMH will never be sent asunder.'

Felix won. The institute survived.

Felix also helped formulate the Community Mental Health program in 1963, Brown says. The program established more than 600 community mental

health centers nationwide that served more than 2 million people annually.

But while administration took up much of his time, Felix continued to see patients. Every morning, Brown says, Felix allotted time to treat patients from the surrounding Maryland communities. Nothing interrupted that routine.

Early one morning in the spring of 1961, Brown, who was then a special assistant to then-President John F. Kennedy, drove out to visit Felix at the Institute.

But when Brown arrived at the Institute, he was told he

would have to wait. Felix was busy. So Brown waited . . . and waited . . . and waited.

Finally, after waiting about two hours, Felix agreed to see Brown.

"He (Felix) looked at me and saw how anxious I was and said, 'Son, I didn't see you because I was busy seeing patients. You have to remember that seeing them is more important than anything, even the president,'" Brown says.

In 1964, Felix became dean of the St. Louis University School of Medicine. In 1974, he retired and moved to Sun City.

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SAYS PHYSICIAN

Sun City—no rusting here

By DAN WALLACH
Staff Writer

A Sun City doctor, reflecting on what Del Webb's philosophy might have been in founding Sun City, ventured a guess that the developer may have said:

"You may wear out here, but you won't rust out."

Dr. Robert Felix, a former assistant surgeon general of the United States and first director of the National Institute of Mental Health, said people who choose Sun City do so because they are active people and want to stay that way.

"The activity is a continuation of a life pattern and it is the activity that helps people feel younger," he said.

FELIX added that people "who want to sit and rock" won't find Sun City appealing.

Felix advised retirees to pick an activity consistent with their physical capability, which also interests them, and pursue it.

"A friend of mine once said that Sun Citians wake up in the morning with nothing to do — and go to bed at night with only half of it done," he said.

FELIX said he and his wife deliberately chose Sun City as the place they wanted to live after visiting several resort or retirement communities.

He characterized Sun City as an "atypically homogenous" community. Blood lines, he said, are pretty close ethnically, but

stopped short of saying whether that is good or bad.

"It's part of a fundamental rule of life — you use what you have," he said.

HE SAID Sun Citians are in the "Indian Summer" of their lives. It's still warm but winter is approaching.

He maintained that Sun City is not a gloomy community, people are not afraid of tomorrow, they are not afraid of death, and they are not in a "frenetic race."

Sun Citians, he said, live with the knowledge that death is not far off but it doesn't seem real — they

can speak about it detachedly, which he said is a sign of a youthful attitude.

FELIX quoted German philosopher Martin Heidegger as saying that there are two kinds of existence — the past, which is immutable, and the future, which has yet to be lived. In Sun City, Felix said, people are thinking about what they have left to live.

"Here, you don't feel age," Felix said. When he retired as dean of St. Louis University's school of medicine 10 years ago, he was 65, and Felix said he doesn't feel any older physically or socially than that right now.

But many people suffer from what he termed the "Sun City syndrome" which is contained in three parts:

"WHERE did I put it? What was I saying? What did I come in here for?"

Physiologically, Felix said that nerve cells in the brain number less than in past years. That means that quick mental responses may have slowed somewhat.

"An old psychiatrist friend of mine said he hated waking up at night to the 'splash, splash, splash' of nerve cells dropping out," Felix said, with a laugh.

To continue the Indian Summer analogy, Felix quoted Percy Shelley, the English romantic poet from the early 19th century — "If winter comes, can spring be far behind?"



Dr. Robert Felix, former assistant United States surgeon general, university medical school dean and author, says that Sun Citians' activities keep them feeling young and vital. Ten years from now, when he's 85, he says he wants to go to a Sun City golf course and shoot his age; then do the same at 90. (News-Sun Photo)

FELIX, DR. ROBERT

Psychiatrist played obstetrician at birth of mental health group

By MARY DUMOND
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — At his 40th birthday party, Dr. Robert H. Felix remembers that he was blue and depressed.

For a psychiatrist, that's not a good feeling.

"I figured I was over the hill," Felix said.

That was in 1944. He can smile about it now, because at that point he still had a lot of active years before him — more active than he had counted on.

In 1949, he presided at the birth of the National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH).

President Harry S. Truman on July 3 of that year signed the first Mental Health Act into law.

Finally, the federal government was forced to acknowledge what Felix had been preaching for years: We had serious mental health problems.

Up to that time U.S. responsibilities for mental health mostly had been delegated to the states.

The states' response had been to stockpile mentally ill patients. They got little treatment and much custodial care in out-of-date "state hospitals."

NIMH was a new approach. Its beginnings were so modest, Felix said, that he had to get the first funding himself — a \$15,000 private grant from the Greenwood Foundation — the only money it had that summer.

"Truman signed the bill . . . then Congress adjourned for the summer," he says.

Since then, NIMH has become the recipient of millions of dollars from Congress. Pushed by professionals like Felix and public opinion, NIMH has built its own little empire.

Since its start, NIMH has been the leader in national mental illness treatment policy and education.

It now conducts and funds research into causes and treatments of mental illness, neuroses and retardation.

In the 1950s and 1960s it had power and money enough to push the concept of community clinics, instead of huge, static state hospitals.

It educated the public to many kinds of mental illness. And it forwarded the notion that being mentally ill should carry no stigma with it.

NIMH funded research projects in pharmaceutical firms, universities, hospitals and even community colleges.

All of this power centered in NIMH meant change, and change was seen as a threat to some local state hospital bureaucrats and policies. And at least one surgeon general, who then headed the U.S. Public Health Service, wanted to dismantle NIMH altogether.

From this epic duel comes Felix's crafty motto:

"Over the years I have come to realize that if you want to kill an activity without being brutal about it, get it considered by a committee."

"Over the years I have come to realize that if you want to kill an activity without being brutal about it, get it considered by a committee."

Felix maneuvered the question

"Over the years I have come to realize that if you want to kill an activity without being brutal about it, get it considered by a committee."

Robert Felix, M.D.

of dismantling the NIMH into committees of the PHS for study.

The committees studied. And puttered. NIMH still functions.

Edith T. Carper of the Princeton School of Public Affairs says: "Dr. Felix clearly emerged as the master strategist and tactician . . . Felix's faith in the inherent delaying characteristics of committee action was amply justified."

Today, Felix, ensconced in a comfortable home at 10501 Indian Wells Drive, has a study full of books on psychiatry and psychiatrists and an unduplicated success story.

On unbooked wall space hang awards, certificates, diplomas, honors from the Scottish Rite (he's a 33rd degree Mason), and testimonials from many institutions he has served.

These include the School of Medicine of St. Louis University, where he was dean for 10 years.

Felix, 83, is one of the board members of Sun City Interfaith Services Inc. "I use that story about how I felt at 40 now, when I talk to men and women who feel

they're over the hill today," he said.

Despite Felix's maneuvering with the Public Health Service, he is no modern Machiavelli.

"Dr. Felix is a fascinating man to know," wrote Hollis Bohling, assistant executive director of Interfaith.

"In light of all his fame and credentials, he is so modest and humble," she said.

He does not let Parkinson's disease slow down his work as chairman of the Interfaith resource coordination committee.

He fishes for funds to keep the payroll rolling and the services serving.

"I look to the day when we can set up a trust fund and run Interfaith on the interest that fund earns," he says.

Felix began life in Downs, Kan., as the son of a doctor, the nephew

happiness because I was following him and his father before him."

Felix received a push in the psychiatric direction when, during his senior year in medical school,

"I had to put in a six-week rotation class in the state hospital in Pueblo."

He and his fellow students discussed their experiences on their way home after their six weeks of work with psychiatric patients of all sorts.

"I said, 'I've never had anything make me so angry in my life. Those poor people, stuck in there with practically no care and nobody to do anything about it.'"

One of his fellow students suggested that Felix do something about it.

"I think I will," Felix remembers saying.

After graduation from medical school and internship, another decision time came, Felix says.

"What was my specialty going to be? I liked everything the most about medicine. I finally applied for an obstetrics-gynecology opening at Vanderbilt (University), genito-urology at Presbyterian in Chicago and psychiatry at Denver."

All three institutions accepted him, Felix says.

In desperation, he took a bus downtown to a Denver cathedral, he recalls.

"There was a gentle snow coming down and someone was practicing on the organ, so there was music," he says. "I got down on my knees and asked the Lord to tell me what to do."

"No heavenly choir of angels sang and I had been there most of an hour," Felix says. "When I left, I was disappointed in God. I told him that I had offered him all I had — me. I had promised him myself, and I got no reply."

When Felix returned from his cathedral visit, however, his future dean called him.

"I hate to tamper with your career, Bob," the man said, "But the Cromwell Foundation wanted a list of applicants for grants. I put your name on the list," Felix says.

What was it for? A psychiatric grant.

"It gave me \$150 a month and maintenance," he says.

The residency was at the Colorado Psychopathic Hospital.

"I was interested in community psychiatry," he says.



Dr. Robert Felix of Sun City laid the political and scientific foundation for National Institute of Mental Health, in the late 1940s. He was its first director, before retiring from public health to become dean of the School of Medicine at St. Louis University. He still works for community health as a board member of Sun City Interfaith Services. (News-Sun photo by Steve Chernek)

While he was in medical school, his brother and sister also were in school, Felix says.

His efforts to earn more money included a job as a night and weekend ambulance driver.

Felix says, "It offered board, room and tuition."

He says he studied in between ambulance calls on nights and weekends.

"Along the way I was constantly being brought to an awareness of community mental health," he says.

To earn more money, Felix started poker parties, always sitting as last bidder, he says.

By watching all the players' reactions, Felix says he learned to read body language. It served him well during his years of psychiatry.

"When I was through school and ready to work, I threw away my poker chips and my cards and I've never played poker since then," Felix says.

Depression years shunted him into public health work. He was commissioned as an assistant surgeon for the Public Health Service; then he was assigned to the Medical Center for Federal Prisoners in Springfield, Mo. There, he was

clinical director. "They had all kinds of prisoners with mental illnesses, retardation — everything," he says. Felix went to the Public Health Service's first "drug farm," the Public Health Service Hospital in Lexington, Ky.

He worked his way up to executive officer there and became senior medical officer for the U.S. Coast Guard Academy at New London, Conn., where he devised psychological screening tests. From there, the climb was steady: assistant chief of the USPHS hospital division, chief of the division of mental hygiene, then founder and first director of NIMH. Always, Felix had pounded into politicians on his way up the ladder that "we rejected more men because of psychological and psychiatric disorders and problems during World War II than the total number of men who served in the European theater of that war."

His constant emphasis on community mental health produced the first Mental Health Act in 1946, he says. After serving NIMH until 1964, Felix became dean of the St. Louis University School of Medicine, then director of the Scottish Rite Schizophrenia Research Program.

Interfaith chief mourned

By TIFFANY MEANS
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Countless lives were improved under the care of Dr. Robert Hanna Felix, who served as assistant surgeon general of the U.S. Public Health Service for seven years, friends and family say.

Felix, who died Sunday in his Sun City home at age 85, worked in many positions with the Health Service, a uniformed branch of the U.S. government, from 1933 to 1964.

His positions included director of the National Institute of Mental Health; the chief of the Division of Mental Hygiene; assistant chief of the Hospital Division, and executive director, clinical director, and chief of psychiatric service of the Public Health Service Hospital.

After he retired in 1964 from the Public Health Service, Felix



DR. ROBERT FELIX — Called a national leader in psychiatric profession.

worked for 10 years as dean at the St. Louis University School of Medicine and then as a pro-

fessor of psychiatry.

Friends say that despite his high-level career positions, Felix remained close to the people in the communities where he worked.

"Dr. Felix was my chief for almost 20 years. He was a national leader as far as his profession went, but he was never a pompous person," Dr. Mabel Ross, who also retired from Health Services, said.

"He was a very real human being with a great deal of knowledge and with administrative ability beyond the usual," Ross said.

Felix's community involvement, even after his retirement to Sun City in 1976, reflected his concern for individuals, those who knew him said.

Felix served as chairman of the Resource Coordination

committee of Interfaith Services, a non-profit individual and family social services agency, since 1983.

"He was an incredible man," said Holly Bohling, assistant director of Interfaith. "He had so much brilliance, but at the same time he was so humble. I guess I was in awe of him and the wisdom he had to share."

His committee served as an advisory group that directed the agency department that dealt with incoming calls.

"He was always able to keep his eye on the priorities we were here for," Bohling said. "To help people who needed us — that was always his top priority."

Felix was a member of All Saints of the Desert Episcopal Church, the Sun City Scottish Rite, in which he was a 33

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degree Scottish Rite Mason; the Lakeview Rotary Club and the Royal Order of Scotland.

He belonged to Delta Sigma Phi, Phi Chi Medical Fraternity, Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Fraternity, the American Medical Association and the American Psychiatric Association.

Throughout his career, Felix received several honors, including the Rockefeller Public Service Award, the Edward A. Strecker Medal for psychiatry, the Salmon Medal for psychiatry, the Distinguished

Service Medal from the U.S. Public Health Service, the Centennial Award from the Mental Health Section of the American Public Health Association and the Distinguished Service Award from the American Psychiatric Association.

He received his bachelor's degree and medical degree at the University of Colorado and his master of public health degree from Johns Hopkins University.

Felix is survived by his wife, Esther of Sun City; his daughter, Mary Katherine Hoenigman of Ohio, and two grandchildren.

FELIX, DR. ROBERT

Sun Citian's 'Life' in good company

MITCHELL VANTREASE
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Josephine Ferguson believes in the importance of preserving family history for future generations.

It is one reason the Sun Citian wrote and published her memoirs in an autobiography titled "My Life." Now the book has garnered national attention in the July 12 issue of "Newsweek" magazine.

In the article, the book was mentioned with other authors who had the same titles, including movie star Burt Reynolds, former President Bill Clinton, French singer Edith Piaf and Israel's fourth prime minister Golda Meir. The writer called Ferguson's book "a true piece of Americana."

"They had me in great company," said Ferguson. "I'm very proud of what has come from this."

Published last year, Ferguson said she originally wrote the memoirs for her family. The book details growing up in rural Audrain County, Mo. along with her adult experiences, including a trip to Africa.

She gathered a lot of information for the book from family members, who did extensive research. Ferguson even includes some old family folklore orally passed down.

"I wanted to make sure it was all on paper," she said. "We don't want anyone to forget it."

Ferguson had the idea of "My Life" after she took a seminar more than five years ago at Bell Library in Sun City called "Writing Your Life Story." However, writing isn't new to the 80-year-old grandmother.

Previously, she wrote several personal and operating manuals for companies.

"I've always loved doing this," she said.

Ferguson said she hopes her life story inspires others to research their family trees and savor precious moments in a book or documents.



STEVE CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Josephine Ferguson of Sun City wrote her memoirs, "My Life," which was recently mentioned in Newsweek.

"I did what I was supposed to accomplish with this book and that makes me excited," she said.

In addition to her memoirs, Ferguson wrote her first book, a story

about her late husband Clarence Eugene called "The Orphan — The Life I Lived." Now she's working on three manuscripts, which includes a novel.

VF

JOSEPHINE FERGUSON

PERSONALITIES

March 28, 2007

SUN CITY WEST INDEPENDENT



Arts & Leisure

99-year-old pens novel

Man shares funny, lifetime anecdotes

By Marla Levine
Volunteer Contributor

The Forum at Desert Harbor turns a new page as it becomes the subject of a book, "Living at the Forum," written and illustrated by 99-year-old resident Emil C. Fischer.

Having lived at the full-service Peoria retirement community since April 1996, Mr. Fischer illustrates the 74-page book with whimsical observations noted from his 11-year residency at The Forum at Desert Harbor.

Penned from a senior's perspective, "Living at The Forum," takes a firsthand look at the independent private residences, assisted living apartments and on-site health care center at the lakeside retirement community.

Mr. Fischer hooks readers with drawings such as the one of a fisherman leaning against a "Please Throw Catch Back" sign posted along the catch-and-release Desert Harbor Lake. A fish on the end of the line spots the catchy phrase, "This has got to stop I'm getting a sore mouth."

A pen-and-ink illustration Mr. Fischer created in December 2001 of The Forum's fountain was reprinted on the retirement community's 2007 calendars as a holiday gift to residents from the staff. Ironically one of Fischer's humorous drawings depicts a woman holding a calendar with a caption that reads, "What good is a calendar when you don't know what



Submitted photo/Marla Levine

Emil C. Fischer, 99, of The Forum at Desert Harbor autographs his new book, "Living at the Forum" for residents of the retirement community. As author and illustrator of the 74-page book, Mr. Fischer portrays a whimsical observation of living at The Forum, where he has lived since 1996.

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As Mr. Fischer draws nearer to the centenary mark on Dec. 29, 2007, in retrospect of his first 100 years that pursuit of creative outlets formed the building blocks of his livelihood.

"My enthusiasm for pen-and-ink illustrations began in 1976 when I was asked by the Bicentennial Committee of Manhattan, Kansas to illustrate a book, "Churches of Manhattan and the Vicinity," Mr. Fischer said.

Copies of the book were placed in the Library of Congress, Avery Architectural Library at Columbia University, and the Kansas Historical Society.

He made a mark as a local illus-

trator in 1987 when he created 115 illustrations of 37 houses of worship for the Sun Cities Area Historical Society's book, "Churches of the Sun Cities."

His personal library includes three volumes of his memoirs titled, "A Journey into History," which documents his travels around the globe during his 62-year marriage to his late wife, Ruth.

Pen-and-ink drawings from sketches and notes depict their journeys to Ireland, Scotland, England, Holland, Italy and France.

"He's probably one of the most prolific retired artists," said his son Dr. Craig L. Fischer, retired chief of international space medicine for

NASA in Houston. "I have 70 of his watercolors and hundreds of pen-and-ink drawings. He's a wonderful artist. Neither my brother nor I can draw a line ourselves, so it is not genetic."

Instead his brother, Dr. Keith Fischer, and he chose to make their marks practicing medicine.

For more about the picturesque surroundings of The Forum at Desert Harbor, call the marketing department at 972-0995.

The Forum at Desert Harbor, 13840 N. Desert Harbor Drive, is owned and operated by Five Star Quality Care, Inc.

For more information, visit the Five Star Quality Care Web site at <http://www.5sqc.com>.

'Life at Forum' is subject of book

Man shares funny, lifetime anecdotes

By Marla Levine
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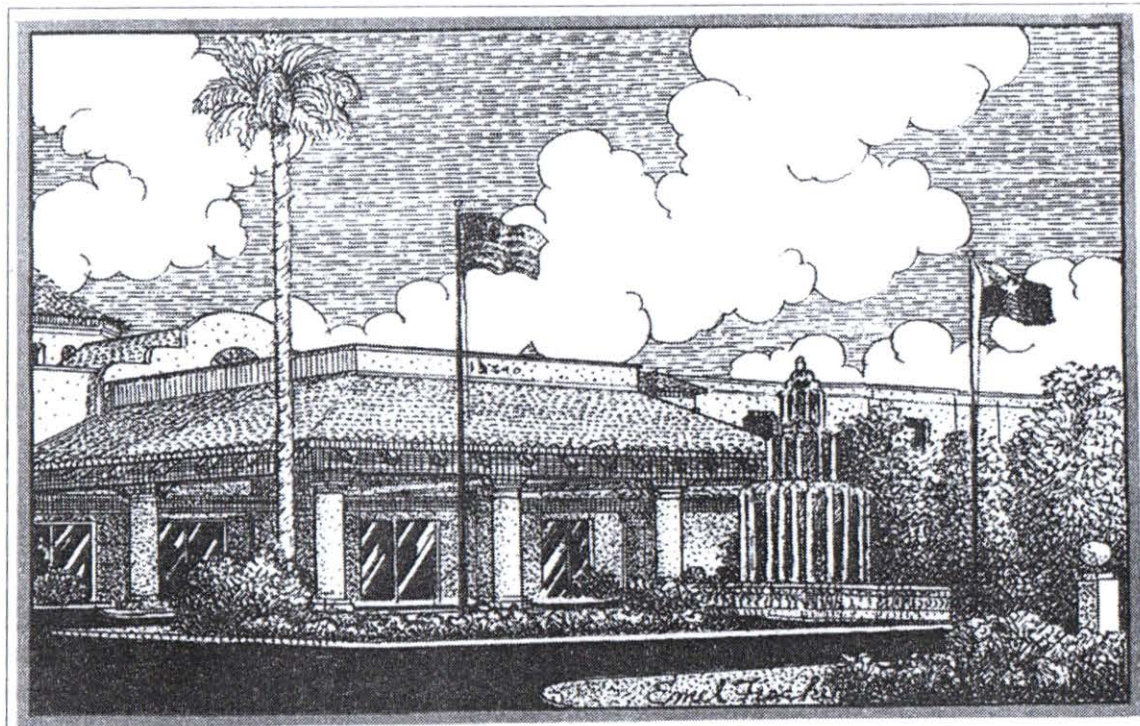
MARCH 28, 2007 SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT

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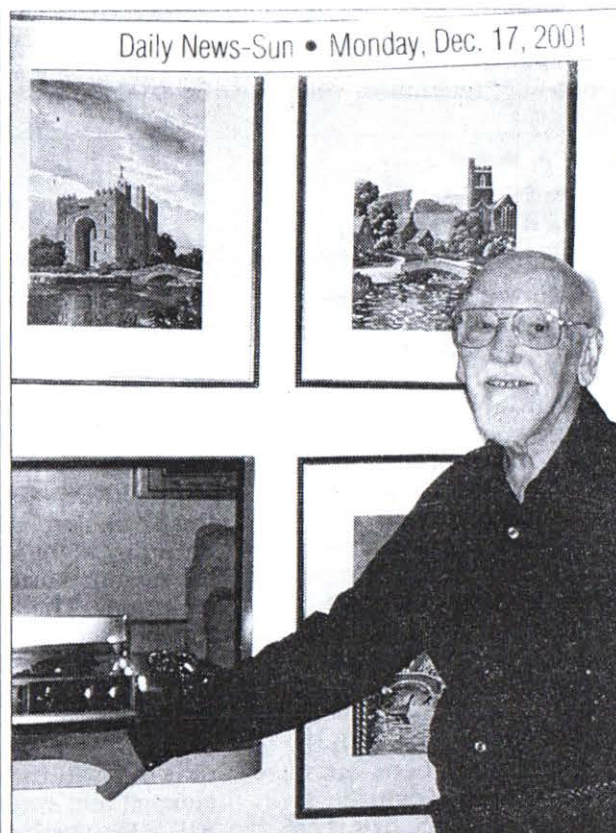
Fischer, Emil

PERSONALITIES

SC



Greetings from the Forum



SUBMITTED PHOTOS/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Emil C. Fischer, right, a 94-year-old artist who lives at The Forum, created the pen-and-ink illustration of the center's fountain entrance on the above note card for residents' use.

● Residents at Marriott's **The Forum at Desert Harbor** in Peoria are sending "Greetings from the Forum" thanks to the work of 94-year-old resident artist **Emil C. Fischer**.

Residents had requested that a blank note card be designed for sending greetings all year long, and Fischer was encouraged to create a pen-and-ink illustration of The Forum's fountain entrance. The picture was put onto greeting cards and framed with a gold border.

Fischer developed his penchant for architectural art many years ago. "My enthusiasm for pen and ink illustrations began in 1976 when I was asked by the Bicentennial Committee of Manhattan, Kan., to illustrate a book, 'Churches of Manhattan and Vicinity,'" Fischer said. Copies of that book are in the Library of Congress, the Kansas Historical Society and the Avery Architectural Library at Columbia University, where Fischer graduated from the school of architecture in 1932.

Fischer's career included tenures as head of architectural design at Ohio State University and dean of Kansas State University's College of Architecture and Design.

Fischer also recorded his travels with his late wife, **Ruth**, in memoirs titled "A Journey into History," which include his drawings and sketches of Ireland, Scotland, England, Holland, Italy and France.

Locally, he created 115 illustrations of 37 houses of worship in 1987 for the **Sun Cities Area Historical Society's** "Churches of the Sun Cities" book.

INDEPENDENT B • Section

Spires that inspire:

Architect's pen drawings recreate area churches

By PEG KEITH
Sun Cities Independent

History has always held a fascination for Emil C. Fischer. He particularly enjoys studying older buildings, their evolution; why they look the way they do.

An architect, and member of the board of directors of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society, Mr. Fischer volunteered to recreate, in pen and ink illustrations, the 37 churches of the Sun Cities. The three-year, evolving documentation has been published in a volume that includes a brief history of each church and synagogue, its leadership and members.

The project included driving to the different churches, then going back with sketches and revisions. "They can build and revise quicker than I can draw," he says.

Actually, the book is not "complete." The design of the volume assures that additional pages can be added, "as significant additions occur."

Sun Cities churches have no particular style, says Mr. Fischer. "But there is a creativity that transcends typical style, and belongs -- it goes quite well with the Southwest-- in this particular area."

A majority of the churches have towers that stand out among the low-level buildings of the community. "They have a punctuating significance," he says. "So many urban churches no longer have towers."

The New Jersey native admits to being something of a dreamer. "Anyone in a creative situation is considered a dreamer; you use imagination to create."

But architects are called to be realists, as well. He became aware of the "real world" early in his career, as he received a master's degree in architecture at Columbia University in 1933. "Nothing was going up, then," he says.

He served as consultant, designing stage sets for a short time, then as draftsman-delineator for Bell Laboratories. "Then the war came along."

He opted for teaching, a career he describes as "very rewarding."

Between 1945-55, he was named professor, head of architectural design, at Ohio State University, and worked briefly as a practicing architect.

He then became head of the Department of Architecture and Allied Arts, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kans., and in 1964, was appointed dean,

when the college of Architecture and Design was formed.

An interest in civic affairs led him to the political scene, and he was elected to serve as city commissioner and mayor of Manhattan.

Among his published works are "Churches of Manhattan and Vicinity," for the Bicentennial Commission; "A Walk Through the Campus," with illustrations and text of campus buildings and a history of the development of collegiate architecture; and "Evolution of a College," a history of the development of the College of Architecture and Design at Kansas State.

At the conclusion of his teaching and administrative career in 1976, the Kansas Board of Regents gave him the title "Dean Emeritus."

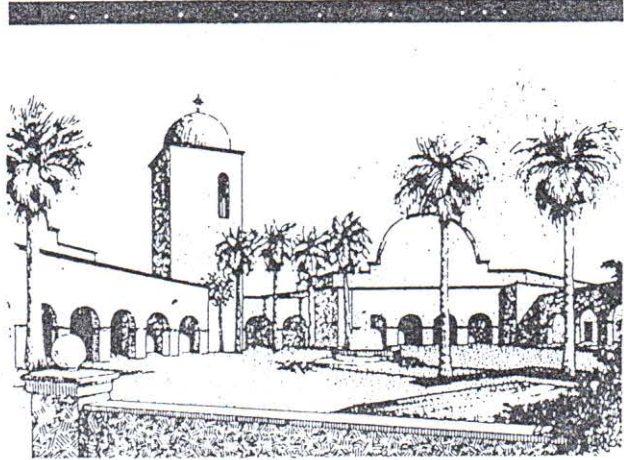
Before retiring to Sun City, Mr. Fischer completed illustrations of President Dwight Eisenhower's boyhood home and place of meditation, the chapel at Abilene, Kans., for the Eisenhower Library.

He and his wife, Ruth moved to Sun City in 1976.

The book "Churches of the Sun Cities," is on sale at local churches and synagogues, and at the Sun City Library.

Inquiries may be directed to 16828 99th Ave., Sun City, 85351, or by telephoning 974-2569. Profits from book sales will go to the Sun Cities Area Historical Society and memberships and contributions are tax exempt.

" ... They can build and revise quicker than I can draw ... "



Dec. 2-8, 1987, THE SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT-Page B-1



FISCHER EMIL

EMIL C. FISCHER has completed a set of drawings of Sun City architecture. St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church, reminiscent of Spanish mission architecture, is pictured left. The illustration is included in "Churches of Sun City" by Emil Fischer, published by the Sun Cities Area Historical Society.

Artist-architect draws from Sun City's history

By P. ATWOOD WILLIAMS
Staff Writer

"Jubilee—25th Anniversary—Sun City, Arizona" will be the third book illustrated by Sun Citian Emil Fischer. It is actually his fourth book, if you count the family history he completed after he moved to Sun City.

His work is graphic and detailed as a result of his background as an architect.

Fischer illustrated his family history, inking some scenes of a family grocery store from memory and working from photos in many cases.

In one photo, he and his sister are using a hollow bed bolster as a canoe. Apparently, this had been a favorite childhood prank until detected by their grandmother.

All the residences of the family are faithfully drawn in the book, as are the buildings on the campus of Kansas State University and the churches of Manhattan, Kan., in the two books which he illustrated.

HE ALSO IS WORKING on some drawings to be used by Cal Farley Boys' Ranch in Texas for a book it plans to publish.

"When I get tired of one type of work, I do some watercolors for a while," said Fischer during an interview in his study/studio.

Fischer retired in 1975 as dean of the College of Architecture and Design at Kansas State University. Under his direction the college had been formed from a Department of Architecture and Allied Arts which he headed in 1955.

"I WANTED ARCHITECTS, landscape architects, interior designers and planners to grow up together so they would be aware of their interrelationships," said Fischer who conceived this integrated approach, unique at the time.

Fischer had always kept one foot in practice and one in education since becoming an architect during the Depression in 1934.

His first job was in teaching. During World War II he worked for Bell Labs in New York until needed to fill a vacancy at Cornell University.

He then headed the Architectural Design Department at Ohio State University before taking the post at Kansas State University.

HE DESIGNED MANY faculty residences in Columbus, Ohio, and never lost his love of detailed line drawings. His preferred college duties were teaching Intro to Design—graphics, drawing and perspective—to freshmen because they were "eager and enthusiastic, not like know-it-all seniors," he related.

Working from photos of places he and his wife have visited in Europe, Fischer has completed a series of watercolors which line the walls of his home. He completed a series of flower photos for their bedroom.

Still on his drawing board are sketches for the Sun City



EMIL FISCHER

history book. He has completed five and is waiting for instructions from the historians as to how many more will be needed for the 14-chapter book.

Half of the text has gone to the printer for typesetting; the writing is completed. The historians are sorting mounds of photos in a room provided for them at the Daily News-Sun.

The book will contain approximately 300 pages. It should be ready in November for sale at \$5.

The book has been prepared with a \$500 grant from the Host Lions Club to cover start-up expenses.

FISCHER, EMIL

The art of an architect continues in Sun City

By GLENN B SANBERG

SUN CITY — When the two doctor sons of Emil and Ruth Fischer saw where their parents were going to live in retirement their surprised comment was "Wow! This is too good to waste on old folks!"

The Fischer's selection of Sun City over other places was the calculated decision of a college dean, a practicing architect, a public servant and a couple with a keen sense of retirement goals. After thirty-one years of life on academic campuses Fischer said he was ready for a change but insisted the change had to permit continued use of the knowledge and skills they had accumulated over the years. He and his wife,



RETIRED IN STYLE

Ruth, chose Sun City and they have never been sorry.

Sun Citians first noticed the impact of Fischer's talents when beautiful pen and ink sketches of Sun City churches began appearing in the News-Sun in 1982. Using artistic talents which showed up before he started school, Fischer has experienced a lifetime of exciting professional accomplishments.

The road to the academic summit-Dean of the School of Architecture and Design at Kansas State University was not easy. New Jersey-born, Fisher's father wanted him to become a civil engineer like himself but that didn't work out. "My math was bad and I was always sketching and drawing," Fischer said, "so after high school I got a job in an architects office".

This settled the question of a career and young Fischer entered Columbia University where he emerged five years later with a bachelor's degree in architecture.

The Great Depression was now in full bloom and finding a job was an exercise in pure fantasy. His professor of Design suggested that he come back to Columbia as a teaching assistant and continue work toward a master's degree. This proved to be a turning point in his life.

Armed with a graduate degree and the recently-passed 18th Amendment requiring the re-licensing of breweries, young Fischer got a job measuring and drawing brewery facilities. Boris Aronson the famous New York stage set designer saw some of Fischer's work and hired him. For the next two years he was part of the behind-the-scenes artists of Broadway.

An invitation to join the faculty of Pratt Institute in New York City got him back to his first love, teaching. With the security of a full-time job he was able to set the date with his sweetheart, Ruth, and they were married in 1936 and moved to Long Island.

Pearl Harbor in 1941 changed the worlds of most people, including the Fischers. He filled war-time jobs at Bell Laboratories delineating sketches, and as a teacher of architectural design for the Navy at Cornell University. At war's end he was appointed Head of Design, School of Architecture, Ohio State University, Columbus. During his 10 years at Ohio State he also lectured at the University of Michigan summer sessions.

Kansas State University in Manhattan was the next stop. He was named head of the Department of Architecture and Allied Arts, a part of the School of Engineering in 1955. Soon he and Ruth were catapulted into the life of the community as well as the campus. Elected a city commissioner for two three-year terms, one of which he served as Mayor saw many changes in the city of Manhattan - flood control projects, development of recreation areas, and enlarged airport facilities.

During this time the college of Architecture and Design was divorced from Engineering and Fischer was named Dean, a position he held until reaching the mandatory administrative retirement age 65. He continued teaching however until 1976 when he and Ruth decided to move to a home they had purchased here.

Now some 12 years later they look back on a lifestyle admirably suited to their tastes and talents. Emil continues his love of the artistic and Ruth finds an outlet in community service volunteering.

Emil's illustrations in JUBILEE, the 25th Anniversary of Sun City are considered classics. This fall he will publish a 120-page book, "The Churches of the Sun Cities" sponsored by the Sun Cities Area Historical Society which is headed for the local best-sellers list. The Fischer home is full of Emil's artistic pieces.

Each of the past ten years, the Fischers have gone back to Kansas State University to present "The Fischer Award" to a deserving architectural student. The fund was established by their two sons

in honor of their parents. The boys stipulated that the Fischers must go back each year to present the Award personally as a reminder of their great contributions to the University.

The Fischers don't wear honors on their sleeves. They do make an exception in the case of their sons, one of whom is a pathologist and former Chief of Clinical Laboratories of the NASA Manned Space Center. The other is a director of a Radiology and Nuclear Laboratory in St. Louis.

For a man who has been named Dean Emeritus of his College, listed in Who's Who for 30 years, been president of the Kansas chapter of the American Institute of Architects and has published three historical documentaries, Emil Fischer deserves more acclaim than his modesty allows. Like other talented Sun Citians, he would much prefer to let others do the crowing and leave him to his beloved pen and ink.

Poster girl charms golfers with stories of early Sun City

ANNIE KARSTENS
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Dubbed the Del Webb pin-up girl of 1976, Martha Fischer was honored at the Lakes East Women's Nine-Hole Golf League of Sun City's spring luncheon Tuesday.

When Sun City was a fledging community, Del Webb used poster girls in advertisements to promote Sun City throughout the country. When the photographer got a hold of Fischer, he didn't let her go. She appeared in monthly promotional calendars during the bicentennial year of 1976, wearing homemade patriotic bathing suits while standing in front of recreation center pools.

"I suppose the photographer took a liking to me," Fischer said. "I loved it. It was so much fun. I used to enjoy all the attention. Now, nephews call me their 'gorgeous Aunt Martha.'"

The 92-year-old is the oldest active member of the Lakes East Golf League. Fischer, humbled by the group's recognition of her, sat at the end of a table, surrounded by old photographs of her modeling days, and answering questions posed by her fellow golfers.

The women were intrigued by Fischer's life and asked what Sun City was like when she moved into one of the first developments in Phase II in 1973. She still lives in the same house on Sutter Gold Lane.

"Properties were fields then. Anything north of Bell was dust and nothing," Fischer said, remembering construction that was happening all around her. "Boy, it was a good time. Everyone was so happy to be moving here. Everytime someone moved in, we'd have a party to welcome them."

Fischer shared other details, remembering that a home sold for between \$8,500 and \$11,500 and a nine-hole round of golf cost \$1.75. A round of 18 holes was \$2.50, she said.

Before the 1976 calendars, Fischer did amateur fashion shows and modeled her

From A1

own custom-designed clothes she'd made as a member of Sun City's Sew 'N Sew Club. Born in Kansas, Fischer lived in the Midwest before coming to Phoenix in the 1950s.

Modeling has called on Fischer throughout much of her life. On a trip to Detroit when Fischer was 19, she had her picture taken at a Sears portrait studio. Not long after, a Sears representative called her and requested she fly to Chicago to possibly appear in its fashion catalog. She declined.

"I was too young and innocent, and Chicago seemed so far away," Fischer said.

On another occasion, she was approached on the

street by a talent scout and asked to model. Again, she turned it down.

"I've had a good life. I have no regrets," Fischer said. "I've been very blessed."

Among her many blessings is a talent for golf. In 2001, she won a blue ribbon for coming closest to the pin in the Quail Run Golf Tournament. After being trained by a professional golfer in the early 70s, Fischer made her first hole-in-one during her first year of playing. She still plays Lakes East, an executive course.

"It's tough to tell someone you were beaten by a 92-year-old woman," said Char Hickman, a member of the Lakes East Women's Golf League. "And you know, it happens all the time."



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Martha Fischer poses in front of Bell Recreation Center pool for a Sun City promotional calendar in 1976 wearing a bathing suit she made.

Mary Autio, club member, said Fischer was an obvious choice as guest of honor at the spring luncheon.

"I knew it would be interesting for the club to learn about her," Autio said. "She's a nice, nice person, and so talented."

Annie Karstens may be reached at 876-2532 or akarstens@aztrib.com.

OVER



JOY LAMBERT-SLAGOWSKI/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Martha Fischer holds a Del Webb Sun City advertisement from the '70s. The 92-year-old was one of the featured models in print ads promoting Sun City.

As teen, woman worked as courier
for group that smuggled escapees

Defying the Nazis

By David Madrid
The Arizona Republic

Maita Floyd spent four oppressive years under German occupation in France, but that didn't dim her teenage spirit.

Despite the danger, Floyd was a courier from 1943 to 1944 for an underground escape network that smuggled Allied air crews, Jews and political escapees over the Pyrenees Mountains into Spain.

The Sun City resident was a teen when France fell to the Nazis in 1940 and German soldiers took over her town and her family's upscale hotel.

Floyd, whose maiden name was Maita Branquet, was born in the Basque region of France, near the Spanish border. Her parents owned the Hotel de la Poste in St-Jean-de-Luz.

"In June 1940, they (the Germans) came to France like a tidal wave," Floyd says. "Nothing could stop them."

At the time, she recalls, the hotel had a lot of British customers:

"So the gendarmes arrived one night with whistles and said, 'Wake up the English people. We have a ship in the harbor to take them back to England.' So I remember as a young girl knocking on the doors. 'Are you in there?' We didn't have time to see who was where."

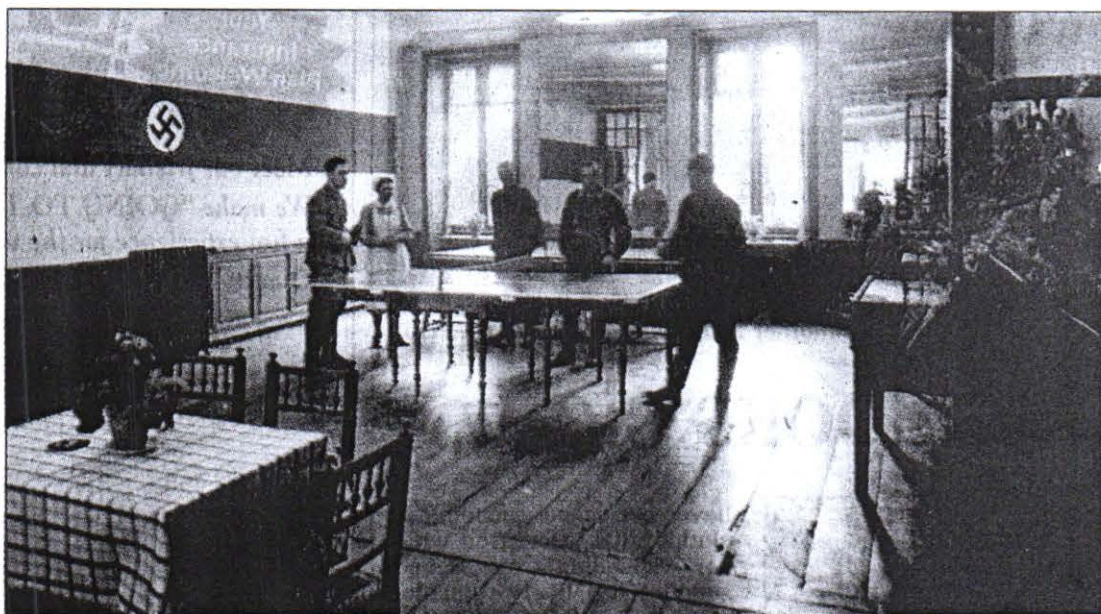
The English escaped with only one suitcase per person. Floyd was 16 years old.

Her brother, who had been captured by the Germans, escaped and returned home. But someone tipped the Nazis off that her brother, Michel, was home.

When the Germans came to the hotel looking for him, Floyd's father told them that his son was in Paris. The Germans didn't bother to search the 85 rooms of the hotel. Floyd's father drove her brother to the family villa, about three miles from the Spanish border.

"About two or three weeks later, I was at the desk, and a German officer came ... and handed me a piece of paper," Floyd says. "It said, 'You have 24 hours to leave the hotel, and we're taking over.'"

The family spent the night packing. They took the silverware and hid it under the parquet flooring.



German soldiers play pingpong in the dining room of the Hotel De La Poste, which was owned by Maita Floyd's parents.

"The soldiers walked on silver for four years," Floyd says.

The family of six moved into a one-bedroom apartment, which was an extension of the hotel that the Germans weren't interested in.

The Germans took what they wanted. Being a teenager, Floyd says, she was always hungry, but the Germans took all the best food. In Paris, she adds, the people had to resort to eating pigeons.

She says there was no coal for heating either, because the occupiers took it all for themselves. They also took 180,000 bicycles from France and sent them to Germany.

But when the Germans began to take people for forced labor, Floyd's father decided to leave St-Jean-de-Luz and move the family to the villa in the country. The villa was so remote that the Germans never came out to it.

One day, Floyd saw an advertisement from the French Red Cross, looking for girls to train as nurses. When she began training, she had to go into town each day, so her brother sent messages with her.

Michel was a member of the French underground, a network that helped people escape the Germans.

"I was my brother's courier" for a year, Floyd says.

No message was written down, because if she were caught, she would have either been sent to a concentration camp or executed.

One day, Floyd was riding her bike with her cousin when the Germans stopped them. They were ticketed for riding their bicycles side by side — the Germans had decreed that bicycles would be ridden in a single line. Floyd had to pay a

fine.

"They were sticklers for the rules," she says.

While Floyd never saw the German soldiers bother the French much, the Gestapo (the German secret police) was a different story.

"Two days after D-Day, 85 men in my hometown were betrayed to the Gestapo and arrested," Floyd says. "They were all taken to concentration camps. The Gestapo was ruthless."

Floyd says someone turned the men in for a reward. She tells of another underground network that was caught by the Nazis. The men were taken into a barn and shot. The women were taken into a church and also shot, and then the church was burned down.

Then, as the Allies advanced, the Germans just left.

Floyd moved to the United States in 1946. Floyd, who writes books and lectures, wrote a book about her life under the Germans called *Stolen Years: In My Little Corner of the World*.

She is a helper member of the Air Forces Escape & Evasion Society in both the United States and Britain. The group recently awarded her a medal for her actions during World War II. Floyd is 80 years old.

OVER

Atterrissage d'Aviateurs ou Parachutistes

AVIS TRÈS IMPORTANT aux Populations

Le Feldkommandantur rappelle aux dernière fois à la population française que le fait d'héberger, de cacher, d'aider ou d'assister de quelque manière que ce soit, même passagèrement, des aviateurs ou des parachutistes anglais ou américains expose ceux qui s'en rendraient coupables **À LA PEINE DE MORT.**

D'autre part, le Feldkommandantur récompensera toute information qui contribuera à l'arrestation des fugitifs indiqués ci-dessous par **LA LIBÉRATION DE PRISONNIERS** de guerre appartenant à la région.

- Poster presented to AFES by courtesy of the Museum of the Resistance in Nantes, France

VERY IMPORTANT WARNING TO THE POPULATION

The Field Commander reminds the French population for the last time that the sheltering, hiding, aiding or assisting in any manner, the passing of aviators or parachutists, English or American, is done so under the penalty of death.

On the other hand, the Field Commander will compensate for information leading to the arrest of these fugitives by releasing prisoners of war taken from this region.

POPULATIONS abandonnées,



AU SOLDAT ALLEMAND

At left, one of the signs the Germans posted in France warning against helping Allied airmen. Above, the Germans also placed posters around the country urging children to trust the German soldiers.



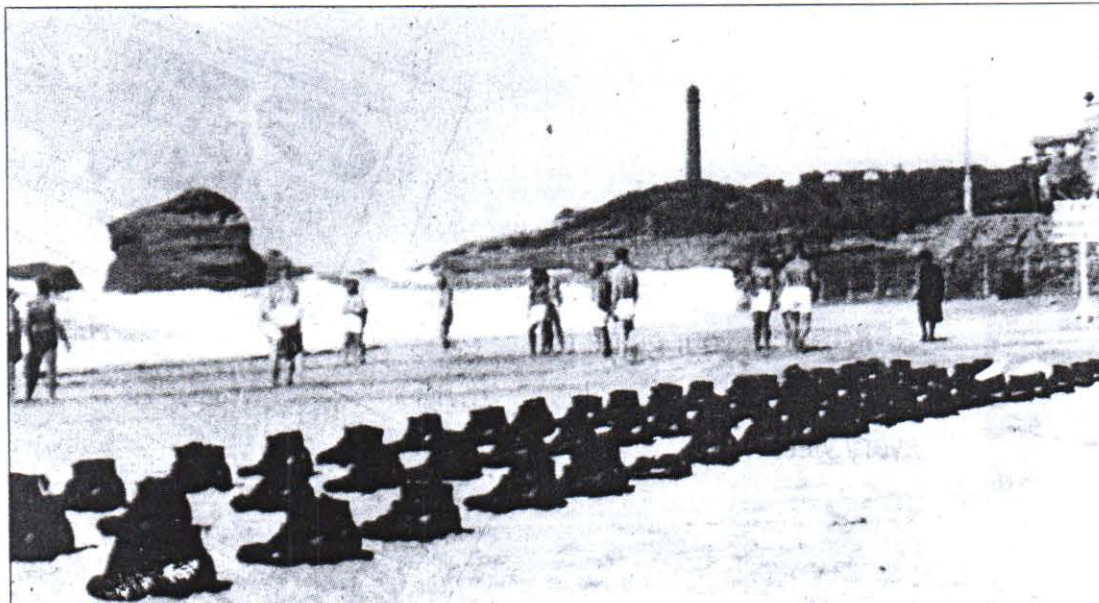
At left, Maita Floyd today. Above, Floyd with two pilots in 1996 who escaped the Nazis with the help of her brother. They are Lee Fegette of Red Oak, Texas (left) and Francis Harkins of Westminster, S.C.

NOM	BRANQUET
Prénoms	Marie Marguerite
Né le	10-8-1924 à ST-JEAN-de-LUZ (Bas-Pyr.)
Sexe	F.
Français par	filiation
Situation de famille	célib.
Profession	étudiante
SIGNATURE DU COULTRIN	
<i>M. Branquet</i>	
Empreintes digitales	

SIGNALEMENT	
Taille	1m64 Nez moyen
Visage	ovale Yeux chât-v.
Teint	clair Cheveux chât-cl.
Signes particuliers	
VALABLE du 4-5-44 au 3-5-54.	
Délivré à BAYONNE	
Le 8 juillet 1944	
SOUSSIGNÉ ET LOUÉ	
<i>[Signature]</i>	
BAYONNE	
Application de l'art. 10 de la loi	

Floyd's identification card, required by the Germans of all French citizens.

Reach the reporter at david.madrid@arizonarepublic.com or (602) 444-6926.



German soldiers prepare to go swimming. They would line their boots up in perfect order and then await an order to enter the water.

September 3, 2003

A Name to Know

Maita Floyd has led quite a life.

Fortunately, the Sun City resident is a writer and artist, so she can share her experiences with readers and place the landscapes of her life on to canvas.



Ms. Floyd's books have such varied subjects as the responsibilities of taking care of an ill loved one to the German occupation of France during World War II. All are written from personal experiences.

Ms. Floyd wrote the book "Caretakers: The Forgotten People" about her experiences taking care of her husband, who died 18 years ago.

"People say, 'That was so long ago, you must be over it by now.' But it still hurts," she said. Similar, somewhat hurtful, statements inspired Ms. Floyd to write another book, "Engage Brain Before Speaking."

Ms. Floyd gives lectures on these subjects at schools and clubs such as Rio Salado Community College and the Lion's Club. She also spends much of her time volunteering at her library and church.

88-year-old Sun City woman stays involved as a volunteer

PEORIA — Gertrude Flyte started teaching years ago after she graduated from high school. Today, at 88, she still is involved in education programs.

This month Mrs. Flyte received the Retired Senior Volunteer Program "Woman of the Year Award" in competition with nominees from Glendale, Phoenix, Avondale and Gila Bend.

It was in January 1968, soon after she arrived in Sun City, that Mrs. Flyte helped organize and direct evening adult literacy classes at Dysart Center in El Mirage. Now she is coordinator of the Laubach Literacy program in western Maricopa County.

The award was based on her long and continued volunteer service at the Dysart Literacy Center, for recruiting volunteers, training and supervising more than 100 tutors in the Laubach Literacy program, and starting a Retired Senior Volunteer Program at Dysart Center.

Why does she keep on helping?

"I am a workaholic," she said. "I have to work to be happy, and I'm healthy. And there is so much to be done in the program. I try to promote others into this interesting field. They will have the same happiness as I do as they grow older."



Republic photo by Thelma Heatwole

Gertrude Flyte shows off her trophies after winning the Retired Senior Volunteer Program's "Woman of the Year Award."

Volunteers are essential in the Laubach "each one teach one" program. Today there are 84 men and women volunteers teaching in the Dysart Center adult literacy program. There still is a great need for more volunteers, she said.

Although Mrs. Flyte started teaching after graduation from high school, she went on to college and gained three degrees. She started her Laubach work 17 years ago in the English department at the Naval and Military School at Elsinore, Calif. It was then that the Laubach system worked very well with Latin Americans.

The basic literacy program at El Mirage has been expanded. Classes now include citizenship and helping high school dropouts gain their general equivalency high school diploma.

The Dysart Center

gained national publicity for its educational efforts, now endorsed by the state Department of Education. The center received the National Freedom Foundation award in 1972 for its educational and citizenship program. In 1974, Dysart received a citation from the National Right to Read Program.

The Dysart program has produced 23 new citizens since 1968, Mrs. Flyte said.

The work produces double results. The volunteer workers also benefit. For instance, a retired teacher who directed a reading center in a large city in Ohio purchased a home in Sun City. Soon she desperately needed worthwhile activities.

Mrs. Flyte had the answer. The woman is now a happy worker in the volunteer program.

Mrs. Flyte works today largely from her home in Camelot Manor, at her typewriter and phone. She writes news releases about literary program events and uses the phone to recruit volunteers.

She also tutors a youth who needs help in reading.

There are about 750 workers serving the senior volunteer program in Maricopa County, Mrs. Flyte said. Volunteers serve in hospitals, day care centers, senior citizen centers, libraries, recreation programs and adult education. Program headquarters in Phoenix is at 1825 W. Northern.

FLYTE, GERTRUDE

✻ Emphasis DAILY NEWS-SUN

Thursday, May 18, 1978

Gertrude Flyte —

She can't help being busy; her plans don't include growing moss

By **MARY DUMOND**
Staff Writer

Sometimes it's really hard to give someone an honor.

Particularly if she's won and been given just about every bouquet, plaque, medal and dish there is to give.

Take Gertrude Flyte, for instance.

"I CAN'T help it if I keep busy," she said Wednesday, a trifle defensively, as she put two more items up on her shelves.

The two new items — an engraved gold plaque and an engraved silver pitcher — came as the result of several phone calls and a trip to Phoenix to attend a party Tuesday.

The buffet luncheon-presentation, with the Central Arizona groups of Retired Seniors Volunteer Program as host group, took place in St. Stephen's hall.

"But they kept calling me," said Mrs. Flyte, "asking if I were going to be able to make it.

"I KEPT telling them that I was trying to round up as many people as I could to come with me."

Apparently that particular bit of zeal was the final straw for the Phoenix would-be surprisers.

They finally told the Sun

Citizen to let the group know if she needed a ride "and we will send a car for you," said Mrs. Flyte. Then I was told that I was going to receive a very important honor.

"I thought I had gotten just about every honor RSVP could give."

BUT MRS. Flyte had forgotten that RSVP names a "volunteer of the year."

This year Mrs. Flyte garnered that honor, too — hence, the plaque and the pitcher.

"It was for my work with the Dysart Center reading program (the Laubach Literacy Program)," she said.

This presentation came coincidentally with Mrs. Flyte's 88th birthday this month.

WEDNESDAY SHE was entertained at a luncheon in the home of Lorene Hill Read of Sun City. The Flytes' son Norman and his family, 10941 Meade Dr., plan festivities in their home Friday for Mrs. Flyte.

Wednesday Mrs. Flyte also was feted at a coffee at the South Dakota Club, with Mr. and Mrs. Henry Schranck as informal host and hostess.

When it was suggested (good-naturedly) that Mrs.

Flyte retire to her Camelot Manor room and grow moss, she said, "Honey, I'm not ready for that yet." Indeed she's not.

SHE'S STILL too busy working with the Laubach literacy program — she is Maricopa County coordinator.

That Laubach work goes back at least 17 years, when Mrs. Flyte then was chairman of the English department at the Naval and Military School in Elsinore, Calif.

She found that the Laubach "Each One Teach One" worked beautifully in teaching Mexican-American people how to read, write and speak English.

This type of teaching is almost impossible without volunteers. It calls for a one-to-one relationship between teacher and student.

Mrs. Flyte helped organize a literacy council and became director of the first Laubach Literacy Center in Southern California.

"**GERTRUDE IS** marvelous at shanghaiing people," said Mrs. Read last year, when she started out with a chat with Mrs. Flyte and found herself teaching a class of Phoenix inner city boys shepherded over to Glendale Com-

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Gertrude Flyte, left, who launched literacy program, helps student learn to read and write English. She has devoted her retirement to volunteer literacy work.

munity College by the Phoenix Police Department.

The very fact the inner city kids — average age between 10 and 11 years — came to Glendale is in part thanks to Mrs. Flyte.

And certainly the fact that the kids — tabbed by Phoenix PD as potential leaders for good or ill and therefore to be inclined

towards the good guys if possible — have a chance to learn is thanks to Gertrude Flyte.

For when she came to Sun City in 1967, she once more stuck her Laubach foot in the illiteracy door and kept shoving the door open.

First was the Arizona Literacy Council and only two students to her first classes at the Dysart Center.

THEN IT was the county and recruiting enough tutors that now two Sun Citians — John and Jean Bassett — spend most of their time giving Laubach

workshops. At least 85 people, mostly adults, enroll in Laubach literacy classes yearly, just in Dysart Center.

She's highly interested in adult education — a highly valued commodity in El Mirage, Surprise and Peoria.

She values people and their potential. She has shoehorned people into classes in high schools, GED programs, community colleges and jobs.

And there's one comforting thing about traveling so fast at 88 that you gather no moss — you sure as heck get a high polish.

'Write a book,' they said, so she did

Friends of Mrs. Gertrude Flyte received a very special Christmas "card" this year. She usually includes a lengthy letter with greetings but this year she mailed and presented nearly 250 copies of her "book."

"I have wanted to put all my recollections together for so very long," said the almost-retired teacher who began her career in South Dakota right out of high school often teaching students older than herself.

FROM TEACHER, to county superintendent, to state director of adult education and regional representative for the Federal Works Agency, to volunteer specialist for the Office of Price Administration, to the first state director of Women's and Professional Projects, to state president of the South Dakota Congress of Parents and Teachers, Mrs. Flyte has had a fondness for the small, warm, human incidents in her life.

These are recalled in her book, entitled "When the South Wind Blew Softly," as are personal and family things.

Mrs. Flyte, who lives at 10453 Snead Dr., also pays a hefty tribute to the work going on at Dysart Community Center, El Mirage, in the Laubach language program, an area she became involved in almost as soon as she and her husband, Fred, came to Sun City near the end of 1967. Now director of the literary project, she is also still a teacher.

THE MOST SEASONAL thought in the nearly-90-page book is a section about memories of Christmas in a small town in central South Dakota when the whole community worked to make the holiday happy for all the children. It was in the 1890s when Gertrude Edmunds, the oldest of what was to become a happy family of seven children, was

in her earliest school years.

"The first step for a community Christmas in the little town of Lebanon was the call to a town meeting in the little church when committees were appointed.

"For at least three weeks before the busy teachers drilled the excited children in Christmas songs, carols, recitations, dialogues, pantomimes, and similar exercises. And how they drilled.

"AT LAST THE tall tree was installed in the church. I remember that my father was usually the person who chose the tree and saw that it was properly placed. Coming from Norway, he loved trees and it was his hands that planted most of the trees in the little town.

"Then the decorating committee would come. Hundreds of tallow candles would be placed in little holders in the branches. Long strings of white popcorn and red cranberries together with yards of glittering tinsel gave further glamor. Meanwhile the ladies made hundreds of bags from red mosquito bar and filled them with candy and nuts; they were placed in bushel baskets near the tree, ready for distribution at the appointed time.

"Finally the great night came. By seven o'clock the people began to crowd into the little church, coming from miles around, assured of a warm welcome and treat for their children.

"AFTER SINGING and watching the program, there was heard the tinkle of sleigh bells and Santa would arrive breathlessly in

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spite of the fact that a telegram had been received stating that he would be late because his reindeer had lost a shoe or some similar mishap.

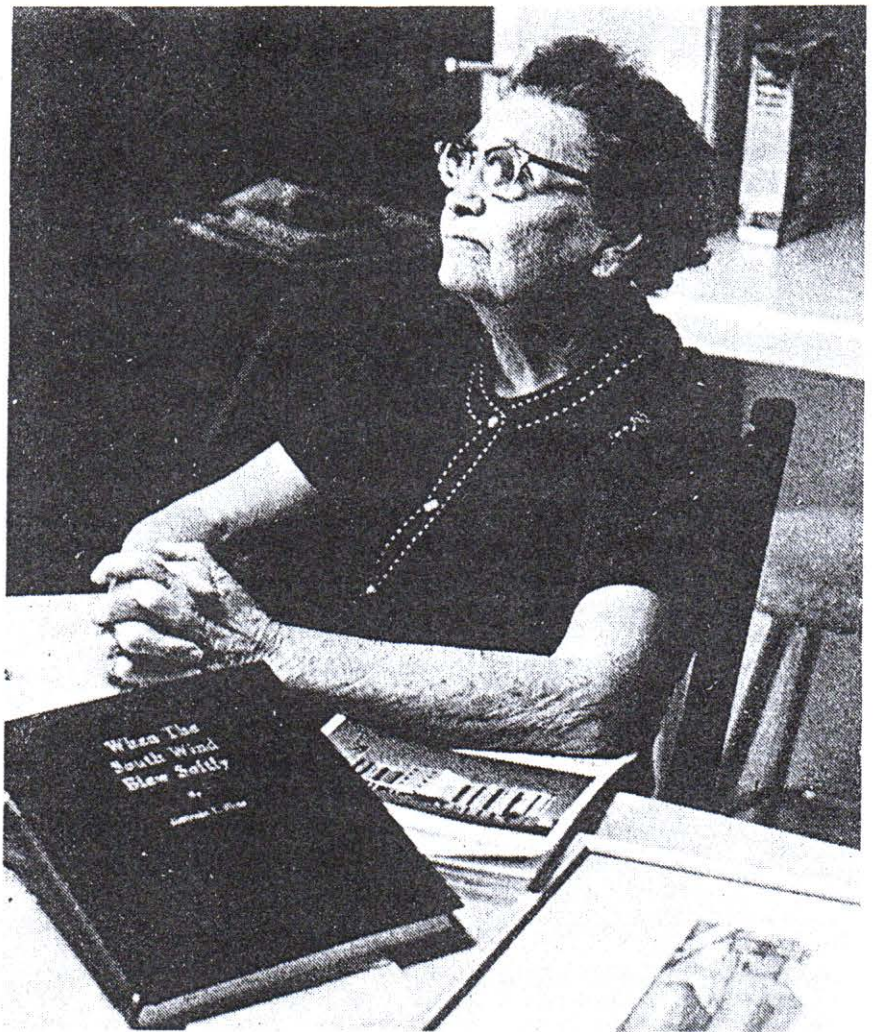
"He never seemed to grow older although some years he was thinner and his red suit grew more shabby.

"He shook hands with all the children and had a wonderful memory for names. Then he would call his helpers and distribute his gifts and those piled high around the tree.

"In those days the gifts were smuggled to the church to be delivered by Santa. Parents brought gifts for their children and each other. There was good-natured fun when the town's most eligible bachelor would receive a broom or a teakettle while a box of pepper might be Santa's gift to the village school ma'am.

"THEN EVERY child received a bag bulging with crinkly Christmas candy. When all the children had received a bag, the old folks were remembered. Old folks in those days included all those who had reached the ripe old age of forty.

"In good time the evening drew to a close and parents bundled up children and gifts and packed them into a bob sleigh. The chimes of sleigh bells mingled with the happy laughter of little children."



Mrs. Flyte started putting book together in 1970, had it ready for printer in Youngtown by June of this year and began sending out copies to old and new friends early this month. "When the South Wind Blew Softly," the title, has been inspirational thought to her since high school graduation baccalaureate service where she first heard it. Taken from Book of Acts, the story of Paul's voyage to Rome, the complete passage is "and when the south winds blew softly, they sailed."

(News-Sun Photo)

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MAR 18 1974

Book recalls rural Dakotas

By THELMA HEATWOLE

SUN CITY — Gertrude E. Flyte, at 83, is old enough to remember when peddlers in covered wagons went to rural America carrying a gramophone with a big horn and ear plugs.

The peddler would gather people at a central location and charge 10 cents to hear popular songs of the 1890s, she said.

"I experienced the great Depression of the Thirties," she said, "and had a part in setting up and carrying out programs to help people survive. There were people who had lost everything through bank failures, crop failures due to extreme drought, dust bowls and grasshopper scourges."

The Sun Citian, who started teaching in 1907 and is still involved in teaching programs, had collected enough memories to write a book. So she did. She drew up her memory, diary and records and called the book, "When the South Wind Blew Softly."

She has already given away more than 250 copies to family and friends.

Mrs. Flyte, born in 1890 near Lebanon, S.D., recalled that her parents and others got together to pay for carbide streetlights so children could have a safer place to play while parents sat on the wooden sidewalks under the trees and watched and supervised.

She recalls community Christmas celebrations that stemmed from the church and glorious Fourth of July celebrations in the Gay Nineties.

"Those pioneers had something we seem to have lost," she said, adding that she hopes the 200th anniversary of the United States will help restore "love for our country."



Republic photo by Thelma Heatwole
Gertrude Flyte of Sun City, who started teaching in 1910, had so many memories she wrote a book.

Her education began in a two-room rural school house. As a beginner, she learned much from hearing older students recite. After high school studies she went to the county seat at Gettysburg, S.D., to write the teacher's examination leading to a third-grade certificate. She later completed her college studies at the University of South Dakota. She married Fred Flyte in 1912 and became a farm wife.

In 1927 she entered politics and was elected county school superintendent of Buffalo County, serving six years. She promoted the Parent-Teachers Association program and spent 15 years with the board of the National Congress PTA.

By 1932 economic conditions were so bad the Red Cross began to help with food and clothing in South Dakota. By 1933 things grew worse with the arrival of grasshoppers and drought.

"I recall driving across the Crow Creek Indian reservation one day in midsummer 1933," Mrs. Flyte said. "The grasshoppers actually sawed a jagged hole in the back of my pink shantung dress. I kept it for years as evidence."

Mrs. Flyte served as South Dakota Director of Adult Education, regional representative

in a seven-state area for the Federal Works Agency and volunteer specialist for the Office of Price Administration. She was instrumental in getting a bookmobile and accompanied it on its first trip to large counties in northwest South Dakota.

In 1942 she was loaned from the Works Projects Administration to the Naturalization Division of the Department of Justice in Washington to write books in basic English for applicants for citizenship. Later she was assigned to the Federal Works Agency in St. Paul, Minn., and was field representative in a seven-state area to help establish child care centers for mothers who worked in war plants.

Her community work did not stop when she moved to 10453 Snead Drive, in Sun City in 1967. She soon organized an adult education program for citizens in El Mirage at the Dysart Center. She is now co-ordinator of the West Maricopa County Laubach Literacy Program.

FLYTE,
Gertrude