

## HISTORY of GREENFOREST BAPTIST CHURCH

The Greenforest Baptist Church in Decatur, Georgia was founded in 1958, with services for the 135 charter members being held in the Wadsworth Elementary School on Greenforest Drive. The church was incorporated on June 5, 1959. Land was purchased adjacent to the school on Shamrock Drive and the church buildings were built in the early to mid 60's.

For many years the church membership increased with the majority of its members coming from the neighborhood surrounding the church. During the early 1970's membership at Greenforest began to decline, due primarily to the racial transition of the neighborhood. As more and more whites moved from the neighborhood and subsequently from the church, more and more blacks moved into the neighborhood and a few joined Greenforest.

In 1977 what was evolving as a gradual racial transitional experience intensified into what has been termed "The Exodus Experience." On one Sunday nearly all the white members, including the pastor, moved their membership from Greenforest Baptist Church. This was obviously a sad day in the life of the Christian church. The remaining congregation operated under a partial mission status for approximately 18 months under the watchful care and support of the Atlanta Baptist Association.

In 1979 Rev. George O. McCalep, Jr. was called to serve as pastor of Greenforest. He followed the interim pastorate of Rev. John Cross who was assigned the position by the Atlanta Baptist Association.

Under Pastor McCalep's leadership the deed to the property was regained from the Association, thereby moving the church from the partial mission status to a full congregationally-owned and autonomously-governed Baptist church. During the past 16 years, under Pastor McCalep, Greenforest has grown from the 25 members present when he came, to over 4,000 members. In addition, the annual budget has increased from \$13,000 in 1979 to \$2.1 million. Evidence of high levels of stewardship of time, money and talent can easily be identified throughout the congregation. Combined ministry budgets total \$5 million.

Greenforest has been appropriately called a melting pot of the spiritually restored. The new heterogeneous congregation includes new converts, seasoned converts, restored converts wounded by previous church experiences, restored backsliders, staunch Baptists (both conservative and liberal), former Catholics, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Pentecostals and Methodists. Our diversity is due in part to Pastor McCalep's broad biblically-based theological ministry; his God-given ability to relate to diverse personalities; and a strong vision from the Lord to heal the wounded body of Christ (The Church).

Because of the demand for space to serve the current ministries, and to allow for the addition of future ministries, it became evident that the Shamrock Drive location was totally inadequate for present needs and future growth. In June 1988, with an occupancy date of July 1989, Greenforest purchased the Mt. Carmel Christian Church. This spacious \$5.6 million facility sat on 16 acres with a sanctuary

that seats 2,000, two classroom buildings, a gym/family life building, ballfield, picnic grounds and playground.

Greenforest's current location at 3250 Rainbow Drive is less than five minutes from the old location and offers higher visibility and accessibility to the greater Atlanta area in that it is bounded by I-20, Columbia Drive, Candler Road, and is near I-285.

Following the move to the new facility in July 1989, the membership grew very rapidly. The sanctuary is now filled to capacity at both Sunday morning services. An evening service has been added on the 4th Sunday. Sunday School attendance averages 1,100. In 1992 and 1993 Greenforest purchased an additional 14 acres, including three houses, and work began on increasing the size of the parking lot.

Also in 1989 the Greenforest Christian Academy and Child Development Center was founded. Children were accepted from pre-

school to the third grade. Currently named the Greenforest Christian Academic Center, 550 students are enrolled from pre-school through the 12th grade. The school is fully accredited, and was recognized by the Institute for Independent Education in Washington, DC, as the School of the Year in 1994.

In April, 1994, Pastor McCalep shared his vision of a Mission City. His vision was for a ministry that would provide housing for senior citizens, child care facilities, an educational complex, and facilities for small businesses. In less than one year of the announcement, Pastor McCalep's vision is nearing fruition. The Greenforest Community Development Corporation has been formed, and as of December 1994 Greenforest Baptist Church had purchased an additional 61 acres surrounding the church, including a 5.5 acre office park and six houses. Greenforest Baptist Church now owns a total of 98 acres of land--well on the way to Mission City. To God Be the Glory!



DeKalb News Sun  
8/22/90

## Pastor In 10 'Most Prominent'

A DeKalb minister is among 10 black religious leaders nominated by a group of distinguished Georgians as Georgia's Ten Most Prominent Black Pastors.

The Rev. Georgia McCaleps, Green Forest Baptist Church, 3250 Rainbow Drive, Decatur, is among those honored.

As a result of the nominations, students and journalists of the Atlanta University System will write detailed biographies of the ministers and the historical growth of their church congregations.

Pastors were selected on the basis of their achievements as religious leaders and their distinguished reputations as known church builders.

The biographical information of the ten nominees will then be coordinated by Sen. Hildred Shumake, Democrat, 39th Senatorial District, to form the material for a novel entitled "Men Amongst Men" documenting their contributions. The finished product will then be distributed to the state's

Department of Archives and History as well as to libraries across Georgia. These efforts are made in an effort to offer positive image building, recognition and education to black teenagers and historians throughout our state, Sen. Shumake said.

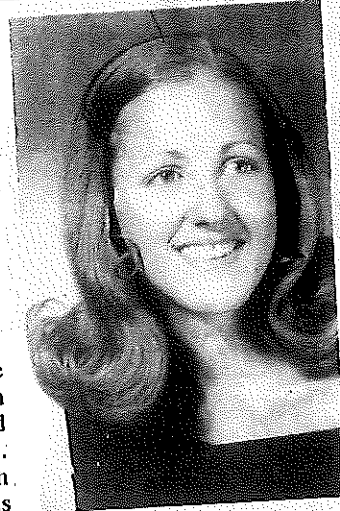
## Denise Cofer, Gary Garland Are Engaged

Mr. and Mrs. D. V. Cofer of Decatur announce the engagement of their daughter, Denise Ann Cofer, to Gary Edwin Garland, son of Mrs. George Garland of Decatur, and the late Mr. Garland.

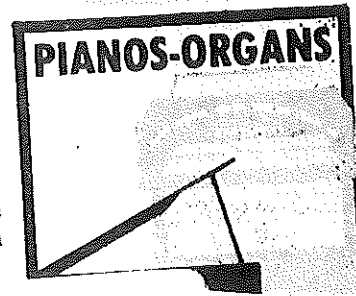
The bride-elect is the granddaughter of S. J. Pipkin and the late Mrs. Pipkin and the late Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Cofer, all of Cordele. A high school graduate, she is employed by a local dentist.

Mr. Garland is the grandson of the late Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Collins of Toccoa, and the late Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Garland of Van Nuys, Calif. He is a high school graduate, employed by The White Lily Foods Co. in Knoxville, Tenn.

The wedding will take place at Greenforest Baptist Church on June 3.



DENISE COFER



THE CHAMPION, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10-JANUARY 16, 1996

## GREENFOREST BAPTIST CHURCH

3250 Rainbow Drive, Decatur, GA 30034 289-9636

"And Thou Shalt Teach Them Diligently."

"TO LOVE THE LORD With All Thine Heart..." Deut. 6



Rev. George O.  
McCalep, Jr., Pastor

- Bible Institute and Seminary
- The Vision of Mission City (in progress)
- Orchestra, Drama, Handbells and Choirs
- Continuing Witness Training (CWT)
- Discipleship and Leadership Training
- Usher Ministry
- WMU and Brotherhood Ministries
- Singles Ministry
- Dialysis Renal Ministry (DLTSC)
- Sisters in Support (S.I.S.)
- Recreation Ministry
- Big Brothers/Little Brothers Ministry
- Free To Be Thin Ministry
- Teen-Agers
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Deaf Ministry
- Wholistic Health Ministry Bus Ministry

Morning Worship Services 8 a.m. & 11 a.m.  
Evening Worship Service - 4th Sundays at 4 p.m.  
Youth Worship Services  
Children's Worship Services  
Youth Revival - Every Friday - 7 p.m.  
Sunday School - Every Sunday at 9:45 a.m.  
Wednesday Bible Study Classes - 12 Noon & 7:15 p.m.  
Friday Prayer Meeting (Happy Hour) - 7 p.m.

THE GAMMON

## Greenforest Hosts Pastor's Anniversary

The Greenforest Baptist Church in Decatur is observing the 15th Anniversary of its Pastor, George O. McCalep, Jr. and his family with a weekend of events and activities on Saturday, September 17 and 18. A banquet is scheduled for Saturday the 17th at the Georgia Association of Educators Building in Decatur at 6 p.m. Worship Services on Sunday the 18th will have a guest preachers at 8 a.m., Dr. Van S. Bird, former Rector of St. Simon the Cyrenian Episcopal Church in Philadelphia; and at 11 a.m., Dr. Cornelius Henderson, President of the Gammon Theological Seminary.

Pastor McCalep has asked his

congregation to give him a special gift of 2000 members in attendance at Bible Discovery Hour (Sunday School) on the 18th. At 5 p.m. on Sunday a special Musical Celebration featuring the Greenforest Orchestra and the Atlanta Philharmonic Chorale will be held in the church sanctuary.

Greenforest Baptist Church is located at 3250 Rainbow Drive, Decatur, Georgia. The public is invited to attend all events. Banquet tickets (\$15 per person) are available in advance in the church office.

Please call Ms. Gloria Lightfoot for more information at 289-9636.

## DeKalb Mega Churches Offer Variety of Services and Experiences

**Greenforest Community Baptist Church**  
3250 Rainbow Drive  
Decatur  
404-486-1120  
Sr. Pastor: **George O. McCalep Jr., PhD.**

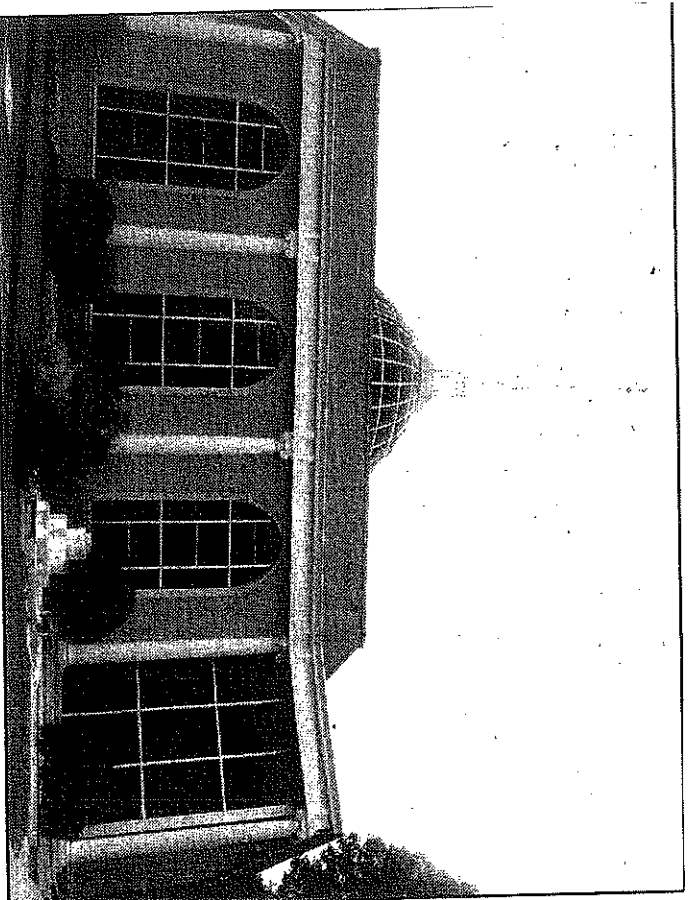
At 46 years old, Greenforest Baptist Church in Decatur is one of the community's oldest mega churches. The church held its first services at Wadsworth Elementary School on Greenforest Drive—hence the church name. The church later purchased land adjacent to the school and relocated again in 1989 to its current home.

In recent years, the church has developed an array of programs and services. Most noted among them is Greenforest Community Development Corporation (GFCDC), which was founded to help improve the quality of life in DeKalb County. Programs under the GFCDC include housing rehabilitation and homeowner training, youth mentoring, tutoring and a job bank. The GFCDC also has an "Adopt-A-Family" program focusing on incarcerated persons and their families. It also provides support systems for former inmates re-entering society. The innovative programs have evolved under the leadership of Rev. George O. McCalep Jr., who became pastor of Greenforest in 1977. He has led the church's growth from the 25 members present when he took over to the current membership of more than 4,000. McCalep now manages an annual budget of more than \$2 million. The church is located on a \$5.6 million, 16-acre campus and has a sanctuary that seats 2,000. There

by Pamela Wilson

Drive down any major street in DeKalb County, and it won't be long before you encounter a church. That's because there are more than 400 places of worship in DeKalb—not counting mosques and synagogues. That equates to approximately one church for every 1,700 citizens. As is often the case in most suburban settings, churches in DeKalb are deeply ingrained into the social fabric. That's because they have expanded beyond traditional Sunday services to offer continuing education classes, recreation, financial services, leisure trips and entertainment. This is especially true of so-called "mega churches," which are defined by religious research organizations as churches whose congregations number more than 3,000 members. There are several churches that fall into the category locally. Among them are New Birth Missionary Baptist, Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Green Forest Community Church, and Ray of Hope Christian Church.

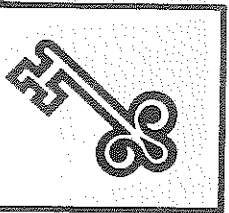
are two classroom buildings, a gym/family life building, a ball field, a picnic area and playground.



Greenforest Community Baptist Church

*DeKalb News 8/30/89*

# Keynotes On DeKalb



**JOHN AND TAMMY CUNNINGHAM** of Lawrenceville announce the birth of a son, Kenneth Brett, August 16 at Northlake Regional Medical Center. The baby has a brother, Chad, 22 months old. Maternal grandparents are Leonard and Willette Wilson of Decatur. Paternal grandparents are John and Betty Cunningham of Cumming.

**MR. AND MRS. LARRY D. TAYLOR** of Dunwoody announce the birth of their son, Eryan Lawrence, August 14. The mother is the former Susan Hutchinson of Atlanta.

**THE OLIVE GARDEN** Restaurant at Northlake was the scene of a 69th birthday party for Edna Norton recently. Invited guests were Johnny Issakson, Mr. and Mrs. Chesley Morton, Mr. and Mrs. Pat Swindall, Mr. and Mrs. Hank Elliott, Mr. and Mrs. James Shearer, Mr. and Mrs. Cyril Bell, Mr. and Mrs. Matt Hawkins, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Page, Mrs. Carl Kirk, Covington, Mrs. Walter Susong, Conyers, Miss Barbara Cunningham, Roswell, Mrs. Jan Fowler, Liburn, Robert Baker, Miss Elizabeth Maynard, Dr. Ken Hoose, Mrs. Dorothy Thurston and Mrs. Georgann Tatham.

**STEVEN D. RICH**, son of Mr. and Mrs. B. Y. Rich of Lithonia, will be graduating from Georgia Tech on September 1 with a bachelor's degree in aerospace engineering. He attended Georgia Tech on a Navy ROTC scholarship and will be commissioned as an ensign on August 31. He will be attending Nuclear Power School in Orlando, Fla. Steve is a member of Tau Beta Pi, national engineering honor society. He is a 1985 graduate of Southwest DeKalb High School.

**MRS. FRANCES DICKSON** of Stone Mountain, Sara Davis Smith of Gainesville and Vela Cantrell of Bremen attended the Young Harris College Homecoming in Young Harris the week of August 17. Mrs. Dickson and Mrs. Smith were roommates. Their late husbands, Bill Dickson, Ernest Smith and Herman Cantrell were also roommates when they were here in college.

**INSA** (The International Service Association for Health, Inc.) will hold its annual banquet Friday, September 8 at the Lanier Plaza Hotel. The dinner will be held at 6:30 p.m. There will be a special international program with Emcee Tom Shtkowitz, health anchor of WXIA-TV. The speaker will be Dr. Dari Snyder, director, International Development, University of Georgia and president of Georgia Partners of the Americas. Reservations may be made by mail only to INSA Office by August 31, P.O. Box 15096, Atlanta, Ga. 30303.

**TODD WUSKE**, associate minister for children, at Mt. Carmel Christian Church for the past ten years, has resigned. He plans to go into a full ministry.

**MRS. HELEN JENKINS AND ALICE LONG**, both of Decatur, have returned from a trip to Alaska. They sailed on the Sea Princess from Anchorage to Vancouver and then toured the interior area of Alaska. They saw the largest iceberg, Mendenhall. Returning by way of Seattle, they flew back to Atlanta.

**MR. AND MRS. FRED STREET**, of Winona Drive, will be honored on their fiftieth wedding anniversary, Saturday, August 26 at Columbia Drive Baptist Church, Dining Hall, by their children and grandchildren.

**MIES (HEAD INJURED PAIS)** meets the fourth Tuesday of each month at Smoke Rise Baptist Church, 5901 Hugh Howell Rd., Stone Mountain, "for those who have been head injured and their friends."

**MAJOR AND MRS. STEPHEN DICKSON** announce the birth of their first child, Elizabeth Ann, August 11 in Eiborg, Germany. The grandparents are Col. and Mrs. Bill Dickson, Jr. of Langwood, Fla. and Mr. and Mrs. Dexter Feak of Colorado Springs, Col. The great-grandmothers are Mrs. Frances Dickson of Stone Mountain and Mrs. Elizabeth McGee of Greenville, Miss. The great-great-grandmother is Mrs. Stella Copelan of Atlanta. The mother is the former Dawn Feak of Colorado Springs, Col.

**MRS. ELEANOR VERDEREY**, Southern Baptist foreign missionary, is home on furlough from her work in Switzerland.

**DR. R. LEE GALLMAN, JR.** became pastor of Columbia Drive Baptist Church, August 15. Dr. Gallman has been pastor of Crawford Ave. Baptist in Spokie, Ill. for the past 15 years. His wife is the former Beverly (Chip) Mensing of Birmingham. They have two children, Sonny, 18, and Jacob, nine. Previously he served as a hospital chaplain and has written for several Baptist publications. They will live in the Rowland Rd. section of Stone Mountain.

**MR. AND MRS. WILLIE SMITH** of Mallard Court, Lithonia, announce the birth of a second daughter, Kathryn Michele, on August 3 at DeKalb General Hospital. The grandparents are Charles and Lou Esther Smith of Muncie, Ind. and Lucy Holmes of Lithonia. The other daughter is Britany.

**LORNA D. CLARK**, a student at Columbia Seminary in Decatur, was licensed to the gospel ministry by Emory Baptist Church. She serves as the pastor's associate, and is serving this summer as a chaplain's intern at the Interfaith Airport Chaplaincy at Atlanta's Hartsfield Airport.

**FOUR GEORGIANS** were recently awarded the Rice-Judson Award in recognition of their leadership, scholarship and commitment to ministry. They are Laura Briscoe Carey of Atlanta, Pebbles Stone of Marietta, Connie Daline Garnon of Menlo and Donna Denise Bailey of Brunswick.

**DR. MONROE F. SWILLEY** has retired as vice-president of Mercer University after more than 20 years association with the college in Atlanta. He will be 75 on October 12, and he plans to retire at the end of the 1988-89 fiscal year.

**FREE HEALTH INFORMATION** is offered over the phone, as a public service of DeKalb Medical Center and the DeKalb Medical Society. The Tel-Med contains over 200 pre-recorded messages dealing with various health topics. To listen to a tape, call 296-9000 between noon and 7 p.m. Monday through Friday and request the subject from one of the operators on duty. Each of these tapes last approximately 3 to 5 minutes. These should not be used as a substitute for a personal physician, but it is beneficial in helping to recognize the early signs of illness.

**GREEN FOREST BAPTIST CHURCH** has dedicated a new facility for its Green Forest Christian Academy and Child Development Center. George O. McCalep, Jr. is pastor. They have bought and are now occupying the site of the former Mt. Carmel Christian Church, located on Rainbow Drive in South DeKalb.

**MRS. CHARLES H. CHUMLEY**, president of Atlanta Chapter No. 18, United Daughters of the Confederacy, entertained the executive board and members with a luncheon at her northside home. An organizational meeting was held. Plans for the coming year were made with emphasis on all UDC goals — historical, patriotic, educational, benevolent, and memorial.

**B. J. WHITE** of Decatur was inducted into the Society of American Florists (SAF) prestigious American Academy of Floriculture (AAF) during the Society's 105th annual convention, July 28, in Chicago. B.J.'s floral career began 20 years ago, after spending many years doing civic and volunteer projects including being a member of the PTA, Methodist Women's Organization, a Cub Scout den mother and Blue Bird den mother. She has been working for Hall's Flower Shop in Decatur, and is primarily responsible for wedding work. She is a past president, vice-president, treasurer and secretary of the Metro Atlanta Florist Association. She has served on the board of directors of the Georgia State Florist Association as well as held positions of the historian, secretary, vice president and president.

**MRS. LUCILE ISBELL** is now living at Christian City in College Park.

**COVENTRY PLACE** retirement home honored those having August birthdays Tuesday afternoon, August 22. They are Laura Peters, Winifred Carter, Eva Brady, Addie Williams, Louise Sneed, Maurice Calkins, Izzy Horn, Ethel Lindner, Jennie Hutchins, Minnie Huggins, Flora Brading, Nan Egan and Emma Darnell. Jan Zacharchuck is their new activities director.