

2004 SPIRIT OF THE SHOALS
AWARD RECIPIENT:

Jane Blair



Jane Blair was born July 16, 1911 in West Point, Tennessee, to Maude Ester (Herrin) Nance and Gorman Nance. Jane is an only child. Her father was a bookkeeper for an oil company that required him to move to different locations, but during her early childhood days, Jane lived in Cates Gap, Alabama, and Oneonta, Alabama.

Jane married Hollis Frank Blair in West Point, Tennessee. Her husband worked for Braniff and Continental Airlines as a mechanic. They had one child, Mary Lynn. Mary Lynn is married to William Lee Freeman (Bill), and they have two sons, Lee and William. They are active charter members at Magnolia Church of Christ.

Jane's husband's job took them to Kansas City, Missouri, when Mary Lynn was just a baby. It was there that she was introduced to the Episcopal Church by a neighbor. Jane talks about going to her first Christmas Eve service at Trinity Church in downtown Kansas City and how they had to take two streetcars to get there. She fell in love with the Episcopal Church that first visit, and it has been her home ever since.

Jane divorced and moved back to the Shoals where she purchased a home at 1410 York Terrace. She was the sole provider during this time for her daughter, Mary Lynn, her mother, Maude, and her grandmother, Mary Jean Herrin. During the early years of her return, Jane attended Trinity Church, Florence, since she could ride with her neighbor Mr. Jack Fouts. In 1954 Mr. Fouts moved to Grace Church in Sheffield, and Jane also moved her membership there. Jane has been a member of Grace Episcopal Church since that time.

Jane worked at several jobs during the early years at a printing company, a savings and loan bank, TVA, and finally took a permanent job with Mr. John C. Martin, Attorney. She worked as a legal secretary for Mr. Martin for approximately 20 years. During this time Jane's spiritual life continued to mature as she attended

Grace Church and became interested in the healing ministry. She was a charter member of the Shoals Chapter of the Order of St. Luke. Over the years Jane attended numerous healing seminars and meetings around the area with its members. She also attended and still attends a prayer fellowship that meets in Sheffield in a home owned by her good and faithful friend, June Jordon. Walter Crawford pastors this group and travels here from Atlanta once a month. This group still meets once a month, and Mary Lynn takes Jane to these meetings, as she is able.

As Jane matured in the Lord, she began to pray daily, beginning each morning by praying the psalms and for an unknown number of people. Members of the Shoals Order of St. Luke got together and put a weekly ad in the Courier Journal newspaper for many years. It read: "If you need Prayer, call Jane at 383-3195, Strictly Confidential." Jane's telephone ministry became known throughout the Shoals Area. Her ministry of prayer has healed countless lives of unknown people, and she has changed and brought many people to the Lord by her prayers and petitions daily to the Lord. Jane is the Shoals Number One Prayer Warrior. Jane's phone rang countless times daily - day and night.

Jane and her friend, Virginia Adams, also prayed daily for patients of a local oncologist. Jane and Virginia prayed discreetly each day at the office as the patients waited to see the doctor. Jane was provided taxi fare each day to go back and forth for this important ministry. Jane developed a deep sense of the Lord's presence and healing powers, and she is known throughout the Shoals. People say, "Yes, we know her. She's that little white-haired lady who prays."

Jane has traveled throughout the Shoals to many churches and is known and loved by countless people. Jane has never let denominational walls stop her as she sees everyone as God's children. She can especially be picked out in an Episcopal Service, as she is the only one with her hands raised adoringly in prayer and exultation to the Lord. Jane read scripture every day and countless books by all the great authors of healing and how to become a better Christian until her eyesight failed her the last couple of years. At age 93, Jane has had to sell her home and move in with her loving daughter and family. This has not deterred her as she still attends church every chance she gets with her family at Magnolia Church of Christ, and now only occasionally at Grace Episcopal whenever she can hitch a ride. Mary Lynn says she has become an inspiration to many in the "Circle of Friends" class at Magnolia. It is a class with folks from all denominations that meets every Wednesday evening.

Jane is the Shoals Prayer Warrior who, even at 93, is still in prayer almost all the waking hours of her day. She will pray with anyone who takes her hand, and she invokes the Holy Spirit to come and be present. She has probably, in her own way, brought more people to Christ single-handedly than any one person in the Shoals Area. Jane's trademark is to call upon "Papa God" to let His Holy Spirit cover you from the top of your head to the tip of your toes. Jane's prayers are offered not only for a person's salvation and healing, but also for our churches, cities, our elected officials, our nation and the world.