

Date: August 30, 2018
From: Alisha DeJesus/Cathy Holmes/Schock Family
To: Members of the IM Board, Missionaries, IM Board Alumni, Missionary Alumni, NLC and Staff
Re: Estelle M. Schock, ABFMS Burma and Hong Kong alumna, goes home

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Estelle M. Schock, American Baptist Foreign Society (ABFMS) alumna passed away on August 22, 2018 in Gig Harbor, WA at the age of 92.

Estelle was born in Shanghai, China in 1925. She grew up in a prominent Chinese Baptist minister's home. She was deeply influenced by her father's work in religious education, preaching, and visiting churches and Christian schools. In her early years at the Northern Baptist Church in Shanghai she participated in choir and youth groups and it is where she first came into contact with Christian missionaries. At about the age of 14 she was baptized. Her goal was to become a missionary teacher. After graduating from St. John's University in 1947, Estelle attended the 2nd Baptist World Youth Congress in Oslo, Norway. She taught for one year before traveling to the United States on a scholarship to study at the Berkeley Baptist Divinity School where she earned a Master of Christian Education degree in 1950.

It was while Estelle was studying at Berkeley Baptist Divinity School that she met Harold Schock whom she married on May 4, 1951. Due to the Communist takeover in China in the spring of 1949, Estelle was unable to safely return to Shanghai for the next 31 years.

While Estelle and Harold waited for an overseas mission appointment, they were called to Reno, Nevada to work with Native Americans. Estelle opened a day nursery for working mothers while Harold served as pastor to the Colony Baptist Church and was also the Director of the Christian Center.

The appointment from the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (ABFMS) came on November 20, 1954. In 1955 they sailed for Burma with two small children, Judy and Mark. Besides studying the Burmese language, and raising a growing family, Estelle helped with the weekly craft program at the Christian Center and worked with the women in the Immanuel Baptist Church where Harold became pastor. She was also president of the English congregation of women. She introduced new programs and new ideas such as mother-daughter banquets and potlucks. As a pastor's wife her home was always open to church events such as retreats, training sessions, choir practices and youth parties.

While in Burma, daughter Linda and son Phil were born. In 1960 Harold became pastor of the Judson Chapel at the University of Rangoon to minister to the Christian faculty and the students there. The Schock family moved to a house on the university campus which was often a gathering place for students and faculty. Estelle was active in ministry in Rangoon during all the years they served in Burma.

In 1966 the political climate in Burma changed and ABFMS missionaries could no longer continue to serve there. Estelle and Harold and the children returned to the United States for a year before being reassigned to serve in Hong Kong.

After Burma and before Hong Kong, Estelle and Harold wrote, “No ship leaves its trail permanently in the waters it divides. No flower as it blooms declares it is master of its little garden forever. Yet we dare to do what ships and flowers cannot do. In touching lives something eternal is created – a trail of friendships, blossoms of memories.”

The Schocks carried on a variety of activities in the Swatow-speaking Baptist churches in Hong Kong. Estelle served as advisor for the women’s work, worked with young adults, translated books into Braille for the blind, shared in Christian Center works and semi-monthly ministry to Burmese-speaking Chinese refugees living in Macao. It was in Harold’s and Estelle’s work with the Chuk Yuen Christian Center in the early 1970’s that Harold confronted the abuse of hard drugs that were so prevalent in that area. As an outgrowth of their Christian Center work, Harold founded the Wu Oi Christian Fellowship in order to minister to drug addicts through a Christian treatment and training program. Estelle and Harold were recognized for their significant work by the American Baptist Seminary of the West which granted both of them honorary Doctor of Divinity degrees.

At the end of 1989, Estelle and Harold retired from active service in Hong Kong and moved to Yakima, Washington. After retirement, Estelle was an active member of their church, the First Baptist Church in Yakima, singing in the choir and going on service projects to Central America. She was also president of the ABWM and was on the Hispanic Ministry Support Committee and the Stewardship Committee. In addition, Estelle spoke 6 languages and was an accomplished painter.

Estelle was predeceased by her husband, Harold and son, Mark.

Estelle is survived by two daughters and a son: Judy Kuiper of Manteca, CA, Linda Shelley of Gig Harbor, WA, and Phil Schock of Camas, WA; 6 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren.

A memorial service for Estelle will be held on Thursday, September 6th at 2:00 pm at the First Baptist Church, 112 N Pierce Ave, Yakima, WA. There will be a reception immediately following the service.

Estelle loved Burma and was grateful for the work of Friends of Burma. The family suggests in lieu of flowers, friends so desiring may make donations to Friends of Burma, 548 Home Ave, Ft. Wayne, IN 46807, or at www.friendsofburma.org.