

DEDICATION SPEECH

*Given by Anne Zimmerman on the occasion of
The dedication of the Rosezella Battles Library*

Rosezella Battles is the fifth child out of nine born to Monroe and Althea Battles of Winchester, Tennessee. Her parents were well respected by the whole community. “Uncle Bunt”, as her father was affectionately called, worked at the county high school for 40 years where he was mentor and helped hundreds of students in his role of athletic trainer. It is significant that the town honored his memory in several ceremonies in late 1996, the 50th anniversary of his going home to the Lord.

The family attended 1st Missionary Baptist Church where her father was deacon. Her mother was also active in the church when home and maternal responsibilities allowed. Rosezella came to know Jesus as her Lord and Savior as a youngster in that church. She sang in the choir, volunteered in all sorts of positions and as President of the Baptist Young Peoples Union.

In 1934 she graduated from Townsend High School in Winchester and went on scholarship to the A&T State School (which later became the University of Tennessee). She majored in Home Economics and teaching which helped her when she taught grades 1 through 8 in one room school houses in Beanscreek, Tennessee and Princeton, Kentucky.

Her continuing education plans and her career were temporarily put on hold when, in 1940, she answered God’s call to help a young Winchester family that had moved to New York City. Part of the draw to the north was the city and the World’s Fair. At every opportunity she visited the city from New Jersey – especially the theater and the landmarks such as the Empire State Building which she first explored in the Spring of 1941.

In keeping with her commitment to God and her desire to serve Him, she dedicated herself to the family – my family – and stayed 22 years! Her faith and love and God given wisdom sustained her and blessed us. With both parents working, “RoRo”, as we children named her, was always there for us. Even when she married and established her own home, they essentially lived at our house. She gave us the educational, emotional and spiritual foundation that led each of us eventually to the truth of Christ. Her faith and prayers undergirded us and guided us even through the devastating loss of our mother when I was 8 ½ years old.

She was our “Godmother” in all ways. My two brothers and I would have been lost without her. So in this small way, we want to proclaim to the world her devotion and love and faithfulness as she followed and obeyed God in her life. It is fitting that this library, a place of learning, inside the symbol of the City to which she was drawn, will be a focal point of teaching and proclaiming God’s love to all the World.