Vida McGiffin Keeps on Winning

Her 31 years of service to Birmingham high school were honored Saturday as Miss Vida B. McGiffin received the Columbia Scholastic Press Association's Gold Key award at a luncheon at the Waldorf-Astoria, New York.

Miss McGiffin resigned from the faculty last June after serving as journalism and English teacher and director of publications since 1928.

SHE HAS EARNED a national reputation for her Birmingham school publications.

She was a member of the faculty of Birmingham high school from September, 1928 to June, 1959.

MISS McGIFFIN received her education at a number of outstanding institutions. She attended Tri-State college in Indiana, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Chicago, and Marion Normal institute in Indiana.

She received both her B.A. and M.A. degrees from the University of Michigan where she was elected to Phi Beta Kappa.

Her early teaching experience was in schools in Indiana and Ohio. Her first high school experience was in the junior high in Bellview, Ohio. This position was followed by a similar one in the junior high school at LaPorte, Indiana.

HER INTEREST in journalism started quite early in her college training. During the time that she was enrolled in a summer session at Marion Normal institute in Indiana she took her first course in journalism. Her first active instruction in this field was at the junior high school in LaPorte, Indiana, where she was in charge of the school paper.

"After coming to Birmingham high school, she almost immediately identified herself with the publication of the school paper, at first working in close conjunction with Mr. Howard Crull, who is now superintendent of schools in Port Huron," Principal Ross Wagner said.

"In working with young people, Miss McGiffin was a master teacher. She not only did a very efficient job of instructing in her content field, but she instilled in the young people qualities which made for success and sound character," he went on.

IN HER CAREER as a teacher of journalism she strictly adhered to the requirements of the professional newspaper writer. She insisted on the meeting of deadlines much the same as in a newspaper office.

"She never spared herself or students in meeting these requirements. It was not infrequent for students to be working with Miss McGiffin until seven o'clock in the evening. Students were accustomed to working with her at her home in the evenings and on weekends. Working on any school publication with Miss McGiffin was almost the equivalent to an apprenticeship training in the field," Wagner continued.

Miss McGiffin, because of her proficiency, has been asked to speak at many conferences and conventions dealing with school publications. She served as a speaker at the Columbia Scholastic Press Association Conference held at Columbia University in New York City.

DURING the summer of 1956 she assisted in the instruction of a course at Florida State university.

She has served as a resource person at the University of Missouri's journalism workshops where she has delivered lectures on offset printing and other phases of high school journalism.

She has written articles which have been published in such professional magazines as the School Press Review, Photolith Magazine, The Nation's Schools, and Scholastic Editor.

"THE EXCELLENCE of her work in this field is attested to by the fact that she has repeatedly won national prizes," the principal went on.

"The Columbia Scholastic Press association has awarded the Birmingham annual the Esper a medalist certificate for the years, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958 and 1959. It has also awarded the Birmingham High School paper the Highlander first place awards in 1954 and 1955," he said.

"Miss McGiffin possesses so many fine personal attributes that her service to her school extended far beyond that of her work in journalism and beyond that of a classroom teacher.

"Her personal interest in her students continued for many years after their graduation from high school. She followed them through their further education and on into their employment. During the war years she kept in close contact with her students in service around the world.

"In Birmingham high school she contributed much to the spirit and the tradition of the school. One of her real contributions to this school was the writing of the lyrics for the school hymn 'Forever Birmingham' which has become the alma mater of the school. She collaborated with a graduate of Birmingham high school in the composition of this hymn.

"She has been an avid sports fan and has kept accurate records of the teams' accomplishments," Wagner said.

ECCENTRIC PHOTO

Concert's Coming Closer

Under the baton of music teacher-director Joan Gassaway, fifth and sixth-grade musicians at Midvale school rehearse for their concert at 8 p.m. March 30, at the school. Full-orchestra pieces, ensembles and nine student soloists will be featured. Ensembles include a clarinet quartet made up of Leonard Hook, Molly Hall, Barbara Warner, Ellen Lindner: a clarinet duet: Jan Fry and Ginger Passavant; a brass quartet, made up of Dick Wyatt, Bill Collins, Jeff Doane and John Dise; and a violin duet: Mary Hurd and Bill Erickson. Other soloists include John Krauss and Ricky Osborn. The public has been invited to the free concert.

Average farm investment for a group of 45 western Michigan fruit growers went from about $15,000 to about $50,000 during the period 1937-1958.

Ward

(Continued from Page 1-A)

suppliers unit. The unit raised 104 per cent of its quota.

Ward's successes in the Torch Drive have paralleled his achievements within the Ford Motor Company, which he joined in 1948 after 20 years of top management in the mail-order business.

HE HAS HELD his present position since May, 1957. He has been a member of the company's administration committee since January, 1956.

As director of purchasing, Ward is directly responsible for all Ford central purchasing activities, and is functionally responsible for all other company purchases.

During six years with the Ford Division, Ward planned and directed the division's nationwide expansion of its parts depot network. He also re-organized the entire requirement, distribution and warehousing system of the parts depots.

OF THE 25 DEPOTS currently operated by the division, 15 were built and four were expanded during Ward's service as manager of parts and accessories.

Ward is a member of the Bloomfield Hills country club and the Detroit Athletic club, and is chairman of the lay advisory board of Mercy college.

Russian Orthodox Priest to Speak

"The Procedure for Becoming a Priest" will be the subject of a lecture delivered by the Rev. Fr. Thomas Ruffin of Saint George Orthodox church, Detroit, at 7 p.m. March 27 at the Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox church hall, Eight Mile and Harned street. It will be sponsored by the Michigan district of the Federated Russian Orthodox clubs.

The lecture will be preceded by Sunday vesper services at 6 p.m., in which all of the Detroit Orthodox Clergy will participate.

Nelle Wants Whereabouts Kept Secret

BEVERLY HILLS — Enjoying her freedom and looking for privacy, Mrs. Nelle Lassiter has attempted to keep her whereabouts unknown.

A neighbor said the accused widow of Parvin (Bill) Lassiter had returned to her home several times, but was not staying at the house at 19690 Beverly road.

Contacted by The Birmingham Eccentric Wednesday, Mrs. Lassiter's daughter, Zonyia, said, "We would rather not have it published as to where mother is, though it's no great secret. She hasn't had any privacy for a long time."

ZONYIA, Mrs. Thomas M. Stankov, is staying with her in-laws, the Michael Stankovs, in Detroit. Mrs. Lassiter has visited the Detroit household to see her first grandson, Michael, born Feb. 22.

She was visiting the new baby at a Detroit hospital Feb. 23, the day she was arrested, when she was asked to report to the prosecuting attorney's office. She was released Monday on $15,000 bail from Wayne county jail.

The first degree murder and conspiracy charges still stand against Mrs. Lassiter and Lassiter's former business partner, Gordon Watsod. No trial date has been set.

Watson, also freed on $15,000 bail, claimed Mrs. Lassiter's statement that he told her of her husband's slaying before police knew about it is "95 per cent untrue."

This & That

(Continued from Page 1-A)

less expensive, materials where possible, in the planning for new buildings, or additions thereto.

IT MAY REQUIRE delaying the installation of such facilities as swimming pools.

Eventually, insofar as desired financing is concerned currently, the emphasis is on salaries. If continuing increases for faculty and custodial employees is to be the pattern of the future, then in the language of the street, "something will have to give."

. . . and, more and more taxpayers are declaring: "Somehow, it'll have to be maximum economy in the cost of buildings as well."

longer be a "shop-worn chestnut."

THE PEOPLE in the Birmingham area on the whole have above average income (1959 statistics), therefore there is no reason why they can't have above average schools and teachers.

You also state that "many of us have all our worldly goods tied up in our homes or businesses . . . Much of the tax burden is due to the unreasonable demands the school district has made upon us and which we have been foolish enough to grant in past years."

Did you ever stop to realize that of all the citizenry tied up all their money in worldly goods and allowed little or nothing for education, we would become a sattelite of Russia in nothing flat!

WE MUST continuously improve our school systems and the standards, as well as the pay, of our teachers if we are to keep up with Russia who has already put us to shame at least as far as space exploration is concerned.

Russians put education before worldly goods and that is probably why they have excelled in space study, for example.

A word to the wise—the future of our country depends on our children who must be properly educated, which means good teachers (well-paid and not so overworked).

MRS. PATRICIA BRUNKE
1165 Eton
Birmingham

The Village Bookshelf
790 N. Woodward Ave. Birmingham
MI 6 8887

ALL THE DAY LONG by Howard Spring (Harper, $4.95) is a well written novel covering a century of English life as three fascinating women knew it. This is unusually good story that will keep you entirely absorbed —and your mind off the bad weather.

THE LINCOLN LORDS family and current business situations are so familiar, and written so well by Cameron Hawley (of "Executive Suite" and "Cash McCall" fame) that you will enjoy reading about them. Mr. Hawley's narrative ability and smooth speed at which his story moves, makes this engrossing reading.

LENTEN READING AND EASTER GIVING suggestions include Peter Marshall's THE FIRST EASTER and A MAN CALLED PETER; Dr. Daniel Poling's MINE EYES HAVE SEEN AND LONG REMEMBER, Dorothy Canfield Fisher's final contribution; MEDITATIONS FOR WOMEN, by Abercrombie and Thielicke; Dr. Peale including his AMAZING RESULTS OF POSITIVE THINKING. These, plus many more, offer inspiration and thoughtful reading for the Easter Season.

NAGGING COMPLAINTS will go, and you'll enjoy a more zestful life according to the good Vermont Doctor Jarvis who prescribes in his FOLK MEDICINE a combination of honey, vinegar and common sense. Roughly, three dozen copies have been sold in the last two weeks. Is it imagination or do people on Maple look healthier these days?

PEOPLE'S COLUMN

March 28 School Vote Brings Out the Writers

Consider These Points Too, Writer Suggests

Fellow Taxpayers,

The Birmingham school board has put forth a concise picture of their future needs and the necessity for a (4) mill school tax increase. It is a fair and reasonable view of the situation as it now exists and they are doing the job for which they were elected and/or employed.

However, the Birmingham school board should not go unchallenged on certain points at issue, regardless of the results of the voting on March 28th. Neither should we as citizens try to shift responsibility for high taxes in an indiscriminate manner.

Kindly take a few minutes and consider a few points before you draw defensive conclusions:

SHALL WE BE brave and actually talk about wages? We all know what inflation and wage increases has done in this country. But let's talk about it anyway.

The major item of the tax increase (51.5%) will be used for salary increases.

In Birmingham salaries range from $4500.00 to $7100.00 per school year. Assume (5) days per week, (8) hours per day, (40) weeks per year. For COMPARISON purposes, this is 1600 hours per school year and carries an hourly rate of from $2.81 to $4.43 per hour. Convert this to a (52) week year to correspond to the ordinary understanding of yearly salary and it then becomes:

$5845 for an A.B. without experience (beginner),

$9215 for an M.A. with 12 years experience.

The fringe benefits include 1) part of a pension fund, 2) vacation time at Christmas and Easter, 3) as well as sick leave, etc,

IN ALL FAIRNESS teachers cannot live on psychic income — particularly those with long years of service. They should have sensible increases because they are generally dedicated to education and usually form the foundation of our systems.

However, the case is different with the inexperienced ones just out of school themselves. A large portion of those do not continue in education for various practical reasons and their starting salary far exceeds comparable positions in the business field.

The board says that six nearby districts pay from $50 less to $200 more per school year to beginners; they pay from $300 less to $1,000 more per school year to experienced teachers.

IF WE AVERAGE all seven districts we find that we are 3/10 of 1% low (2¼ ¢ per hour) for beginners; we are 3.4% low (15¢ per hour) for experienced teachers. One of the seven districts used in the averages has one of the highest wage scales in the United States.

It takes 37.8% of your school tax money to handle the debt burden previously contracted.

Our present school debt is $14,422,000. If it is funded at 5% and we maintain our 8.5 mill debt service we realize $1,617,230. per year to cover this debt.

It will take us at least 12 years to pay what we now owe. This assumes no more school debt will be incurred for 12 years—and we know this cannot happen.

IS ALL THIS significant? Well, all public and private debt is under constant pressure for repayment. Economic changes—such as price declines due to overproduction (or under consumption) or excessive taxation, or loss of incentives to keep a reasonable portion of what you earn—all of these can exert pressure which can make payments on debt very difficult to sustain.

I would like to digress from the current problem at hand and try to relate it to a larger and more complex question that might be simply stated, "Is everything getting better and better just because it costs more and more?"

We hear a great deal about the built-in safety features of our economy, but this is not a "normal" economy when we are fighting a cold-war and using roughly 50% of our Federal budget for defense measures.

OUR PRIVATE debt has increased from $200 billion to $500 billion just since World War II. We are not recession or depression proof just by saying or acting as if we are. It takes a willingness on the part of all of us to provide a sound basis for our economy.

This letter is not one of protest against education, boards of education, school activities, nor any individuals connected with our governing bodies. It is an attempt to get "grass-roots" acknowledgment that we can only afford what we can pay for. FEDERAL "grants-in-aid" will not solve our problems. We need to think seriously about costs and their relationship to general economic problems.

VOTING MONEY is not enough for any activity. The costs of governmental services (your requests) are rising, and the tax load is at record level. Will just the voting of more money improve our situations? No! We need a greater understanding of the "Reality" situation.

At the expense of repeating an old expression that cannot be said with any other words: "It is time to re-examine and evaluate what we really can afford in the way of more taxes at any level."

Thank you for your indulgence and may all those concerned with education understand my motives.

J. R. MITCHELL
Box 377
Franklin

Pupil Load Figures Wrong; Ex-Teacher Says

To The Editor:

I was appalled today to receive in the mail, a three-page letter from a Roland C. Koehler, secretary of the Birmingham School District Taxpayer's Committee, urging people to vote against the 4 mills of tax money for schools in the school election on March 28.

Either Mr. Koehler's group has been misinformed, or else the group is deliberately misrepresenting the truth.

MR. KOEHLER'S letter, among other things, states that "five years ago the system had 26.7 pupils per employee. Today it is 25.2: quite good progress . . ."

These figures may be correct, but our school board is urging us to vote "YES" in Monday's election in order to help reduce the pupil load per teacher, not per employee. Employees include janitors, office workers, school nurses, teachers, administrators, etc.

Our school system today does not average 25.2 pupils per teacher. The average is well above that figure.

ONE OF MY SONS is in a kindergarten class of 38 youngsters. My other son is in a "split" room of 15 third graders and 15 fourth graders.

The reason there are only 30 pupils in this split room is that there is just one teacher to handle both grades. The other third and fourth grade rooms (not split) have more than 30 pupils.

The school my sons attend is fairly new and it has adequate room in order to keep the classes smaller. But some of the rooms have had to be closed this year because of lack of funds to hire the required number of teachers.

Thus the over-crowding in the rooms presently being used. This is progress?

TEACHING IS not "easy," Mr. Koehler, and members of your group. I know because I taught school in the Grand Rapids public school system before I was married.

Have you ever tried to teach a group of 30 or 40 active, mischievous youngsters? I have—and I must admit that a good portion of my time was spent in trying to keep them quiet so that they would learn something.

It is much easier to control a smaller group, and more individual attention can be given, resulting in more learning.

To anyone who happens to read this letter, I urge you to vote "YES" in the forthcoming election—that is, if you advocate more learning in our school system.

MRS. DONALD M. SMITH
17834 Beechwood
Beverly Hills

Reader Protests Committee's Ad

To the Editor:

I am not one given to writing letters regarding newspaper articles, television or radio shows, etc., but the ad placed in your paper by the "Birmingham School District Taxpayer's Committee" rankled me no little.

In the first place, this "committee," which I suspect is composed of one member, Roland C. Koehler (note how taxpayer's is punctuated), defers any defense until March 24., when it will be too late for a rebuttal in The Eccentric. (See the rebuttal on Page 1-D—EDITOR.)

SECONDLY, why did the "committee" not come forth at the PTA meetings as did the members of the school board? Another example of furtiveness!

Mr. Editor, I believe it would be most fitting for your paper to inform us in next Thursday's edition of the composition of the "committee", so that they may be contacted face to face, if necessary.

I have enjoyed your paper very much during the three and one-half years we have lived in Beverly Hills and I have regarded you and your staff as eminently fair and honest in all matters dealing with our community.

I have two boys in Greenfield school and I am most interested in these "hundreds of dollars to be taken out of my pockets" . . . all I can say is about $30.

A. C. "CHICK" HOLMES
31745 Auburn drive
Beverly Hills

Taxpayer Answers Taxpayers' Committee

TO THE EDITOR:

This letter is directed to the Birmingham School District Taxpayer's committee:

In response to your secretary's circular of March 15, 1960 (with which I am thoroughly disgusted), since when have our educational needs become "propaganda campaigns" as you stated in your circular?

The right to a good education is an inheritable right of every American child! A good education involves good teachers (as well as proper facilities, and good teachers cost money!

TEACHERS SPEND a minimum of four years in college to prepare themselves for their profession. Instead of earning money during those four years, the teachers are continuously paying it out for tuition, books, transportation, etc.

Not only money is involved, however. College work involves a great deal of hard work, concentration and diligence.

In your circular you said to "study your last tax bill and you will find that about three-fourths of it was for education", and then you go on to state that there are other government functions that need to be supported too. I believe that your statement is slanted so that anyone who reads it will take you verbatim.

HOWEVER, I checked my tax bills for 1950 and found that of a total of $304, only $150 was alloted for education.

Therefore only one-half of my total bill went for education rather than three-fourths.

In responde again to your circular, you stated that the pupil - teacher ratio at the present time is 25.2 to 1.

YOU FAILED to explain what you meant. Consequently those citizens not familiar with the school system would not understand that it does not mean that every teacher has only about 25 pupils per class. The fact is that in the majority of cases the average is about 34 per class.

I have been a substitute teacher in the Birmingham schools for the past year-and-a-half, and I have noticed such to be the truth.

There are some advanced classes such as college algebra and foreign languages that have as few as 20 pupils per class but such is the exception rather than the rule! The fewer students per class, the better job the teacher can do in educating the individual child.

IN CASE YOU do not know it, the goal of our American education system is to "educate all the children of all the people". Since not all the children are capable of undertaking what many people consider "tough" subjects, easier subjects must be put in the curriculum for their benefit. (Not everyone is capable of becoming a scientist.)

Your statement "Salaries are lagging behind other school districts", and your comment, "this old chestnut is getting shopworn from too frequent use in past years" irks me also.

In the first place, Birmingham does have one of the lowest salary scales of any suburban area of Detroit. If the scale was increased to stand par with the other school systems around us it would no

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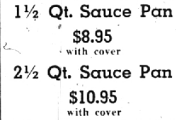
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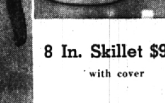
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The Birmingham Eccentric
Published weekly except semi-weekly for eight issues during last week in November, first five weeks in December, fourth week in May, and first week in July in The Eccentric Building, 220-34 No. Woodward Ave., by The Birmingham Eccentric, Inc. Telephone Midwest 4-1100. Address all mail (subscriptions, change of address, Forms 3579) to: 220 N. Woodward, Birmingham, Mich.

George R. Averill, President, Editor and Publisher
Paul N. Averill, Vice-President and Treasurer
George Wm. Averill, Secretary

Entered as Second Class Matter in the U. S. Post Office at Birmingham, Michigan, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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BITS OF BIRMINGHAM

New and more flexible traffic signal controllers are going to be installed along US-10, according to state highway department officials. Birmingham commission this week approved $675 for its share in replacement of the old controllers, installed 10 years ago. Mounting maintenance costs indicate the desirability of new equipment now, highway officials explain.

TAX TIP: Did you receive dividends from corporations this year? There is a $50 exclusion for dividends received by you and a similar exclusion for the dividends received by your spouse. Also, remember to use your dividends received credit of 4%.