



Men of Faith *and* Works Created Your Foundation

*What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works?
Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food,
and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled,"
without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?
So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.
But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works."
Show me your faith apart from your works,
and I will show you my faith by my works. ..."*

James 2:14-24

On September 30, 2015, First Methodist Church of Fort Worth Foundation marks its 51st anniversary. To celebrate, we are sharing a series of more in-depth background information about the remarkable individuals who launched our Foundation in 1964. These men had the foresight to envision the enduring value an endowment could provide for First United Methodist Church. That was faith. Then, they took the bold steps to create the fund in 1964. That was works. This combination of faith and good works is exemplified by one of those founders, Judge M. Lyle, M.D. We are delighted to share his amazing story with you!

Mississippi native Judge M. Lyle was born in February of 1896 and lived there most of his childhood. However, the family left the state during the boll weevil crisis of 1914. Migrating to Ralls in West Texas, near Lubbock, young Judge watched the steadfast industry and grit exhibited by his parents as they persevered through difficult times and in a new environment. He especially admired his grandfather, a banker. When family financial constraints made it impossible for Judge to continue his quest for medical school, he began work as a bank teller in Lorenzo. World War I was imminent; as soon as he could, he enlisted in the Army Medical Reserve Corps. By the end of the war, Judge was able to continue his education once more, and he entered Tulane Medical School in New Orleans. Thus began a lifelong commitment to caring for people as a family doctor and a recommitment to the hard work and positive outlook that carried him forward.



Judge M. Lyle at the time of graduation from Tulane Medical School in New Orleans.

After his medical school graduation in 1921, he was inspired to come to Fort Worth to open a medical practice. He'd passed through Fort Worth many times when traveling between Ralls and New Orleans, and he had relatives in Fort Worth. So he joined Dr. Harold V. Johnson's practice and initially lived at the Westbrook Hotel.

Dr. Lyle became THE downtown Fort Worth doctor. But it wasn't all work for him: Dr. Lyle became involved with a young church, First Methodist, on Taylor Street. His work and faith were a big part of his life, one that expanded several years when he met his wife-to-be, Dorothy. He and Dorothy married in 1930 and had the first of their three daughters, Barbara, in 1931. Wini and Dee followed.

Dr. and Mrs. Lyle and their family grew proportionately with their Church. While pregnant with Barbara, Dorothy helped Judge and other members hard carry items from the existing Church to a beautiful new building on West Fifth Street, our lovely, architecturally significant centerpiece of faith for Fort Worth. Judge was very active in the Men's Bible class, in Sunday school classes and all the activities of First Methodist. The family was at church every Sunday and Wednesday, his daughters recall, no matter what. As well, Dr. Lyle was chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Church many, many years.



He was also a part of the close-knit group of dedicated gentleman, church members and city leaders, who gathered to discuss the benefits of creating an endowment that might ensure the continuation of their much-loved institution. Though their leadership, the Foundation was formed in September of 1964. His financial considerations extended to advisory about the best investments, too. He was instrumental in recommending that the church buy property when it was available.

Judge Lyle's unique understanding of business, insurance and real estate was apparent. It was Judge Lyle's guidance and support that inspired the purchase of the First Street Mission site, a number of parking lots and eventually made possible the property that is today a church-owned and often-used retreat on Eagle Mountain Lake. He also built an office building and clinic on Ballinger at Pennsylvania, one that stayed in the family when his son-in-law, Doug Tatum M.D. went into practice in the early 1960s. During his lifetime of family, faith, work and civic involvement, Dr. and Mrs. Lyle were also avid travelers. Judge was a hunter, sportsman and lover of the outdoors. In fact, according to his daughters, he was interested in everything. Friends and family attest to the fact that he was the most open minded person ever met, an extrovert who knew no strangers and was the happiest of people.



Dr. Lyle is remembered for having joyously shared all his gifts and talents with his Church family for over half a century. We were reminded of Lyle's commitment to our church every year when fireworks lit up Eagle Mountain Lake off the Point at Lyle Lodge, a tradition that has been discontinued.

We are reminded of Dr. Judge Lyle's life and work and his generosity and stewardship each time we visit Lyle Lodge. And we can enjoy the sanctuary of our magnificent Fifth Street Church building that is maintained by the Foundation that he and his co-founders began in 1964. May Dr. Judge M. Lyle rest in peace, with our thanks for his faith AND good works.



This article is one in a series that will talk about the founders' vision for our Foundation and what it means for our Church. The goal is greater insight about the dedicated people, then and now, and their commitment to the Foundation's one beneficiary: First United Methodist Church of Fort Worth. We hope you enjoy this blog.

Our thanks to Barbara Lyle Tatum and Wini Lyle Klein and to Don Stegall for sharing their stories and pictures with us this month.