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Keep the Spirit of Hope Alive

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Keep the spirit of hope alive

When Ruth (Musunu) Tit Manyaka ’69 began writing a young woman on the opposite side of the world, she could not imagine how her life would change. Manyaka was reunited with her friends and mentors Allen and Margaret (Cook) Anderson, both ’47, and friend and former college roommate Carol (Smith) Hosler ’68 of Kearney, Ariz., when she traveled from Africa to give the commencement address to the class of 2007. Calling Anderson her “spiritual father,” Manyaka said he was instrumental in bringing her to Linfield College. Manyaka, the daughter of an American Baptist pastor and a teacher, was raised at a mission station in the Congo. She began writing to Hosler, who encouraged her to attend Linfield. Anderson, the head of the Bethany Youth Fellowship in Washington state, galvanized young people who held car washes, mowed lawns and organized garage sales and other fund-raising events to help Manyaka attend Linfield.

“The generosity of your hearts has continued to spread and we have touched generation after generation since we left Linfield,” Manyaka said. After completing a biology degree at Linfield, Manyaka received a master’s degree in public health from Loma Linda University. She later met and married Raphael Tit Manyaka, a graduate student in engineering from Cameroon. Eventually they returned to Cameroon, where Manyaka taught biology at a secondary school in Douala, the country’s capital, and raised four children. Following her retirement from teaching in 1999, she founded Women, Environment and Health (WEH), a non-governmental organization devoted to serving the needs of the most vulnerable populations in Littoral Province. That May, she has spent last January Term working with her and others, calling that it is due to misfortune or evil spells.

WEH has organized an agricultural project for women, growing food crops and livestock and helping find markets for the produce as well as improving the diets of local families. They have identified 800 orphans and provide school materials for nearly 400. They are training local villagers to address common diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. The biggest challenge they face is HIV/AIDS, Manyaka said, with many believing that it is due to misfortune or evil spell. She praised Linfield Professor Sherry Archer, Portland Campus Director David Groff and the 14 students who spent last January Term working with her and others, calling them Linfield’s ambassadors to Africa. “I believe these young people had an experience that cannot be matched elsewhere,” she said. “Your coming to Africa opened your eyes to a world different from the one you are familiar with. I challenge each of you this day to set a goal to serve mankind. No action is too small to go unnoticed.”

“No say to prejudice, no to war, no to indifference,” she urged the graduates. “Make it your aim to touch at least one life at a time. Keep the spirit of hope and compassion as you go on life’s journey and never give up.”

— Mardi Mileham

Approaching the sesquicentennial

Linfield in the war years

(Editors note: This vignette provides a look back through 150 years of history as Linfield approaches its sesquicentennial in 2008. Marvin Henberg, professor of philosophy, is writing an illustrated history titled Inspired Pragmatism: An Illustrated History of Linfield College. Barbara Seidman, dean of faculty, is editing the text and will write an afterword for the book. It will be available through the Linfield College Bookstore this fall.)

Though founded prior to the American Civil War, McMinnville College’s place on the frontier insulated it from that terrible conflict. No records have come to light of any founders or students serving for either the Union or the Confederacy. Oregon Baptists did split over pro- and anti-slavery factions, but McMinnville College subscribing to the anti-slavery cause.

The first recorded alumna to die during combat – Bertie Clark and Frank Hibbs – participated with at least 17 other McMinnville College students in the Spanish-American War of 1898. Eleven nurses and two interns left the Good Samaritan Medical College to provide medical services in that conflict, as well. The First World War found McMinnville College graduate and army Lieutenant Leonard Hopfield, class of 1901, drilling roughly 75 men from his alma mater for enlistment at the end of the spring semester of 1917. Roughly 167 McMinnville College men were veterans of the conflict, with at least six killed in the line of duty. Good Samaritan sent off 103 gradu- ate nurses to Army hospitals, many serving in France.

Motivation for World War II at Linfield was commemorated with the size and gravity of that conflict for the nation. Over 500 alumni, faculty members and students saw service, with 25 listed as dead or missing in action. Nurses from Good Samaritan also rallied to the cause, with over 100 enlisting. In 1945, a liberty ship, the S.S. Linfield Victory, was commissioned by the Oregon Shipbuilding Corporation in Portland.

No records can be found of alumna lost in the Korean War, the first for which draft deferments became available for college students. Films of Korean War soldiers being treated during a 1952 chapel program to bolster Linfield’s turnout for the annual Red Cross Blood Drive.

College draft deferments continued during the Vietnam War-era, but became controversial and were ended by a draft lottery among all selective-service registrants in December of 1969. By this time the country was deeply divided on the war, and the student-rights movement came to the fore at Linfield as across the country. According to Linfield Bulletin records, which may not be exhaustive, at least five alum- ni died in Vietnam. They were Army Captain Richard Goss ’54, Army Lieutenant Ralph Leroy Williams ’62, Navy Lieutenant Stephen Richardson ’63, Navy Lieutenant Wayne Alan Armstrong ’63 and Army Lieutenant Paul H. Eklund ’63. Eklund received posthumous awards of the Bronze Star Medal and the Silver Star Medal.

This plaque, listing the names of Linfield students and alumni who were killed in World War I, was hung in Memorial Hall. The name of Hubert A. Santo was subsequently added.

— Rob Reynolds photo reproduction

The most recent Linfield graduate to die in defense of country was Army First Lieutenant Erik McCrae ’01, who died in Baghdad, Iraq, on June 4, 2004. English Professor Lex Runciman published a fitting tribute to McCrae in the fall 2004 edition of The Linfield Magazine.

— Marvin Henberg