

# DBU REPORT

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Hearts of Servants

## Orville and Esther Beth Rogers

Dallas Baptist University is pleased to name its Intercessory Prayer Ministry the Orville and Esther Beth Rogers Prayer Ministry in honor of wonderful servant leaders and dear friends of DBU, Orville Rogers, and his late wife, Esther Beth.

# The Orville and Esther Beth Rogers Prayer Ministry

On May 3, 1964, hundreds gathered on a hill in southern Dallas county, dedicating a piece of land to the Lord and asking Him to guide the new school that would soon occupy the space. Among those present, some of the very first to lift up DBU in prayer were Orville and Esther Beth Rogers. Forty-five years later, DBU has chosen to recognize their life of service to the Lord and to the school by naming the DBU Intercessory Prayer Ministry the Orville and Esther Beth Rogers Prayer Ministry.

The Prayer Ministry began in 1988 under the leadership of Dr. Gary Cook, DBU president. The school faced many struggles, and according to Dr. Cook, "I knew that only the Lord could help us overcome our problems." Over the years, the ministry has coordinated daily prayer for the school and also for the needs of the entire DBU family. Some of the first individuals to join in this intercession were the Rogers family.

"Orville and Esther Beth Rogers are true friends of DBU, but more importantly, true servants of the Lord," explained Dr. Cook. "We are so pleased to be able to name this vital part of the University after this wonderful couple."

Orville and Esther Beth Rogers were married in 1943 and moved to Fort Worth to attend seminary and pursue their passion for missions. However, World War II delayed these plans as Orville headed off to war as a flight instructor for the Army Air Corps. Following the war, he continued as a commercial airline pilot and finally retired in 1977. During this time, though, he discovered a new way to combine his career and his calling by becoming a pilot for Southern Baptist missionaries and Wycliffe Bible Translators all around the world. From 1982-83, the couple themselves served on the mission field for 13 months in Tanzania.

Long-time members of First Baptist Church of Dallas, where Orville has served as a deacon since 1953, the Rogers family excitedly welcomed the prospect of a Baptist college located in Dallas. Attending the groundbreaking ceremony, they prayed that the Lord would bless the school.

Over the years, the couple became more and more involved in the life of DBU. Esther Beth was an active member of the DBU Women's Auxiliary Board (WAB), serving as a past president of the organization, and Orville has served as past chair of the DBU



*Orville and Esther Beth Rogers along with their son, Bill, outside of the John G. Mahler Student Center following the celebration service of the 40th anniversary of the groundbreaking for DBU, which they attended in 1964.*

Foundation. The couple has made several large gifts to the school and has included DBU in their estate planning. In addition, they donated \$1 million for the construction of Spence Hall, a women's dormitory.

The couple's commitment to the school extends beyond themselves to their family. They have four children, Bill, Rick, Susan, and Orville, Jr., who was killed in action in Vietnam in 1970, and 10 grandchildren. Bill has served faithfully for 19 years in various roles at DBU, and his wife, Melanie, served as a past principal of the DBU Lab School and also past president of the WAB.

It was the privilege of the University to present honorary doctorates to both Orville and Esther Beth in recognition of their service to the school, and the WAB also presented Esther Beth with the Ruth Award in recognition of her Christian example and support of the work of DBU.

In March of 2008, Esther Beth went to be with the Lord. In her honor, Orville, at the age of 91, competed several months after her death in the USA Masters Indoor Track Championship. Competing in the mile and the 800-meter run, Orville broke both world records for his age group.

"We are so pleased to be able to highlight the life and service of Orville and Esther Beth to our DBU community," explained Cyndi Pettit, director of the Orville and Esther Beth Rogers Prayer Ministry. "They are role models for our students, faculty, and staff, and their support of DBU over the years has done so much to further the mission of the school to be a University that is pleasing to God."