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LETTERS TO LORI WINS BEST REGIONAL NON-FICTION

Letters to Lori: The Family History and Stories of Opal Corn Myers—a heartwarming tale of passion, sacrifice, and endurance, recently won the Bronze Medal for Best Regional Non-Fiction in the 2008 Independent Publisher Book Awards. The awards were presented in Los Angeles, CA on May 30th.

Letters to Lori was written by Barbara League, a longtime friend of Opal Myers. “Opal and I first met in 1976, when my husband and I came back to Del Rio and the Old Fifteenth to revisit the original mission location of *Christy*. We remained friends until her death in 1991.”

Myers, who assisted Catherine Marshall in her research for her best-selling novel *Christy*, attended the mission school as a child. She earned a scholarship to attend high school at the Highland Institute near Jackson, KY. After attending one year at Milligan College in Johnson City, TN, Myers came back to her home community where she taught in several of its one-room schoolhouses.

It was in the late 1980s when Opal first began talking about wanting her family history and stories written down for her granddaughter. She was very concerned about the history becoming lost or distorted and her stories forgotten. It was important to Myers that her granddaughter Lori take pride in her heritage.

In this beautifully scripted letter to her granddaughter, teacher and mission worker Opal Myers leafs through the pages of her family’s history, and exposes the struggle of a mission striving for acceptance in a reluctant back-mountain community. Packed with her adventures as a one-room school teacher fighting poverty, as well as humorous anecdotes of the area’s memorable characters, the story reflects Opal’s humor and great love for her people, the mission, and its workers who changed her life.

When interviewed by League, Myers said, “If I could do one more big thing in my life—one more project—I would rebuild the mission. I would still like to have my life make a difference to somebody else, some other child. I had always dreamed of the mission being restored. Maybe it wouldn’t be like the mission had once been, but it would be used to help underprivileged or troubled children and families. I felt this so strongly that I considered it a calling from God.”

Myers was never able to rebuild the mission. “Through *Letters to Lori*, Opal’s dream has become my goal—to make a difference in the lives of the underprivileged and troubled.” The profits from League’s book are raising funds and awareness for Appalachian missions and well as other ministries. “I am thrilled that Opal’s life continues to make a difference in to the hurting. Through *Letters to Lori*, she is still fighting poverty, hunger, addiction and making a difference in the lives of children and adults.”

League has earned many enthusiastic endorsements from readers across the country such as the following from Pamela Guerrieri, Literary Judge (ECPA, Christy Awards, RWA), “Barbara League reminds us of the passion and dedication of missionaries around the world. Rich in history and culture, *Letters to Lori* is a testament to the faith that moves mountains through the life of Opal Myers”.

Lori Myers-Hammonds, Myers’ granddaughter, resides in Cleveland, TN. She graduated from Lee University with her Masters of Arts in Teaching and just completed her first year teaching the 5th grade at Waterville Community Elementary School. Her husband Seth is the Pharmacist in Charge at Moore & King Pharmacy. They attend Mt. Olive Church of God. Lori and Seth have a daughter Isabella Opal Hammonds and are expecting a boy in September.

Letters to Lori may be purchased online at www.LettersToLori.org. Barbara League will be speaking at ChristyFest which takes place in Townsend, TN June 18th – 22nd. Contact author at lmci@fuse.net.