

**Southwestern In Focus**  
**ADMINISTRATOR OF CHILDREN'S**  
**HOME PROVIDES LOVE AND**  
**UNDERSTANDING**

By Jo Baldwin  
Written Especially for Sundial  
EPT 7/19/70

Mrs. Victor C. Moore, administrator of Southwestern Children's Home, 3700 Altura, has dedicated her life to the welfare and happiness of children. A strong faith in God, determination, and an enjoyment of each daily experience have contributed significantly to the success of her work in the Home. She has the talent for excellent management, and for providing neglected and underprivileged children with genuine motherly love. For over 40 years Mrs. Moore has been associated with the Home, and today has the same enthusiastic spirit that she must have had when she first began to serve.

Born in Beauregard, Miss., Mrs. Moore, the former Kathleen Biggs, was the fourth of five children. The family moved to New Orleans when Kathleen was very small because a hurricane had blown away the business of her merchant-father. After a grade school education, the young girl suffered a bout with typhoid fever and when she recovered she began to think of her future.

"I always wanted to help other people and this soon was a surging desire within me," Mrs. Moore recalls. "I decided to train in social work at the Sophie Newcomb School in New Orleans."

Her wish was fulfilled during World War I when she became a social worker at Camp Shelby, Miss., while it was being built. After the construction workers left, she stayed on and nursed the soldiers. She was sort of a "mother-away-from-home." Mrs. Moore

says she can never forget the jubilation of everyone there when the armistice was signed, ending that costly war.

**HEADS GROUP**

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In 1925 a Mr. Raynor of New Mexico, then in charge of a mission in New Orleans, met the busy social worker and told her about the Hogg Orphanage (later changed to Southwestern Children's Home) in El Paso. As she became more interested, he related that the Rev. W.B. Hogg, minister of Trinity Methodist Church, and his wife had established the home in 1923 after taking in five motherless children. The facility was growing and more workers were desperately needed.

At the time she was teaching a Sunday School class of teenage girls and also was teaching them how to sew. The girls didn't want her to leave New Orleans and Mrs. Moore remembers that many tears were shed by teacher and pupils. But she couldn't shake off the forceful urge to go West, and as she made her decision, she sang the hymn, "I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord!"

Arriving in El Paso, the eager and curious young Southern woman, then a widow, found the Children's Home located at 1019 N. Ange, where she was to live for the next 25 years. The superintendent, Victor C. Moore, whom she later married, had been a well known and successful attorney, who gave up a lucrative practice to devote more time to the affairs of the Home. Under Mr. Moore's energetic guidance and with the aid of interested friends, the number of children cared for increased rapidly.

Mrs. Moore, named superintendent by the Board of Directors after her husband's death in 1939, says the Home experienced some difficult days during the Depression and World War II. At one time during the war, there were 91 children in the Home. In order to save space and sleep all of them, bunk beds were made by sawing tops off army cots bought from a salvage company. The need, for materials and help was greater than money.

"When someone donated glaring blue paint for the exterior of the building, we used it and were thankful," she says, a little humorously.

### **NEW BUILDING**

As early as 1943 the idea of building a new home began to take form. Larger playgrounds were needed, as were a fireproof

structure and better facilities, since the old building did not warrant remodeling. The public became aware of the situation, and soon voluntary contributions began to pour in. Building fund trustees were R.E. McKee, Rev. B.M.G. Williams, and C.M. Harvey, all now deceased.

In 1951 the new Southwestern Children's Home was completed by the McKee Construction Co. at a cost of approximately \$400,000. A dream had come true. The Home was a reality—donated by interested people of the Southwest, ranchers, businessmen, and all "friends of children." Mrs. Moore gratefully adds, "We moved in without owing a dime."

Today visitors to the Home are impressed by the clean and attractive brick structures and well-kept grounds. The modern administration building is entered through Espy Hall, named for Mr. and Mrs. J.W. Espy, long-time friends of the Home. Furnishings in the large sitting rooms and offices are beautiful, and the high ceilings add to the spaciousness. Mrs. Moore recalls that when they first moved in, the staff and older girls made the drapes, and the dressing tables and stools. The lovely mirrors on the walls and some of the chairs still in use were also re-done at the time. In Mrs. Moore's own living quarters, there are several pieces of ornately carved antique furniture that dates back to the last century.

On each side of the administration building there are two cottages, all about the size of a normal seven-room house. Spread over the seven and a half acres are picnic areas and a skating rink. The Home is centrally located for public schools and churches of different faiths, which the children attend.

One of the happiest times of the year is when the entire family goes to the summer

home Ruidoso. Since 1928, the children have enjoyed two months of recreation in the mountains on a large tract of land donated by the late Mr. and Mrs. Ike Wingfield. A staff of college students and teachers guide the children in crafts, Bible study and outdoor activities.

Mrs. Moore stresses that the Southwestern Children's Home is not an orphanage. "The children come from broken homes," she explained. "They are dependent, delinquent and in real need, perhaps caused by a death or illness of a parent. Alcoholism or desertion may have been the problem. Some are just misunderstood and not wanted by their families.

"Our aim is to rehabilitate the child, teach him about the Lord, and how to be a good citizen. We hope to return him to his own family in a better relationship, if possible."

### **100 AT HOME**

Presently, there are around 100 children at the Home, somewhat higher than usual. The average age for boys is three to ten while the girl may be a little older. Although they may stay longer, Mrs. Moore says the normal time is one or two years, with some remaining during their high school years. These older ones help with the younger ones, providing an atmosphere of "togetherness." The children are united in playing games, reading Bible stories, and in prayer during Morning Services and Vesper in the evening.

The energetic and congenial administrator, who appears much younger than her years, is known as "My Dearie" by her present brood and the "graduates." Often she receives letters beginning: "Dear My Dearie," many from former Home residents who have grown up to be successful and prominent citizens. They do not hesitate to express

their appreciation to "My Dearie" for her great influence in their lives.

On rearing her own offspring, Mrs. Moore says: "They were raised in the Home, right along with the others. They received enough regimentation and had no special favors. I'm very proud of them." Her five children are Mrs. Mildred Austin, Judge Brunson D. Moore, Victor C. Moore Jr., Miss Elizabeth Moore, all of El Paso; and Edward Taylor Moore, an attorney in Houston. In adult life, they have given of their time and talents to help their mother work with underprivileged children.

### **NO RETIREMENT PLANS**

Mrs. Moore emphatically states she has no immediate plans for retirement. She says there has never been time in her life for hobbies, but if she had to name one, it would be the implantation of the love of the Lord into the hearts of children. She attends Trinity Methodist Church.

A gracious and humble woman, she declines credit for the success in maintaining the Home and constantly praises the work of the household staff, Board of Directors (under the leadership of Dale Resler), United Fund, volunteers and loyal supporters everywhere.

The story of Southwestern Children's Home is the story of children. For over four decades the slogan, "A Chance for Every Child" has been faithfully carried out by its administrator, Mrs. Victor C. Moore, who could "never turn down a child in need." Because of her unselfish dedication to the Home, the troubled, deserted and unwanted can find a haven where they may rest awhile and find themselves.

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# Administrator Of Children's Home Provides Love And Understanding

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