

# *Volunteers, Missionaries, and Other Adventist Heroes and Celebrities*

BY BONNIE DWYER

Growing up Adventist, attending “MV” meetings and singing the Missionary Volunteer song, the emphasis (at least in my mind) was always on the Missionary part of the phrase. It has taken working for an independent, non-profit organization other than the church for the beauty of the song’s chorus to sink in.

Volunteers, volunteers, how I love the name.  
Volunteers, volunteers, Jesus to proclaim.

This year, we lost two of Adventist Forum’s most amazing volunteers: Nancy Bailey in April, and James Kaatz in August.

Nancy Bailey served first as chairperson of the Adventist Forum Advisory Council, the group that has provided the financial backing to keep the organization operational over the past fifty years. Shortly after the group was formed, she crisscrossed the country to attend fund-raising dinners in key locations and helped get the group going. Later, she took the title of treasurer of the organization. She paid the bills, advised the Board, and kept us all on an even keel as we moved the office from Takoma Park, Maryland to Roseville, California and transitioned from the editorship of Roy Branson to mine.

It was a challenging time for the organization and for her. Her famous husband, surgeon Leonard Bailey, had just been diagnosed with throat cancer. Radiation treatments left him exhausted, but not defeated. She would tell

us about his latest invention, a modified camelback water delivery system to help keep his throat hydrated while he operated, in spite of his lack of saliva. No matter what the story, there was always cheer in her voice, and she could find the humor in any situation. On our weekly calls to discuss our precarious financial situation, she got the tough assignment of being the financial reality check. That she also knew how to find sunshine in challenging times made her beloved beyond measure.

Through those calls, we caught glimpses of her celebrity life, post the Baby Fae surgery. We heard about her work for the Democratic Party, her visits to Sacramento, her acquaintance with Diane Feinstein. She hosted a fund-raising dinner at her home for Adventist Forum, and there we caught a glimpse of her as a fabric artist with a sewing room and vast quilting supplies.

Then last year came the news that she, too, was now battling cancer. Len had fought it for years, but had taken a turn for the worse. They were at home caring for each other until the end. She died on April 7, 2019, and he passed away a month later, on May 12.

While Nancy helped put the national Adventist Forum organization on its feet, Jim Kaatz was the storied leader of the San Diego chapter of Adventist Forum for twenty-seven years.

It all began with a recording. Jim Kaatz had the idea to record the presentations being given at the San Diego Adventist Forum chapter that had formed in the 1970’s. He



Nancy Bailey

duplicated tapes, and mailed them to whomever requested them, and with that effort he grew an international audience for the chapter. The tapes also provided an income stream to sustain the monthly programming. Jim's foresight and organizational skills were quickly recognized by the group, and, in 1983, Jim was elected president of the chapter, a position he held for twenty-seven years.

When Jim passed away in August, he left a legacy of inspiring tenacity within Adventist Forum. Not many people are willing to stay at a volunteer position for twenty-seven years. Family and friends gathered at the Tierrasanta Church in September to honor his memory. He left behind a large family: three sons, Jim, Jeffrey, and Jan, their spouses and children; and four siblings, from both his biological and adopted family. He was married to Averille Ellen Smouse in 1955. The couple met at Emmanuel Missionary College (now Andrews University) and both graduated in 1955. Averille's grandparents had changed their name from Schmaus to Smouse when they immigrated to the US. It was humorous to EMC's students when the couple got engaged as the cat (Kaatz) caught the mouse (Smouse).

Kaatz was an educator his entire adult life. While still a college student, he took a couple of years off to teach in a one-room, twelve-grade Adventist school in Rhineland, Wisconsin. A year after their marriage, the Kaatzes moved to California and his first teaching job was at Bellflower Adventist Academy. Three years later, he moved to Lynwood for another three-year stint, and then to La Sierra Academy for three years. Meanwhile, he completed an MA in education at California State University, Fullerton and then an EdD at the University of Southern California. After completing his doctorate, he was offered a faculty position at San Diego State University in 1966, which is where he taught until his retirement.

Gardening, the local church, and Adventist Forum were his passions. With the San Diego chapter, he found

a place to contribute to the conversations that he saw as important for the future of the church. In the planning of programs, he did not shy away from touchy topics or controversial speakers. He was always an advocate for social justice both within and without the church. La Sierra University honored him with a place on their Path of the Just for this commitment.



James Kaatz with his wife, Averille

Before her death, Averille joined him in the work that made the San Diego Forum chapter successful—all the mailings of tapes and a newsletter to keep members informed about upcoming programs. As the chapter flourished, annual retreats were added. Pine Springs Ranch in May became a regular tradition.

The success of the San Diego Forum chapter was inspiring to others, too. At the *Spectrum* office, we often referred to Jim people who were looking for advice on

forming a local chapter, writing up a constitution, putting together a planning group, or securing a 501(c)(3) status from the government for tax purposes. The one thing that could not be duplicated, however, was Jim, the faithful gardener. Year in and year out, he stayed at his task. Tending the soil, planting the seeds, watering the plants, sharing the crop. He kept things going. His dedication was amazing, an inspiration.

In this issue of *Spectrum*, we pay tribute to these two wonderful volunteers for Adventist Forum. We also have missionary stories to share, plus in-depth reports on Des Ford and Brenda Walsh. We hope you enjoy this "people" issue of *Spectrum* with its accounts of missionaries and volunteers.



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