

EARL AND MELVA WRIGHT



Earl Wright and Melva Baldwin were married on June 10, 1949, in Angwin, CA. They shared a deep love for God, their families, the outdoors, and serving young people. They believed God was calling them to a life of service together and they approached this calling as a team. Earl had just graduated with a degree in Theology from Pacific Union College

(PUC), and Melva had just completed a year of teaching music at Lodi Academy with hopes of finishing her degree in the near future.

Their life of service together began in Oakland, CA, working for the TV and radio ministry of the Quiet Hour Quartet. Melva was the accompanist and Earl sang baritone for the group. Their days were filled with filming the TV program and assisting with the youth at Grand Avenue SDA Church. Their journey continued with an internship in Grass Valley, CA, then on to Lodi and Stockton. By 1954, the couple had added two children to the family, Earl was ordained to the ministry, and they moved to Hawaii where Earl served as Educational Superintendent and Youth Leader. While in Hawaii, Melva kept busy caring for their two young children, Linda and Ed. She completed her Bachelor's Degree in Music from the University of Hawaii, and hosted, on average, one company meal per day to visiting missionaries and friends.

After seven years in Hawaii, Earl and Melva made their way to Thunderbird Academy in Arizona. The adjustment to desert living didn't come easy—especially for Melva. She missed Hawaii and the people she had grown to love. In 1964, Melva didn't get the lush growth of Hawaii she longed for, but she got the next best thing—Monterey Bay Academy (MBA) and the Pacific Ocean at her front door. Earl served as Pastor and Bible teacher and Melva taught at Virgil Hauselt Jr. Academy for a year, then taught English and music at MBA.

Earl and Melva loved their time at MBA, spending many hours, together and individually, talking one-on-one with students, listening to their concerns and encouraging them in their life path. They were class sponsors, Melva sponsored the newspaper, and they assisted wherever needed. They were dearly loved by the students and their home was often the site of a birthday party, worship time, or a meal around the family table.

In 1968, the Wright's moved back to Stockton, CA, to pursue graduate degrees at University of the Pacific, then in 1970, it was on to PUC where Earl was the Associate Dean of Students, and faculty in the Education Department, while Melva taught in the Music Department. On a cold foggy morning in March of 1971, Earl was asked to help recruit for PUC in Bakersfield, CA. Another teacher was flying a plane down to help make it a shorter day. Earl agreed to go, and the unfortunate plane crash happened one minute after take-off from the Angwin airport. Earl's life was cut short by this tragic event, but the results of his work were not. He is remembered as a loving Christian who made a kingdom difference in the lives of others. Melva continued to teach at PUC until 1977, when she married Dr. Tom Cummings and moved to Monument Valley, CA.

MBA has remained a special place to the Wright family. Melva has remained connected to MBA through the years, returning frequently to alumni reunions, keeping in touch with former students, and sponsoring two international students so they could benefit from MBA's program. It is an honor to recognize Earl and Melva Wright for the many years of service to Adventist education, and more specifically, for their impact on MBA students.