

Eunice H. Harrington (1907-1989)



Eunice H. Harrington, a native of what is now the Great Plains Conference was the first president of the Women's Division of the Board of Global Ministries following the 1968 union of The Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren Churches to become the United Methodist Church. She served

from 1968-1972 during which time the organization, United Methodist Women was created. Her passion was helping the needy and serving her Lord.

Eunice grew up in the Evangelical United Brethren Church. She attended the United Brethren York College, The University of Nebraska at Lincoln, and LaSalle Extension University. Later she awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters by Nebraska Wesleyan University.

Harrington and husband, Wayne had one son and four granddaughters. She served as a public school teacher, was the office manager and later President of the Harrington Farms.

As a philanthropist, leader and activist throughout her life, she served in many leadership capacities in the church's women's organizations, the church, ecumenically, and in her community. After serving in the Woman's Society of Christian Service at the local and district levels, Eunice served the Nebraska Conference Woman's Society of Christian Service as treasurer and then as President before being elected to serve as the treasurer for the South Central Jurisdiction Woman's Society of Christian Service.

As president of the Women's Division from 1968-1972 Eunice presided over three especially significant events:

1. The celebration of the 100th Anniversary of Isabella Thoburn College, the earliest of the missionary institutions founded by predecessors of the Women's Division in Lucknow, India.
2. The creation of the organization, United Methodist Women. Eunice was a delegate to the General Conference which adopted the new plan.
3. A Structure Study Commission appointed by the 1968 General Conference was assigned to study and restructure all general agencies. Upon recommendation of the Division Committee on Long Range Planning, a 15-point statement was

adopted. Eunice and then associate general secretary of the Division, Theresa Hoover, presented the plan to the Study Commission in 1969.

At the conclusion of her presidency, the Women's Division made a grant of \$50,000 to St. Paul School of Theology in Kansas City for the "Eunice Harrington Seminar on Major Issues." The grant was made so "her interest and influence may continue in some visible form and in deep appreciation of her years of devoted work to the Division" which funded campus visits by well-known leaders to address human rights, ethics, nuclear proliferation and other current issues.

A mission institution of special interest to Eunice throughout her life was Mother's Jewels Home, which later became Epworth Village at York, NE. She loved Epworth Village and its mission.

Granddaughter, Abbi Harrington Kleinschmidt says "As one of four of Eunice's granddaughters, I now realize how extremely blessed I was growing up alongside such a positive, spirited female role model. During the time my grandmother served as President of the Women's Division, she would load my sisters and I in the car and we would venture into Omaha to see firsthand what she had been working on. We visited a Black radio station she helped start, we would go to Boy's Town to see what they had going on." With pride Abbi states, "I am pleased to say that Grandmother passed the legacy of serving on the Board of Epworth Village to my mother, Karen and then to me, as I am currently serving as the president of the Epworth Village Foundation."

Eunice Harrington believed in the power of women to positively impact the world locally, nationally, and internationally. She leaves us a legacy of living our belief by service to those in need and effective participation in finding solutions to today's problems and injustices.

In 2009, the Nebraska Conference United Methodist Women established an annual award in honor of Eunice Harrington's legacy of leadership, service and advocacy.

The Great Plains Conference United Methodist Women is pleased to continue to honor the legacy of this remarkable woman as we too, put our Hope, Faith and Love in Action on behalf of women, children and youth locally, nationally and globally.