

# Dortch, Volney

## Denver

### (1920–1996)

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Volney Denver Dortch was an Adventist colporteur, church administrator, and missionary in the United States and the Philippines.

## Early Life

Volney Denver Dortch was born on August 20, 1920, in Colorado, United States. His father was Volney

Bert Dortch, born in Nashville, Tennessee, and his mother was Neva Esther Wilson Dortch, born in Jamestown, Missouri. His early years were spent in Denver, Colorado; Glendale, California; Portland, Oregon; and Dodi, California. Born to an Adventist family, Dortch was baptized by Toral Seat in the Lincoln Park Seventh-day Adventist church, Los Angeles, California.<sup>1</sup>

## Education and Marriage

Dortch's early education was acquired in California and Oregon. He attended La Sierra College in 1936 where he studied accounting and business administration courses. He completed these courses in 1940. In 1941, he enrolled at La Salle to take a certified public accountant course. He also took army extension courses from 1944 to 1946. Finally, he was certified as public accountant by the International Accountants Society in 1947.<sup>2</sup>



Volney Dortch.

Photo courtesy of sandsoftime. Source: *Find a Grave*,

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/594059/volney-d-dortch>

On April 6, 1941, V. D. Dortch married Juanita Crystal Luther in Loma Linda, California. Juanita Luther was born on January 31, 1922, in Caldwell County, Missouri, to William Brown Luther and Mary Crystal Christian. The family later moved to Glendale, California. She converted to the Adventist faith in 1937 while she stayed with her uncle who was an Adventist. B. R. Spear baptized her in 1939 in Los Angeles, California. She took a pre-nursing course at La Sierra College in 1939 where she met Volney Dortch. The Dortches were blessed with a son, Kenneth Leroy, born on November 27, 1943.<sup>3</sup>

## Ministry

Dortch started work as a colporteur for the Southeastern California Conference between 1938 and 1940 while still a student. Although this was an intermittent experience due to his schooling, the experience prepared him for greater future service. After completing his business accounting and management courses in 1940, Dortch worked as an assistant at the Southern California Book and Bible House. In October 1941, he was asked to serve the Pacific Press Publication Association's Portland Branch as a bookkeeper and assistant branch manager.<sup>4</sup>

In January 1942, Dortch answered the call to become cost accountant and bookkeeper at Loma Linda Food Company in Arlington, California. He returned to school in June 1944. After obtaining his CPA degree and additional training in the army, he was again called to serve the Southern California Book and Bible House as an assistant in May 1948.<sup>5</sup>

On July 1, 1949, he became the manager<sup>6</sup> of the North Carolina Book and Bible House until 1953.<sup>7</sup> On February 26, 1953, the General Conference Committee requested the release of Dortch from the Pacific Union and Northern California Conference to become the manager of the Philippine Publishing House (PPH) in Manila, Philippines.<sup>8</sup> The Dortch family was warmly welcomed by the Far Eastern Division during their arrival in the Philippines.<sup>9</sup> While working in PPH, he had the opportunity to visit the office of the Philippine president, Ramon Magsaysay, and personally gave him a copy of the book *The Great Controversy*. While in the Philippines, Dortch worked with Elders J. D. Cristobal, P. H. Romulo, E. W. Dunbar, and W. J. Hackett.<sup>10</sup> However, the Dortch family did not remain in the Philippines for long.

On September 15, 1955, V. D. Dortch was authorized for a permanent return to the United States as requested by the Far Eastern Division.<sup>11</sup> In October 1955 he was invited to manage the Boulder Sanitarium Health Food Store in Dallas, Texas, as voted on October 20, 1955, by the North American Division Committee on Administration during its 72<sup>nd</sup> meeting.<sup>12</sup> Because of his sincerity and faithfulness to his work, he was called to Porter Sanitarium to be an assistant manager on February 2, 1956.<sup>13</sup>

The North American Division Committee on Administration approved Dortch's calling by the Atlantic Union to serve as an administrator of the New England Sanitarium on August 15, 1957.<sup>14</sup> Dortch was seen to be very active in performing his work. As an administrator, he supported programs launched by the sanitarium such as the tree-planting project for which he planted the first tree.<sup>15</sup> He also continued the sanitarium's practice of

hosting a potluck and a night of celebration as a tribute to over 300 dedicated workers and volunteers. The employees were given recognition and awards for serving the institution from five to forty years. This event was happily received by the employees.<sup>16</sup> In his annual report, he cited the developments, needs, and vision of the sanitarium.<sup>17</sup> On May 8, 1960, during the National Hospital Day, the New England Sanitarium and Hospital hosted an open house showcasing its work and accomplishments. Its aim was to create awareness of its services among the people it served and to recruit new employees.<sup>18</sup>

On November 2, 1961, a call to serve as the manager of the Ventura Estates in the Southern California Conference was approved by the North American Division releasing Dortch from his service to the New England Sanitarium.<sup>19</sup> In September 1975, he was chosen as the director of budget and cost control at the Loma Linda University Medical Center.<sup>20</sup> As the director of the Medical Center, he accomplished his work faithfully and with integrity.

## Later Life

Dortch showed a spirit of dedication in serving the Lord. He was energetic and sincere while working in various capacities. He died on November 25, 1996, at the age of 76.<sup>21</sup>

## Contribution

V. D. Dortch served in various administrative capacities in the publishing ministry, hospitals, food service, and others. As a certified public accountant<sup>22</sup> and manager, he helped the many business institutions of the Adventist organization to flourish. His remarkable dedication and a missionary spirit allowed him to reach out to the Philippine president and other significant individuals in the history of the world through the printed ministry and other media. He served his Master with happiness despite challenges along the way, but he persistently moved on as a leader.

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## NOTES

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