The Life and Times of Mother Mac

Mrs. Fred McCleskey, or “Mother Mac,” was a beloved faculty member and the mother figure of JBU during the 50’s. She married Fred McCleskey, or “Dado” as he was affectionately called, and worked under the Southern Methodist Evangelistic Board. After their marriage they traveled with John Brown Sr. and other evangelists with the International Federation of Christian Workers. When John Brown decided to start a school, then known as the Southwestern Collegiate Institute, Mother Mac and Dado were eager to enlist their services to an old friend.

Mother Mac saw many of the changes and advancements of John Brown University and stated, “With its growth, the school has become part of my heart.” Her deep attachment to the school stemmed from the vast amount of time she spent with the students on campus. She acted as Resident Head of the women’s dorm (a title that is now known as the Resident Director) and a women’s dormitory counselor. Mother Mac was also the Dean of Women for ten years in hopes of shaping the characters of the young women around her. She declared, “May every soul that touches mine, be it the slightest contact, get therefrom some good- some little grace, one kindly thought, one inspiration yet unfelt, one bit of courage for the darkening sky, one gleam of faith- to make this life worthwhile and heaven a surer heritage.” (From the Brown Bulletin in the 1950’s)

She was so well respected and loved around campus that they dedicated the 1949 Pioneer to her, an act she acknowledged as the highest honor paid to her. She left this reading to her students as a summation of her life’s desire-

“In this wide world, so sad I’d be
If no one in it needed me.
If no one needed my help at his task
And no one ever wished a favor to ask;

If none were depressed and weary at heart,
And needed a “Friend” to play the part-
Yes, sad to me this world would be,
If no one in it needed me.”

Mother Mac was devoted to a life of service. She poured into the lives of everyone around her and improved JBU’s campus with her presence and heart for others. Because of this she was and will be an integral part of the university.

Milestones

• When John Brown University was founded in 1919, it was called the Southwestern Collegiate Institute. Its one building, Southwestern Hall, was built in just one month and four days, with the construction led by William Waterhouse. Waterhouse was a retired California contractor who had traveled with John Brown for several years on his evangelistic campaigns. The first semester, there were 12 faculty and staff members and seventy students.

• In 1946, a full-page story in the New York Times included five pictures representative of the 40,145 who were selected for that year’s publication of “Who’s Who in America.” Individuals featured were Thomas J. Watson, John Dewey, Princess Lazarovich, Betty Grable and, representing all the clergy and school leaders, John E. Brown Sr.
The end of October will soon be here and along with changing leaves, cuddling weather, and anticipation for the holidays, comes Halloween.

Different people have different opinions about Halloween, ranging from indifferent to malice. Some people don’t think children should participate as much as they do now.

“I don’t think there’s any harm in children dressing up, but I don’t like it when it’s as ghosts, murderers, leatherface, or other things like that,” Julie Birky said.

With the replacement of Halloween on the JBU campus by the “Harvest Humdinger” celebration, it seems that, as a community, we definitely have an opinion about Halloween as a holiday.

Freshman Drew Rothermal shared his sentiments on the subject: “I was raised thinking that it was a blast, that there was no harm in it. Then I came to a private Christian school, where the basic belief is that it promotes Satan, so now I question the ideals behind it and have not come to a conclusion yet.”

In the midst of controversy, some students at JBU are totally oblivious to the fact that there is anything to be concerned about. M.K. freshman Rachel Joongward from Ethiopia said, “We don’t celebrate Halloween much where I come from, so I don’t know very much about it.”

One student suggested that maybe we should open up a Halloween education booth so people will know the facts about this seemingly innocuous holiday.

Meanwhile, as the end of October approaches, it seems nothing has changed. We’ll still have trick-or-treating, we’ll still have a banquet, and we’ll still have a party in the J. Alvin atrium. The only thing that seems to be changed is the name.”

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**ECHOES OF THE PAST**

An excerpt from the October 26, 1990 edition of the Threefold Advocate

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**Insights**

*Works from John Brown, Sr.*

“It is the dreamer of today, who usually becomes the builder of the morrows. It is the man with a vision, who climbs and sings, while others sit and whine. It was the vision of the lovely, and the obedience to that vision, that sent the poet forth to sing the songs that lived through the centuries, and that strike the responsive chord in every human breast. It was the vision of the lovely, and obedience to that vision, that sent the sculpture forth to chisel out of an ugly rock the beautiful angel with snowy wings.

It was the vision of the lovely, and obedience to that vision, that sent the artist forth with pen and brush, to create the masterpieces that now hang on the walls of art.

When we behold these wonders and beauties all about we so often fail to realize that back of this vast creation, there stands the mighty creator, and that every beautiful building—every great painting—every well-known statue—was first a thought in the mind of the ones who created them. Every worthwhile deed and every deed has its history.

From origin to maturity, every step is traced back from the finished product, to the hour when the thought was first born in the cradle of the mind.

When St. Paul gives the exhortation, “Whatsoever things are lovely,” it is with this realization that these Philippian Christians will rise to the high level of well-rounded, lovely, fruit bearing Christian testimony, only as they climb to that high level in their thinking.”

Excerpt from “Thinking Things”