



Vol. 6 No. 2 May 1974

IN MEMORIAM

Baldwin Park, California

Ettie Lee - 88 Years of Service

Outstanding life of unselfish service to others comes to close.

A life of dedicated service to others quietly came to a close at 1:30 a.m. on May 25, 1974. Ettie Lee, who changed the lives of thousands of young people, died at 88 of natural causes in Mesa, Arizona. In accordance with her wishes, funeral services were held in the Wilshire Ward Chapel of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and interment was in the Inglewood Park Cemetery, Inglewood, California.

The Eulogy was read by Neil E. Howard, Executive Director of Ettie Lee Homes for Boys, and a moving tribute was given by one of her boys, David Shaw, who told of the great influence for good she had on his life.

Dr. Rex Lee, representing the family, said she was "a giant of this dispensation," and John Russon, Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees, gave excerpts from her early life.

Elder Robert L. Simpson, representative of the President of Miss Lee's church, expressed gratitude for those who give, not of their surplus, but of themselves, as Ettie Lee did.

The crypt was dedicated by Judge Jesse A. Udall, a member of the Board of Trustees, and Miss Lee's brother-in-law.

The inspiring ceremony was attended by many of her present and former boys and homeparents as well as friends and relatives.

The family, Board of Trustees and National Advisory Council wish to express their gratitude for the kind wishes, the flowers and memorial contributions sent by her many many friends.



ETTIE LEE
NOVEMBER 2, 1885 — APRIL 25, 1974

THE TEACHER'S WORK IS DONE

*Come, lay her books and papers by,
She shall not need them more,
The ink shall dry upon her pen,
So softly close the door.
Her tired head, with locks of white,
And like the winter's sun;
Hath lain to peaceful rest tonight,—
The teacher's work is done.*

*Her work is done; no care tonight
Her tranquil rest shall break,
Sweet dreams, and with the morning light,
On other shores she'll wake.
Her noble thoughts; her wise appeal,
Her works that battles won;—
Her voice again shall teach, who thought
The teacher's work was done.*

Adapted from "Come, Lay His Books and Papers By" by Annie Pike Greenwood.

Sung by Charlene Stratford at Ettie's Funeral.



Casket Bearers included 6 of Ettie Lee's boys and 2 of her nephews.

Ettie Lee often heard her father say, "Those who draw from the well of life should put something back."

Throughout a long life of service to others, she lived this teaching to the fullest. Her devotion and dedication have improved the lives of thousands of children, both in school classes she taught for 44 years, and in her Ettie Lee Homes for Boys, the largest boys' home organization in the Western United States.

Honored in 1971 by her Alma Mater, Northern Arizona University, with their Outstanding Alumni Achievement Award for her innovative accomplishments in the fields of teaching and child care, she was also a Los Angeles Times Woman of the Year in 1965, Teacher of the Nation in 1966 and Brigham Young University Woman of the Year in 1968. The story of her phenomenal achievements has been featured in many newspapers and in national publications such as Reader's Digest, Newsweek, Coronet and others.

Cited by the Intermountain Juvenile Court System as America's foremost enemy of delinquency, Ettie Lee's indomitable strength of purpose provided family type homes for over 3,800 boys — the "hopeless," the "delinquent," the "incorrigible"; the boy abandoned by society and headed for a life of crime and despair.

Ettie Lee, the daughter of John David Lee and Evaline Dorinda Clark, was born in Luna, New Mexico on November 2, 1885. Her mother died when Ettie was 14 months old, and her father married Inez Hamblin, daughter of Jacob Hamblin, famous pioneer scout and settler of the West. She spent a happy childhood as one of 12 children in a warm, close family, and it was her memories of this family togetherness that inspired her efforts to create the same kind of home for boys whose families had failed them.

Her father was a strong advocate of education for girls as well as boys, and she attended the Gila Academy in Thatcher, Arizona, then went on to Northern Arizona Teacher's College for her Bachelor's Degree. At 17 she began her teaching career in a one-room schoolhouse in Thatcher, where the groundwork was laid for her lifelong concern for troubled children. After 3 years she entered the University of Southern California for her Master's Degree, and taught English classes in night school to cover her expenses.

Ettie Lee taught for many years in the Los Angeles School system, earning national recognition for her creative teaching methods. She authored many textbooks which were used throughout the States and in Europe, and lectured extensively at many schools and universities, including USC and UCLA.

She was made Assistant Supervisor of Teachers in the Los Angeles Education System, but after serving in this capacity for a few years, she requested a return to the classroom, where she felt she could do the most good.

During the 44 years she taught school, she became more and more concerned about the steadily increasing number of her brightest students who were getting in trouble with the law and being sent to correctional institutions. She discovered that these boys all had a common denominator — they came from broken homes where they failed to receive the discipline, guidance and love they needed. She became convinced that institutions only teach a person to be an inmate of an institution, not a well-balanced citizen of his community. "A boy in trouble does not belong behind bars," she said. "He needs love. He needs a mother and father to guide him. Above all, he needs a home."



Ettie had a marvelous sense of humor, and loved to trade jokes with the boys.



Ettie received many honors. Here City Councilman John Patrick Cassidy presents the "Teacher of the Nation Award" at the "Apple of Gold" Luncheon on Teacher Remembrance Day.



Ettie believed that boys need to be around animals, so most of the Homes are in the country.



A renowned scholar, Ettie brought the joy of reading to many young people.



Ettie (black dress) oversees planting at one of her Homes in Fontana.



Ettie firmly believed in the value of a strong sports program for her boys. Here she tries out a new basketball.

Ettie Lee approached child welfare groups, correctional institutions and the courts to plead the cause of misguided youth, but soon realized that if someone was going to provide homes instead of institutions for these boys, she would have to do it herself. She knew she couldn't do much on her meager salary of \$200 a month, so following advice in a library book on real estate investments, she saved half her salary and began to invest. She made a down payment on an apartment house. During the day she continued to excel as a teacher, but on evenings and weekends she cleaned, painted and sewed. When the apartments were rented, she did the maintenance work herself. Then she sold for a profit, bought a larger one, and pitched in again. This was her pattern — buy, improve, sell. Work hard, save, invest.

Her courage and perception were phenomenal, her methods unorthodox. She was a firm believer in the power of prayer, and many hardheaded business executives were amazed to see her excuse herself to pray about a transaction, then return calmly, her decision made. Over the years she accumulated investment properties which gave her enough income so she could have retired comfortably, but she felt that since she was guided in acquiring this property it was not hers, but was meant to finance a worthy cause. She lived frugally in one of her smallest apartments, her needs met by her teacher's pension, and used all her earnings to finance her real life's work — rehabilitating wayward boys.

She searched until she found a big, comfortable ranch out in the country where troubled boys could feel the healing influence of nature. Then she set to work once again, scrubbing, painting, refurbishing — and the first of her many homes came into being. Finding couples to act as parents wasn't easy — they needed the patience of Job, the wisdom of Solomon, and a genuine love for children. But she searched until she found them, too.

Her revolutionary child care theories soon proved amazingly successful, as the boys came to her from the Courts — unloved, bitter, despairing — and in the warmth and security of one of her homes learned to understand themselves and solve their problems. This love and security gave them strength as they went forth again into the world — back on the road to happy, successful adulthood.

Today there are 19 Ettie Lee Homes — 13 in California, 5 in Utah and 1 in Nevada. The work she began is being carried on through the non-profit organization she created, under the direction of a dedicated Board of Trustees and National Advisory Council, who have caught her vision and been inspired by her example.

Ettie Lee had the courage, the strength, and the stamina to carry through against great odds until her dream became a reality. She pioneered the group home concept which has proven so successful that it is now widely copied in the child care field. Her dedication and perseverance have made it possible to reclaim the lives of thousands of boys who might otherwise have been lost to society and to themselves.

"Love does work miracles," Ettie said many times. "I hug each boy and gently teach him to pray. That's all I do. Good food, wholesome family fellowship, clean environment do the rest."

Ettie Lee has become one of the immortals — because her life goes on in the lives of these boys and the thousands more who will one day find new life and new hope in one of the homes she made possible.

SPECIAL MEMORIALS

An ongoing Memorial and Tribute program is an important part of the support of our Boys' Homes. Those who wish to honor the memory of a departed friend or loved one, or pay tribute to the living, do so by sending a donation in their name. In the regular editions of our Fireside, these Memorials and Tributes are listed here. However, since this is a Memorial issue dedicated to Miss Lee, we are listing only those received in her memory. The next regular edition will contain further listings.

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Ettie with Executive Director Neil Howard in front of her Home in Blanding, Utah.



Judge Jesse A. Udall dedicated the crypt. The simple white casket was chosen by Ettie Lee a few years ago. It is a style that is now discontinued, but was made up especially for her so her wishes could be carried out.



The courage and determination that enabled her to accomplish so much clearly show in this photograph.



Ettie with a few of her boys when they gave her a birthday party.



The boys all loved "Aunt Ettie" and were happy to have her visit them.

TRIBUTE LETTERS

To the relatives and friends of Ettie Lee.

Having known Ettie Lee favorably and well for more than half a century, I send to you best wishes, kind sympathy, and high esteem. Ettie Lee as a beautiful young woman was my fourth grade teacher in public school. A woman of vision, selflessness and sacrifice, she has done much for young men who had been deprived, but through her vision and enterprise have found much in life, including opportunity and accomplishment.

Our world would greatly profit if it had more public spirited sacrificial women such as this splendid woman. God bless her memory.

Spencer W. Kimball
 President, L.D.S. Church

Please accept my expression of condolences to the Homes and staff from Los Angeles County Probation Department on the death of Miss Ettie Lee.

The children of this County have benefited from Miss Lee's good works. She had a dream that effort and perseverance made real: a proper home and guidance for wayward boys. It was our privilege to share with her the rewards of having helped restore order and direction to so many badly disordered lives. And to have seen one home grow to a successful agency of 19 homes.

Although Miss Lee's spiritual influence will be missed, we feel certain the Homes, founded by her 24 years ago, will continue to foster her ideals and provide for needy children the kind of warm family life requisite to healthy growth and development.

John Chillington
 Placement Coordinator

