

Living Today

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'Footprints on the sands of time'

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Living Today Editor

It was a beautiful day Sunday when family and friends came to the First Presbyterian Church to honor Dr. E. F. Montgomery Sr.

Those who could not come sent letters including President and Mrs. Ronald Reagan.

The festivities began at the Sunday Church School hour when the children took Dr. Mont's footprints and gave him many hand made birthday cards.

The worship service was special with an old friend, Dr. Jack G. Hand from the first Presbyterian Church of Jacksonville speaking.

A bouquet of 90 roses given by Mary Gibson was in the sanctuary.

After a dinner on the grounds, everyone assembled for a short program planned by Tom Brown and the dedication of the Fellowship Hall of the church in honor of Dr. Mont.

Simon Smith of Jacksonville spoke for the North Florida Council of the Boy Scouts.

"Dr. Mont with his Christian character has influenced the lives of many young men who in turn have had influence on others," noted Smith.

Pete Croft from the Shrine Club told how Dr. Mont had become a Mason 65 years ago in 1917 and that he had helped organize the Lake City Shrine Club.

"Dr. Mont is the most well known Lake Citian around the state," declared Croft.

Lynwood Colson told how the late Archie Buie had asked Dr. Mont to become the first Juvenile Court counselor when it was organized in 1951.

The first petition from the Juvenile Court of Columbia County was one from Dr. Montgomery asking the court to place a child in the Florida Baptist Children's home.

"Also, Dr. Mont was the school attendance officer," said Colson.

After Colson became the first full time counselor, Dr. Mont continued to help with the troubled children of Columbia County.

Carson Brittain, former minister at First Baptist Church, joked that Dr. Mont was the only non-Baptist whom he would let into his pulpit as a guest minister.

"I felt that Dr. Mont and I had a Paul and Timothy relationship," said Brittain.

He then turned to Dr. Montgomery and quoting the Bible said, "I thank my God for every remembrance of you."

Brittain representing the ministerial alliance noted that other minister friends of Dr. Mont were also there including Heidt from Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Tom Gordon from Epiphany Catholic Church and Carl Shafer from First United Methodist Church.

Frank Preston of Ocala represented the Suwannee Presbytery and brought greetings to Dr. Mont from United States Representative-elect Buddy MacKay and Rabbi Sam Ef.

Preston noted how the name Montgomery means camping to the young people of the Presbytery. The Presbyterian



Dr. E. F. Montgomery Sr. on his 90th birthday stands before his portrait which will be hung in the Fellowship Hall of the First Presbyterian Church which is named for him. (Photo by Anne Knight).

camp is named Camp Montgomery.

"He has left his footprints all over north Florida," noted Preston speaking of the oldest member of the Presbytery.

T. A. Hackney spoke of his memories of Dr. Montgomery as he grew up in Lake City and Tom Brown noted that many of Dr. Mont's former Scouts had sent him greetings which had been made into a scrapbook.

In a few brief remarks, Dr. Montgomery told how he remembered the death of Queen Victoria and people talking about the Spanish-American War.

He shared his schedule as a young minister at the First Presbyterian Church of Lake City.



Tom Brown (right) shows Dr. E. F. Montgomery Sr. some of the messages which he received on his 90th birthday. Included was a letter from President and Mrs. Ronald Reagan. T. A. Hackney (left) was one of the speakers for the program which honored Dr. Mont. (Photo by Anne Knight).

On Monday he went to Hi-Y; on Tuesday he preached at Deep Creek; Wednesday was prayer meeting night; on Thursday the Boy Scouts met and on Friday night he went to Jacksonville to court his future wife, Margaret.

Since he had rested all week, Dr. Mont was busy on Sunday teaching a Sunday School Class, giving the sermon and children's sermon, spoke at the church's missions on Wilson Street and Gum Swamp Road, ministered at the Veteran's Administration Hospital, attended Christian Endeavor, preached at the evening service and then went to choir practice!

That is Dr. Mont's secret for living to be 90 years young. Celebrating his birthday was the purpose of the events last Sunday.

As Brittain said quoting Longfellow, "Live of great men all remind us that we can make our lives sublime and departing leave behind us footprints on the sands of time."