

Legacy of Ruth Blanchard Garner

July 2, 2021, is the 194nd birthday of The Memorial Baptist Church. Founded in 1827 as the Greenville Baptist Church, the church was renamed The Memorial Baptist Church in 1890 as a memorial to the founding of the Baptist State Convention in 1830. Since its founding, many members have left large footprints in fulfilling Memorial's mission and ministry. Ruth Blanchard Garner is among them. She joined the church on April 11, 1948, during the pastorate of Rev. Richard Hardaway. As a long-time member, she faithfully served the church and South Roanoke Baptist Association in a number of capacities. Among these were membership on the planning committee to rebuild the church at Fourth and Greene Streets; and, most importantly, her strong commitment and long service to the Woman's Missionary Society of The Memorial Baptist Church, and Director of the Woman's Missionary Union of the South Roanoke Baptist Association.

Ruth Garner served as Director of Memorial's Woman's Missionary Society in 1968-1970; 1973-1975; and 1984-1985. In the early 1960s, she acted as Recording Secretary of the general meetings of Memorial's Woman's Missionary Society. The minutes are in depth and well written. Her

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75th annual session of the WMU in Raleigh. She also has WMU experience at the national level. In 1962, she traveled to Glorieta, New Mexico, for the annual National WMU Conference.

Through the 1950s and most of the 1960s, Memorial's Missionary Society grew steadily and reached its peak enrollment of more than 230 members in the mid-1960s. Directors such as Ruth Garner, Gladys Lee, Annabelle Averette, and Minnie Brooks stimulated this growth.

Ruth Garner's experience with WMU was more than local leadership and going to anniversary gatherings. She received a Letter of Commendation for completing four or more "Advanced Leadership Conferences."

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