

# Chicago Metropolitan Baptist Association

*We Bring Good News!*



## **Passing the Torch**

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The Chicago Metro Baptist Association

O.K. last month we learned we will not get to see the Olympic flame come to our city, but we did see a passing of a torch in this city that I want to lift up for all to see. In the past month Chicago Metro Baptist Association has seen the home going of three senior saints: Pastor Fred Aten, Bill Mavrick and Barney Rivers. Only one pastored a congregation, the other two served the Lord actively in their local congregations as they worked secular jobs, but ALL served the broader kingdom of God where He placed them.

**Brother Fred Aten** shepherded the First Baptist Church of Willow Springs for the past 41 years just short of his 90th birthday. I will remember him best for his words at the Summer Associational Meeting of Churches (AMC) in 2008. Many said to me afterwards they hoped to have as much joy in serving the Lord as Pastor Fred when they reached 90. It became apparent at his wake that in addition to shepherding his flock Pastor Fred also shepherded a whole community. Police directed car-after-car of people into a funeral home filled with people who had no connection to the church but shared stories of how Pastor Fred cared for them. His funeral procession traveled by several municipal buildings with signs that said, "We will miss you Pastor Fred!" Fred loved and served his local church but he also loved and served the broader kingdom of God.

**Bill Mavrick** served as a deacon of First Baptist Church of Bolingbrook. At his funeral testimonies centered on how much he served others through the benevolence ministry of his church. A request for a show of hands by those who had been helped by Bill's ministry produced a wave of hands of work colleagues, schoolmates and acquaintances that packed the church. In addition to his service his wife Nancy, sister Debbie MacKellar, daughter Jennifer and son Nicolas gave over 50 years of service to CMBA as administrative, janitorial and whatever other help was needed.

**Barney Rivers** spent the last view years of his life in a nursing home but most of his life as a servant of his local church in the south suburbs of Chicago. His grandson, Tim Filkins, pastors the Lighthouse Fellowship in Frankfort, a church started by a man his grandfather led to the Lord. Many who have been around CMBA over 10 years will remember Barney as a faithful servant alongside Harold King in Sunday School training. He assisted churches in Bible teaching as a volunteer for CMBA for 23 years and his name is all over the early documents for this association dating back to the late 1950s. He loved to share his faith even until his last days. Churches all across Chicagoland started and grew Bible classes from able equipping they received from Barney.

All three men will be greatly missed. Maybe it is not the Olympic flame but the bright flame of their life and ministry that has brightened our city for a generation and now the city looks to a next generation of Christians to hold the torch of our faith high in the city. These men loved the local church but they also loved the work of God's kingdom. May God give us similar hearts today and in future generations.

Please join us the morning of the 24th and the evening of the 25th of October at Uptown Baptist Church for the kingdom work God has called us to do as Christians united around Jesus Christ in our city.

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