

Kemmerer, Martin Edgar (1913–1998)

CHERYL CHRISTO HOWSON

Cheryl Christo Howson earned a graduate diploma in computer aided interior designing at the Dr. Bhanuben Nanavati College of Architecture for Women in Pune, India. She co-founded an interior design company in Sri Lanka and worked as a copywriter. She contributed to the morning devotional published by Women's Ministries at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, the *Shepherdess International Journal* magazine, and the *Adventist Review*. She has written several plays. Currently (2020), she lives in Hosur, India while preparing for a piano exam.

Martin Edgar Kemmerer served the Seventh-day Adventist church as treasurer of the Southern Asia Division, controller-treasurer at Andrews University, and undertreasurer of the General Conference.

Early Life

Martin Kemmerer was born November 7, 1913 in Emmaus, Pennsylvania, to Sally (Burkart) and Edgar M. Kemmerer. In the summer of 1916, his mother was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist church, but she died December 12, 1919, leaving five young children at home. Their father then remarried, to Maggie Hill, also a Seventh-day Adventist. Martin was baptized in 1927 by Elder A. A. Cone in Reading, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.¹

Martin attended Reading, Pennsylvania, Intermediate Church School for grades 9-11 from 1927 to 1930, then completed grade 12 at Washington Missionary College Academy, graduating in 1931.²

Education and Marriage



Grave of Martin Kemmerer.

Photo courtesy of AEPDLP. Source: *Find a Grave*, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/144868439/martin-e-kemmerer>

Martin enrolled at Washington Missionary College (today, Washington Adventist University) in 1931, where he studied a commercial course for two years, and graduated with a B.A. in 1938.³

At college Martin met Margaret Evelyn Mettler, born January 9, 1910 in Cleveland, Ohio, to Clara (Saam) and John J. Mettler. Growing up in an Adventist home, she was baptized in 1920, in Cleveland, Ohio, by Miles Roy Coon. She studied at the Cleveland Church School between 1921 and 1924, and attended Mt. Vernon Academy 1924-1929. She did two years of a commercial course at Washington Missionary College, and graduated with a B.A. in Education in 1934.⁴

Martin and Margaret married July 31, 1934, in Takoma Park, Maryland, U.S.A. The couple had one daughter, Margaret (Peggy), born in Takoma Park, Maryland in 1944.⁵

Ministry

After their wedding, Margaret Kemmerer began working as a secretary to S. W. Tymeson at Washington Missionary College, while Martin continued studying. After he graduated in 1938, Martin began work at the college as an accountant in the business office, while Margaret became a typing instructor. Mr. Kemmerer was then appointed the cashier and accountant in 1939, and from 1945-1946 was the assistant business manager and cashier. In 1946 he was promoted to business manager and treasurer. He also acted as pastor and local elder of the Arlington, Virginia Church, Virginia, beginning in 1942.⁶

In 1944 Margaret took a break from work to care for their newborn. In 1948 the Kemmerer family was called to India to serve as missionaries. Martin was appointed secretary-treasurer of the South India Union Mission.⁷ During his time there, he was also a member of the Union Quartet.⁸ For a short period of time in early 1950 he was superintendent of the Northwest India Union Mission.⁹ In 1950 he was elected treasurer of the Southern Asia Division, a position he held for twelve years.¹⁰ Among other responsibilities, Margaret Kemmerer served as president of the Dorcas Federation, which held its first business meeting in Poona on December 8, 1960.¹¹

Martin Kemmerer played a major role in the development of the Adventist hospital in Banepa, Nepal, and after its completion, he and Margaret visited the Drs. Sturges in mid-1962.¹² On June 11, 1962, a host of friends and colleagues bid farewell to the Kemmerers, along with Miriam Kemmerer, Martin's younger sister, as they boarded the train at Poona (Pune), to begin their long voyage back to the United States.¹³

For their first year back in their home country Martin served as the assistant manager of Andrews University. He accepted the position of controller-treasurer at the University in 1963, until he was called to the General Conference in 1966 as an assistant treasurer.¹⁴ In 1970 he was promoted to undertreasurer, at which post he served faithfully until 1979.¹⁵ He was elected treasurer of the committee for the North American Division Multilingual Ministries in 1975.¹⁶

Later Life

In 1980, Martin Kemmerer was on the Board of Directors of GENCON Risk Management Service and the International Insurance Company, at the General Conference, Takoma Park, Maryland, U.S.A.¹⁷

Martin Kemmerer died August 26, 1998. He had been residing in Redwood Valley, California, U.S.A.¹⁸

Contribution

The Kemmerers served the denomination faithfully in educational institutions, as missionaries in India, at the Southern Asia Division for 12 years, and for 14 years at the General Conference. Elder Kemmerer served a total of 42 years in various financial positions, working tirelessly, and yet endearing himself to his colleagues.

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