

**Southwestern In Focus
LONG-TIME EDUCATOR ENJOYS
MANY NEW INTERESTS
IN HER RETIREMENT**

By Jo Baldwin
Written Especially For Sundial
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Often when retirement comes to an active person, he finds that giving up a full-time occupation can be pretty hazardous to his mental attitude. He must learn to cope with a life that is full of adjustments and adaptations. But fortunately for one El Pasoan, Mrs. Walter D. Guthrie, retirement brought new interests, marriage, and activities that keep her as busy-if not busier than ever before. In May 1970 when she retired from the teaching profession after 40 years, Mrs. Guthrie, then Mrs. Hattie Lamb, had not made any concrete plans as to what she would do in the future.

"I have worked hard all my life and i certainly didn't plan to sit in the rocking chair," she quickly and emphatically. stated. "When school was 'out' for me, I decided to do more volunteer work, I pick-ed out several places to go,"

One of these "places" was the Rescue Mission, where she immediately began to devote much of her time and energy to their charitable-projects. Too, this was one way she could spend her summer days before she was to take a trip to the Far East in that fall of 1970. But marriage to the mission director, Walter D. Guthrie, on Aug. 28 disrupted her plans.

NOT AS FAR

"I never did get away," she laughed. "The Rescue Mission is as far east as I got. I've been so busy I wonder how I ever had time to work!"

But work, indeed, has been a way of life for Mrs. Guthrie. Born in Plano, Tex., the oldest of three children, she says her father

greatly inspired her at an early age to learn and to teach.

My dad always told me that an education was the only way a poor girl had a chance to rise above a humble birth. He saw education as an American heritage, and I grew up feeling that it was a privilege to go to school," she commented, in turning back her thoughts.



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Consequently Hattie mustered up enough courage to leave home without any money and then began her college career waiting on tables in the dormitory and by other means during the depression years. She received her bachelor of science degree from Sul Ross State College (now University) and began to teach when she was barely 16 years old. To further her education, she .attended summer schools and afternoon and evening classes until she was awarded a masters degree.

CONTINUES TEACHING

From Alpine, the dedicated teacher came to El Paso in 1944 to continue the span of a 40-year teaching career. During the last 11 years of her profession, she became intensely interested in the problems presented by deaf children in the public educational system, Hattie's sympathetic heart and crusading spirit led her to take special training at the University of Southern Cali-

fornia and the John Tracy Clinic for deaf children in Los Angeles. Later, she took additional courses in the field of Special Education at Texas Woman's University and New Mexico Western University. These years of training and effort helped her teach the aurally handicapped at Hillside Area School for Deaf Children in El Paso.

Hattie was always interested in little children. But for the deaf, she pursued a never-ending quest for more effective ways of teaching, and felt strongly toward the democratic principle that every child in America deserves an education. Her work involved finger-spelling, lip-reading, and the combination of spelling and talking at the same time. She believes that people should not feel sorry for these handicapped youngsters.

SENSE OF HUMOR

"The deaf are happy children with a sense of humor," she explains. "They do require a special, education that will prepare them to live and compete in a 'hearing' world."

Her devotion to the education of the deaf won Hattie the nomination for Outstanding Career Woman of 1968 by the American Association of University Women. Earlier, in 1964, she had received the title "Teacher of the Year" given to her by the West Texas District of the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs. Honors have come easily and deservedly to this vital, enthusiastic woman who has long served in so many worthwhile activities.

But whether in club work or in civic matters, Hattie Guthrie, has a reputation as a hard worker. And during her lengthy period of teaching, she wasn't exactly sitting idly outside the classroom. While president of the Five Points Pilot Club, she established a School Children Shoe Fund for poor children in South El Paso and Ysleta. The seed that was planted was nourished, and the project is still functioning, Other

projects were contributing funds for the mentally retarded and collecting clothing for the Rescue Mission. For years she taught a Sunday School class for young married couples at Grace Methodist Church. She also was the church treasurer for two years and served twice as a member of the Board of Stewards.

FAVORITE SPEAKER

A renowned world-traveler, Mrs. Guthrie has been a favorite speaker at many groups in and out of El Paso. Through this medium she has shared her experiences in Europe, the Far East, Canada, Hawaii and all the states, and South and Central America. In the summer of 1969, before her last year of teaching, she flew with friends to Spain, Portugal and Morocco for 21 days. (When asked for a comparison of Spanish and Mexican food, she revealed: "It is quite different. In Spain the food is not as hot and they serve more sea food and rice.")

Even in "retirement" the former educator is active in many organizations. For more than 20 years she has been a member of the El Paso Business and Professional Women's Club and is the past district director of District 8, which she represented at the State Fair of Texas in 1966. One of the highlights of this club work was when she attended the International Convention in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1953. She has served on all committee of this organization, a past president of the XI Chapter of Alpha Delta Kappa, honorary teachers sorority, she is also a member of Kappa Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma, the Ysleta and El Paso Woman's Clubs and Retired Teacher's Association.

DID HER PART

During World War II, Hattie did her part by working with the USO. In the Korean Conflict she was active as a Gray Lady. Her educational interests have taken her to many areas of the globe, including Central and South America, Europe and Asia when she was a participant in the National Edu-

cational Association tours. Locally, her “helping hand” has expanded to the El Paso Heart Association and March of Dimes. For two years she was secretary for the Sun Chapter of the Council on Exceptional Children of the National Education Association.

The Guthries reside at 431? Lomaland. After their marriage they had to find ways to dispose of some belongings or be a little crowded, Walter, a widower, brought along a few of his own utensils, and now as Hattie puts it, “We have two of everything! You name it—two toasters, two electric skillets, two refrigerators, two washing machines.”

AMUSING STORY

Endowed with a delightful sense of humor that has been an asset in her years of teaching as well as her charitable work, Hattie also has this amusing story to tell: “We didn’t know each other’s birth dates until we went to get the marriage license. Then as we filled out the papers, we learned we were born on the same day of the same month in the same year.”

At least five days a week Hattie spends her time at the Rescue Mission. Describing herself as a “permanent volunteer,” she sorts and distributes clothing and often plays the piano for the religious services. Other days she may be seen taking people to the hospital or visiting the ill and troubled. She is quite capable of these duties and derives a satisfaction from being able to do for others and working with her husband. In a sense, it is a time of spiritual refreshment for her.

Hattie Guthrie could hardly be portrayed as a “do-nothing, think-nothing” person. She one said, “I believe almost anything is possible if someone will study a problem, learn as much as there is to know about it, and then work hard, and patiently to solve it.”

Applying her own philosophy to her retirement, Mrs. Gunthrie continues to serve, bringing happiness and continuity to her particular pattern of living.

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