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Linfield in the War Years

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Alumna tells graduates
Keep the spirit of hope alive

When Ruth (Musunu) Titi 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 Kearny, 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 nurse, 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 Baptist 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 Titi 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. This past January, she hosted a group of Linfield students and faculty who worked with WEH in the local villages. (See related story on page 12.)

The goal of WEH is to address the basic problems facing rural communities in Cameroon.

“When we are the core of every society, and that cannot be overstated in the context of the Cameroon,” Manyaka said, “we have more than 5,000 people who attended graduation. “Someone has said, when you educate a woman you educate a nation.”

Cameroon, located in the Congo basin of Central Africa, is rich in biodiversity and endowed with numerous natural resources.

However, the people are poor and don’t benefit from the natural wealth around them. Many live on $1 a day or less. WEH is trying to help communities organize to make use of the natural wealth around them. Many live on $1 a day or less.

“Say no 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

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 between pro- and anti-slavery factions, with 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 Hospital to provide medical services in that conflict, as well.

The First World War found McMinnville College graduate and army Lieutenant Leonard Hopfield, class of 1914, serving overseas in France. He died of pneumonia, possibly from influenza, leaving behind 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 graduate nurses to Army hospitals, many serving in France.

Mobilization for World War II at Linfield was comprehensive, with many serving in the military. Good Samaritan sent 55 men from its alma mater for enlistment. The student-rights movement was deeply divided on the merits of the war, and the student-rights movement was deeply divided on the war. The student-rights movement was deeply divided on the war.

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 became the fore at Linfield as across the country. According to Linfield Bulletin records, which may not be exhaustive, at least five alumni 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.

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

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.