noise removed and header inserted-Edited Edition

Q: This is Kandy Dipprey, Mildred Davis, and Barbara Glasscock. Today is Thursday, January 23rd, 2014. We are interviewing, at 11:00 a.m., Mrs. Esther Weir. The interview is taking place in the home of Esther Weir at 2201 Leander Road, Georgetown, Texas. This interview is being conducted by the Williamson County Historical Commission, and is a part of the oral history project.

Q: Esther, what year did you move to Georgetown?

A: Nineteen thirty-eight. Thirty-eight.

Q: And what year did you begin teaching at Southwestern?

A: That year I moved here to teach at Southwestern.

Q: And who was the president at that time?

A: Dr. John Berglund.

Q: What subjects did you teach at Southwestern?

A: I taught physical education. I taught at least one class in theory, health -- it was health, physical education, and recreation, at the time. And I can't remember whether I ever taught one purely in recreation, but I did a lot of classes in recreation because I -- it was one of my interests. My classroom was in the Add building. And that

space is still there, but it is used by about four different offices. At the time I taught there, it was lower than the entrance, the back entrance to the Cullen building, it's called now. ADD building is called Cullen building. And you went in the back door and then stepped down about six steps down to a floor level that was so that the top was fairly high. I don't remember if there was a basketball net in there. I had 10 dumbbells for equipment. The room and 10 dumbbells. And maybe I shouldn't tell that, but it is true. And the equipment, and the facilities in Southwestern for physical education, now called kinesiology, today is quite different. That's why I made a point of telling that this was inside the Add building, and it had a stage right at the level of the hall, outside hall, and a little dressing room back behind. And that was the facility.

There was a man hired at that time to teach men's physical education, and he didn't have any space at all. So he made himself a room where -- well, it used to be the boiler room, where the heater was. And he got equipment, and he h did a full schedule of athletics at Southwestern outside for the next two years or three years. And I had told my family that this man came at the time that I did, and I was

totally stymied by no space, and no equipment. But he went on and got what he needed, and taught, and had practically every boy in school on an athletic team of some kind. Which wasn't so bad, because there weren't very many boys in school. There was a football team at the time, but there weren't very many other boys. But he had them all playing, and I told my family that this man is going to organize athletics in the whole state of Texas before he retired. And it was Ray Williams, and he did organize the entire state of Texas. He was the athletic chairman of the interscholastic league when he came back from the Navy, and a Georgetown boy finally got that job. And then, now the person also has Georgetown connections. And practically everybody who has been the chairman of the interscholastic league was connected to Georgetown. (laughter)

Q: What was the enrollment of Southwestern at that time?

A: It was approximately 300. That's as well as I can remember.

A: That, including boys and girls. Mostly girls.

Q: What other difficulties did you face at the beginning of your teaching career at Southwestern?

A: Besides not having any space to teach, and not having any equipment? I think that pretty well covers it. And I

don't know, I was very fond of the people, I lived in the dormitory. That was required at first. But then after --

Q: For all the teachers?

A: ALL the Single teachers.

A: There weren't but two women single teachers. They did not require that of men, of course. Iola Bowden was here, and she was not required. She was a piano teacher, and she taught piano to Ellsworth Peterson.

A: He told me she was the best piano teacher he ran across ever. And, you know, she started that Negro fine arts.

A: Paulette told me yesterday that she was in that school, that fine arts school. And that that's where she learned to play the piano. And she played the piano Monday for the group that went down to the church -- marched down to the church. And she was telling me about it.

Q: How many years did you teach at Southwestern, total about?

A: That is a very difficult question. And the reason is that, I'm going to give you all a copy of this timeline. I taught from '38 to '41, and I married in 1941, and at that time, married women did not teach. Iola married later, and continued to teach, but she did not teach at Southwestern. She moved to another school. There were two other women on the faculty. And they -- I think they did not teach after

they married, but as soon as the war came along, then married women got a chance to work. So we've been working ever since.

Q: So the war had an impact, before the war you couldn't teach women didn't work out of the home?

A: That's right. Well, married women.

A: Single women, of course, could work. And widows could work. And maybe there were other exceptions. The servant type work -- service type work could be done by married women. But just regular jobs were men's jobs. But then when the men went to war, the women began to be welders, they -- the songs were about Rosie the welder and things like that.

Q: Yeah. They had to fill in. Was there anything else about the years you taught that you remember.

A: OK, the years I taught, I have it down . And I'll give it to you, I'll give you a copy of it later. I married in '41, Mike was born in '43. In August of '43 was when the Navy unit came. And I happened to have a math major, and I had said that on my transcript when I turned it in to teach, to begin with. And so, Bill Finch, Richard Finch's father, was president at the time. And he went through all the transcripts of everybody that -- on the faculty. And he called me at nine o'clock in the morning, and he said,

"Your first math class started at eight o'clock, and the second one is getting ready to start right now. Please hurry to teach." I said, "I didn't know I was going to teach." He said, "Well you are." I had -- so that was -- wait a minute. That was in August of 1943. That's -- that's what I said when I talked to Mike, that I didn't have things to hook time to. That's why I spent some time looking these dates up, so I'd have them. And I'm going to give them to you so you won't have to get it off of there. In August of -- yeah, I started in the Navy unit. They had math five days a week for an hour, and I had 50 guys in my class, and I had three classes in a row, an 8:00, a 9:00, and a 10:00. And then, at eleven o'clock, they went to a roll call or something like that. Because Southwestern had chapel, and the few students there who were Southwestern students went to chapel, and the Navy unit had a meeting of some kind. And so, they only had two hours, or they had three hours, but it was a one hour course. So they had three five hour courses, and one three hour course. That's 18 hours, and that's what I taught. Every semester, I taught the Navy unit, I taught 18 hours. I had a six month old child to begin with. Course, he got to be two before I quit. But they had three terms a year. So I taught three

-- I taught four terms, which academically counted as two years. So academically --

Q: So the Navy unit, that's guys that were going to war, or in the war? Or why did they call it the Navy unit?

A: They were already in the Navy. And they were assigned to Southwestern as their assignment.

Q: They had those barracks, didn't they? I remember the barracks.

A: Well they had barracks for classes, but they stayed in LK, in Laura Kirk .

Q: I thought that's where they lived.

A: They lived in the hall -- well, they -- some of them did live in the barracks, I think. But most of them lived in that building, or in LK. It was three stories, and they put bunks in the rooms, they crowded it like crazy. And -- but they had access to the gym, and the -- we couldn't, the girls in physical education couldn't get in the gym. Because the men had it. That was all right. I wasn't teaching physical education anyway, I was teaching math. But I did switch over to, in August of '45, I switched over -- well, I didn't teach at the end of '44, because Laura was born in March of '45. So I quit before she was born, but not long. All of this was very difficult for me to dig up, because it was so spotted. But then I went back to

teaching when -- in '45, she was born. In March of '45, and I went back in the fall of '45 to teach physical education again. So, the Navy unit may have been gone by then. But it may not have been. Yeah, I think it must have been gone. It took me a long time to figure out whether, in '45, I went back into physical education or I went back in math. But I don't think I went back in math. I may have taught one math course to accommodate them one time. A course in analytic geometry. Anyway, so '45 and '46, I think was, I taught a year and a half. The Navy unit, I taught two -- what amounted to two years, and then this was a year and a half. And then I went back in September of '53, I'm going to give you all this in writing, I taught in September of '53, and taught until May of '61. And I think that amounted to 15 years. But I'm not really sure. But that's about 15 years. I had 17 years in all on the college level. And I taught one year at Southwest Texas. Wasn't very pleased with that, it's a long commute, and Doc was very ill. So, I didn't do a good job, and I didn't like being there because of circumstances. And then, I had 17 years of -- that made it 16, and I don't know. So maybe I taught at Southwestern for 16 years. And I taught on the high school level for 17 years, I know. So that amounted for --

Q: Did you teach at different schools, or just in this area?

A: Yes. When I first got a master's degree, I taught in South Carolina, in high school. And then, we moved out here to the house, all of us, and the house caught on fire, burned. And we had to move back to the big house, and we also needed to rebuild this one. So I got a job at the high school here, taught at the high school for three years.

Q: Was that in the '50s, or...?

A: Yes.

A: I vaguely remember it now.

A: Well, we had a basketball team. And Cookie Baron was the star of the basketball team. And Cookie Baron has attained a lot of fame in athletics. And she was really good. And I was -- I didn't coach them because I didn't know anything about it, but the -- were you all in school when Mr. Williams was principal? Well, he came to me and asked me to have this basketball team, and I said I don't know how to coach a basketball team. He said, "I'll coach the team, but you have to take the credit for it."

(laughter)

A: "And you have to be there, you have to be there all the time." And so, I said "OK, I'll do that." And he was excellent. I mean he took those six girls, and he taught them how to play basketball. And we came close to winning

state two different years. We didn't do it because of some stupid things that I did, but the girls think they didn't do it because they didn't win it. I thought I didn't do it. Anyway, they -- we had a lot of fun with it. And there were just about eight girls on the squad. Several of them had moved into Georgetown High School from Walburg. And they had been playing basketball since they were born.

A: So, my -- I always put it down as 16 years of teaching at Southwestern.

Q: What was the most difficult situation -- well this is probably that you didn't have any equipment at Southwestern during your time at Southwestern, were there any other things you had to confront while teaching there? Different situations that you can --

A: Well there were a number of situational problems that arose. I was thinking the other day that we -- I shared the gym, but I had the part closest to the girl's dormitory, and the boys had the other part. And it seemed like, to me, they had more than I had. And there were more of them, there were more faculty members for them, because they had teams that had to be coached. And I didn't have any --

Q: The girls didn't have any basketball --

A: Well they had intermurals.

A: Yeah. Laura used to love it, because I went at about 10 o'clock at night, and I had to take her, and she just had a ball. She sat in those bleachers and watched those girls play. She just thought that was wonderful. I thought it was an imposition, but --

A: I mean, the intermission, I mean I did the intermurals for the girls, and we got the gym at 10 o'clock.

Q: Oh wow.

Q: Probably after the boys played.

A: Yeah.

Q: Interesting.

Q: Ten o'clock at night.

A: I know. So it was really the most inconvenient thing was that we were second-rate. But then, you know, that wasn't particularly unusual.

Q: Now you told us a little bit about the war years affecting Southwestern, about the Navy base and all. Was there anything else you can remember about, during the war years, that happened? That affected your teaching, or your family life?

A: Well, you know when they first -- when the Navy unit first came in, Southwestern could use the Navy unit in their football team. And that's why Southwestern had such an

outstanding football team. They had the entire [Baylor?] line, were members of the Navy unit. And the backfield came from the University of Texas.

Q: Oh my goodness. Well I think -- didn't they play the University of Texas at that time? It seemed like somebody told me that they used to play the University of Texas.

A: Yeah. Well, because Southwestern had two renaissances in sports. They had one way back when Southwestern was new, and there weren't many colleges in Texas. And they played Texas then, but when the Texas backfield went to Southwestern and the Navy unit, and the -- the line went from Baylor, then they played one time in Austin, in the stadium. The original stadium, not the elongated skyscraper.

Q: OK. In what way are things different at Southwestern today compared to when you first began your teaching career there?

A: Well, the plan doesn't look anything like the Southwestern of 1938. The buildings are beautiful, they are kept up, they look great. I was thinking the other day that the back part of my office was a mess, and I never did get in there with a broom and a mop, like some people did when they got -- when they found themselves in a dirty, filthy situation. I just turned my head and went the other way.

And -- but I think the guys used every bit of theirs, so they kept theirs up. And I didn't, because that wasn't --

Q: Just how things are different today at Southwestern than when you started.

A: Oh, the plan, to begin with. And then, the relationship between the faculty and the administration I think is entirely different. Especially recently, that when Jack Schrumn was here, he had a lot of problems with the faculty, in that when times got really, really bad, Southwestern lost a lot of its endowment. A lot, and they simply could not meet the -- the administrative problems that the faculty members needed and wanted. They had hired excellent young scholars, young PhDs who were actually interested in providing an education for the kids, and then they introduced this plan or procedure that I think I'll think of the name of it, (inaudible).

A: Yeah. Where students are encouraged to take a subject and run with it, and do -- learn all they possibly can. This is a PhD-type approach. Any subject is worth investigating. And if they can find the subject that has an appeal, then they can go with it. And they can go all over the world with it. When these 300 students were here in 1938, I don't think there were more than two girls in that whole bunch who could have afforded to go to Europe.

And those two girls were very modest about it. There were a few girls along the way who were wealthy girls, and they encouraged more. When Dr. Score became president, which happened during my first term at Southwestern, my first time I guess you'd say, on year three, Dr. Score became president, and he brought a lot of money with him. He had been the minister of a very wealthy church in Houston with a lot of very wealthy people, and he told them how important Southwestern was, and they began to get Houston kids to come to Southwestern. Houston kids loved Southwestern, boys and girls. Because it was not Houston temperature. It was in the country, it had trees, it had fish in the stream that you could walk to from your room in the -- at Southwestern, and fish. All those things really appealed to those kids who came in who were your age, and just a little younger. And what they needed when they got here, and by then, I wasn't even working anymore, what they needed, or I guess I was, too, but I was working on the public school level. What they needed when they got here was a place to walk, to roam, and I told them come on, you know, they could sit on my porch, they could study out here. They loved to come out here and study. And they still come, and they bring their food and their -- they brought their children, and now they bring their

grandchildren. And these are friends that Mike and Laura hardly knew. Mike had gone off to school, and when Mike left to go to school, we didn't know, but he didn't ever come back to stay here again. He said, he told it by saying that when he left to go to college, that I moved his clothes out of the house. And I never did let him bring them back in. I don't think that's true, but I've heard it so often that it's about to convince me that it -- OK, what's the next question?

Q: OK. What do you recall about what was taking place in Williamson County during the time that you were at Southwestern, other than the war?

A: Well, Southwestern and Georgetown had an off and on relationship with one another. Georgetown was totally responsible for putting Southwestern in Georgetown. They got a committee, and they went to the Methodist church, and they said, we need this school here. And there were three little schools; I used to remember the name of them. Rutherford was one of them. And I don't remember what -- . And I don't remember the other one just off-hand. And three different places, and the Methodist church combined them all and put them here. And Southwestern had a kind of interesting early history, which we heard a lot when we -- when I was teaching here, especially at first, because when

I first started here, Southwestern was coming out of the Depression, and it was a real depression to Southwestern. And they allowed students to pay tuition in barter, food and different things that they might need. And -- but the fact that they did not get paid at all, they got paid in tokens, which they could use later, but they ate -- all the families ate in the dormitory, all their meals, and then received these tokens for salary, which they were redeemed later. And they're not --

Q: So if you had children, you could bring them to the dorm with you and your whole family ate all three meals in the dorm?

A: Yes, yeah.

Q: And that was part of your pay for working?

A: That was, yeah, that was along with the pay. And they did that for several years. The faculty members all lived right there by Southwestern at that time, where the Episcopal Church is, there were two or three, four houses there that -- where faculty members lived. And so it was real easy to go across the street to breakfast, and lunch, and dinner. And so, Southwestern became fairly affluent, and had a reputation for being a rich kids' school, which it never was a rich kids' school. But, a lot of people thought it was. And when I first came, the -- and you see,

when I first came, it was what, five or six years before Laura was born, so to put it in a perspective of your lives, the salaries were very, very low. But the next group that came in and Dr. Score came in, they raised the salaries a whole lot. And then they continued to raise the salaries, but then they hired faculty members and put them on a scale to get an increase in salary each year, and a promotion, or they had to leave. They got -- they either got on tenure or they had to leave. And that seemed to not apply to me, except that the little times that I was here were little -- a few years here, a few years here. And so, I started at the bottom every time, and got up, worked up a little ways, and then quit again. OK, differences. All those buildings, which because I said, the physical plan itself, and the faculty was so much better educated. I don't think they hired anybody who didn't have a PhD. And I didn't have a PhD, but I -- they kept me on because they couldn't find anybody that would take that job. (laughter) Under the circumstances.

Q: Are any of the buildings the same? Still the same? Still standing?

A: No, no. That -- the gym that I started working in was located sort of halfway between the present physical education building and the chapel. But closer to the

center of the campus. And it was a nice floor, it was one long building, and it had a real good basketball floor. I always thought that the perfect gym had a good floor to be worn out regularly and replaced every few years, but I don't think they thought that, so they wouldn't let people come in the gym on muddy days, on rainy days, and it rained a lot in that -- those few years, those first years that I lived in Georgetown. And so we couldn't go in on the floor. And that building was still new, and it had a swimming pool behind it. And it was still new when they tore it down and built the one they've got there now. And I thought oh, you know, why do they keep tearing down these good buildings, and building -- but they were building super buildings. And they're tearing down one now and rebuilding -- or maybe they've already finished rebuilding the science building. And it was new a long time ago, and --

Q: Was the chapel there?

A: The chapel was built -- I think Dr. Score was responsible for having the chapel built there. From the very beginning, they were talking about the dream of the Southwestern campus. And it was to take all the streets -- so you could drive right into the center, you could drive right up to the front door of the chapel, on the street,

with curbs and gutters, and everything. And the same thing about the gym. It was right behind that building that's there now. And they were talking about not having any roads on the campus. So, they finally got the chapel, and when they got the chapel, they closed up all the roads. Which made some of us pretty peeved. Because we had to walk too far.

A: So the staff was so different, so improved. And the buildings were so improved. Now what else? I guess the student body increased every year after that.

Q: Don't they have a maximum number of students that they take now? Or is that just --

A: I think.

Q: Like 1,200 or 1,300?

A: I think 1,200. I've heard, but I imagine they would take a few extras if they -- if circumstances were the same. What's the next question?

Q: Are there any -- do you remember any particular historical events that might have taken place during your time that you were teaching? Other than the war?

A: Oh sure, sure. Lyndon Johnson visited frequently.

Q: He would come to Southwestern?

A: What?

Q: Lyndon Johnson came to Southwestern?

A: Yes. He visited Southwestern prior to his going into the Senate, even. When he was still down here, and when all of Texas was Democratic. It all became Republican. And he -- when he was president, he was still Democratic. And he had a lot of influence, he got -- he may have been influential in getting the Navy unit here. I think maybe he was. I was just reading one of the references that I have here is a book that Bill Jones wrote. Bill Jones is still alive, and lives over there in that neighborhood. And his wife's named Carol, and they're not as old as I am. So I can remember them, but I remember when Bill came to teach. But when he retired from teaching, he was hired to write a book about -- the history book about Southwestern. Previously, Ralph Jones had written a history of Southwestern as his PhD thesis in the history department of the University of Texas. And -- but that, the administration and the board of governors -- that's not what it's called.

Q: Regents.

A: What?

Q: The board of regents.

A: No, it's not even called regents.

Q: Board of directors, maybe.

A: It's not board of directors, but it's --

Q: Similar to that.

A: And it's not board of education. It's -- but it is board of something. And they really do direct the process or education at Southwestern. In recent years, they have sort of had a turnover. And there -- to begin with, there was a lot of East Texas money in the board of directors. A lot of individuals who were from East Texas. Mainly I guess, mainly I guess they were from gas people. From oil people who lived around Tyler, and Livingston, and there. And were fairly narrow-minded in what they thought education should be. But gradually, the staff changed, the members of that board of education became much more liberal-minded about things. Things at Southwestern, morals and mores changed considerably along in there. And you say historical things. There was one president who really got going on getting fine speakers to come to Southwestern and stay a week or two, and be a part of the student body. And some of these were extremely interesting people that provided us with a lot of entertainment. Jack Dempsey was here. Yeah, just came to talk. Who was -- *Bring Him Back Alive*, that historical person was here for a week. And met everybody, met all the people in town, and all of that. All of the events, the things that were going on, well, one of the things that we -- that happened at Southwestern was that Iola Bowden started this Negro fine arts school. And

all that, Iola told me in class yesterday that she played the piano for the march when it got to the church. And she said, "You know, Miss Bowden taught me how to play the piano in -- when Southwestern had the Negro fine arts school. And it was such a great thing for us, because it taught us all music." There was one guy, one little black boy, who had a beautiful singing voice, and Iola Bowden sort of took him under her wing, or maybe Ellsworth, I don't -- Ellsworth was a student at the time. And he went to Southwestern, and all the students knew he was in Southwestern. No other black student had ever been to Southwestern before. Or to any of the other colleges, for that matter, around here, in the Bible Belt, which was where we were.

Q: Do you remember what year that was?

A: No, but when you graduated, the whole congregation stood up, and it screamed and applauded.

Q: And he was the first black person to graduate from Southwestern?

A: And he was the only black one in school for those four years. And maybe for the next two, I don't know. But after that, then there were many more. But that was a historic event that nobody knew about.

Q: And it sort of changed the --

A: It changed -- well the students were ready to do it. It was the faculty and staff that -- and the administration, and the powers that be that weren't ready for it.

A: But the students -- and because the students wanted him in school, they protected him. And they didn't let anybody see him. I didn't even see him, and I was teaching at the time. So, it was prior to '61 when it was -- oh, he made the keynote speech at the dinner Monday night. He has been the director of music for the Dallas public schools ever since he graduated from college. He's been high -- well he didn't start off as the director, but he started off as a music teacher in the public schools in Dallas. And he got to be the director of music in a hurry. Where he learned his music outside of Iola Bowden, I don't know. But he did. Anyway.

Q: That's interesting.

A: See what else. I'm answering the question, what things happened that were -- who were the historical --

Q: Historical events.

Q: That was pretty historical. The first black person that graduated from Southwestern.

A: Yes, and Southwestern had its 100th anniversary, and we had a big celebration. And I can't remember what year that

was. It seems like to me, that was about '41. It may have been some -- yeah, (inaudible) been 1841.

Q: I don't know, that sign has the date on it.

Q: That's just what I was trying -- was it 1848, or?

Q: Maybe that's it.

A: Maybe it was.

A: Maybe it was '48. Anyway, a big celebration for that, and

A: Yeah, a lot of people came from all over the state. A lot of important people came to Southwestern, and they were available to the students. That was the whole key. That was the way they were asked to come, to be with the students. And that was the way they were. OK.

Q: What are some of the awards and honors you received while teaching at Southwestern?

A: State that again.

Q: What are some of the awards and honors you have received while teaching at Southwestern, or after your tenure at Southwestern?

A: That I have received?

Q: That you have received, yes.

A: Oh heavens. (laughter)

Q: There's a scholarship there named in your honor.

A: What?

Q: Isn't there a scholarship in your honor?

A: Oh yeah. But that's very recent.

Q: Right, but even recently.

A: Yeah. Oh, that was my 90th birthday, was given a fellowship -- a grant for a scholarship at Southwestern. And it grew very rapidly. What does that say?

Q: It says Esther M. Weir Fund established at Southwestern.

A: Well --

Q: It was your 95th birthday. That was --

A: Ninety-fifth? Oh, well that was just two years ago. I was thinking it was the 90th. Well good, but it's grown so fast. And I've been so stunned, but the other thing is, the economy has grown very fast, didn't it? And they invested that, and so it just blossomed. But I was stunned, I thought only, you know, really important people got those.

Q: You are important.

A: So I got to be a real important people, because I got the scholarship. No, I have had so many real fine honors, the -- I had the chamber of commerce most valuable citizen one year. And I can't remember what year that was.

Q: Oh, the years don't make any difference.

A: It's what?

Q: I said the year doesn't make any difference. It's the honor.

A: I -- yeah. I had the Chisholm Trail most valuable citizen one year. Those things, you know, are really important to me.

A: I didn't believe them, and I still don't, but I liked them anyway. OK, go ahead.

Q: OK. And to wind up, are there any other stories or special memories you'd like to share with us?

A: Let me look at this and see if I had any . Well you knew that the Southwestern -- I told you that the Southwestern men won the Sun Bowl in El Paso that year that the Navy unit came in with all those good football players out of all those other places. And that was a lot of fun -- that was fun. Doc, my husband, went to Southwestern. His brother, just older than he, and they both graduated from Southwestern. And their mother graduated from Southwestern. And Doc's younger sister, just younger than he, graduated from Southwestern. And Mike's two children graduated from Southwestern. So, we in our family have a pretty good legacy at Southwestern. (pause) OK, I don't have any more.

Q: Well, we want to thank you Esther for your time. For sharing with us all your memories.

A: I had fun doing it.

Q: Good.

A: And of course, I have fun seeing you all again.

Q: A little reunion for us.

Q: I know.

END OF AUDIO FILE

Southwestern

GIVING

Esther M. Weir Fund Established at Southwestern

Fund endowed in honor of long-time Southwestern friend's 95th birthday.

1 of 23

Esther Weir at her surprise birthday party on March 19, 2011.

Esther Weir has been in Georgetown for more than 70 years. Since her arrival in 1938, she has seen the incredible growth of the City of Georgetown, and has made her mark on that growth, receiving countless awards for her extensive contributions to the University and the community. Esther's deep Georgetown roots and wide-ranging activities formed her fearless personality and her can-do attitude—her influence endures at Southwestern and in the city to this day.

Esther was 22 years old when she was offered a teaching position at Southwestern University. For more than 17 years, she taught a wide variety of physical education classes and was a favorite teacher among students. She and her husband, A.C. "Doc" Weir, also taught horseback riding at their ranch to Southwestern students during and after her tenure on the faculty. The couple's philosophy of hospitality was, "If you enjoy it, please come out to the ranch and make yourself at home." Thus began Esther's reputation for generosity, know-how and friendliness. Weir Ranch quickly became a student respite and faculty gathering place. The Weirs loved having people come out to the ranch, especially college students. Now the grandchildren of the students the Weirs originally welcomed onto the ranch come to visit and the legacy continues.

Esther "retired" in the late 1970s, after teaching for 17 years both at Southwestern and in the Georgetown public schools. This freed her to work tirelessly in the community. Esther's many contributions include revamping the state's physical education curriculum, editing Georgetown history books, pitching in to revitalize downtown, helping to create the Christmas Stroll and Mayfair, and serving as the first woman on the original committee that pushed for better recreation opportunities in Georgetown. She has served in many capacities for the Georgetown Heritage Society, Downtown Georgetown Association, and Chamber of Commerce board of directors. Esther has said that she was involved in the community because it is where her family lived, and it was her job to assist in any way she could.

Not surprisingly, when asked about these accomplishments, Esther is modest and lighthearted. But her accomplishments speak for themselves, are deserving of much praise and admiration. To honor the countless ways Esther has touched us all, her family began searching for a way to create a lasting legacy in celebration of her 95th birthday in March 2011. But what do you give the woman who has received so many awards and accolades? The family realized that a scholarship in her honor would embody many of Esther's values and accomplishments. Esther's family and closest friends launched this initiative and in true Weir fashion made it a great success! The **Esther M. Weir Fund** was established and kept a surprise until Esther's birthday party at Southwestern on March 19, when President Jake Schrum revealed the scholarship to Esther in front of a large crowd gathered to toast her 95th birthday.

Esther was all smiles as the announcement was made. She was poised and gracious to all involved. She later wrote a note to President Schrum expressing her thanks, saying, "Who could ever imagine that I would have a scholarship named for me? It's still hard to believe." Esther is truly deserving of this gift, which will shape the lives of future Southwestern students. Thanks to generous gifts from family and friends, the endowment will fund its first scholarship in fall 2011.

August, 1938

arrived in Georgetown
moved into L. K.
room + board

Classroom Rm 10
equipment- 10 dumbells
stage + small dressingroom

Rhea Williams
John Utley
about 300 students

had a football team
scholarships

April, 1941

married
A.C. "Doc" Weir
S.U. graduate
also
2 brothers
1 sister
mother
(no record)

August, 1943

Math in Navy Unit
Ad Bldg.
18 hrs. of math
50 students in class
graded papers
prepared grades
3 terms

1945-1946

P.E. in
West Gym
W.C. Finch
New Bldg.
West Gym
shared floortime
with men
supplies limited
physical Education

Sept, 1953/May 6

P.E. in
West Gym
W.C. Finch
West Gym

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