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Easom, Horace (Education & Music Minister)

Music Ministers, Organists, and Education  
Ministers of First Baptist, Shelby

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### Charity and Children - Jan. 24, 1963 - Horace Easom

Unknown

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# CHARITY AND CHILDREN

THOMASVILLE, N. C., THURSDAY, JANUARY 24, 1963

NUMBER 29



Favorite Pastime—Horace Easom spends any spare time in his busy day reading at desk in his home.

'No. One Tar Heel Layman'

# Horace Easom, Twice Retired, Still Working Full Schedule

He has retired twice but still holds two regular jobs. His nights and weekends are filled months in advance with speaking and singing engagements, as he is much in demand throughout the state.

Who is this business tycoon and what is his business?

He is Horace Easom of Shelby and his varied career centers around the church. He ranks with the best among Southern Baptists as a church music and education director.

His many talents led him to several years of promotion and money raising and he topped off 40 years of denominational service with a stint as North Carolina Baptist Brotherhood secretary.

"I'm a musician, of course," Easom booms in a jovial voice when asked his vocation. "I came to see as a college youth that the Lord had a place for me and my voice and I yielded to His leading." He readily agrees that church education has also been his life and he sees the two as equally vital ministries.

Horace Easom is beyond doubt one of North Carolina Baptists' best known laymen. He has preached, sung or spoken in more churches than most people have visited.

For 25 years a common comment in Baptist circles was, "Get Horace Easom; he can do it." This included everything from music to program planning and from committee work to fund raising. He did it with ability, organizational skill and an extra measure of personal persuasion.

Easom's life has many highlights. Measured in terms of personal happiness he places at the top his 17 years

as music and education director at First Church, Shelby, during the pastorate of Dr. Zeno Wall.

This service was in two terms; 1928 to 1934, and 1936 to 1947.

Another high point was his two years (the missing link in his Shelby service) as educational director at First Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas, when Dr. George W. Truett was pastor.

Then there was the five year period, 1947 to 1952, when he led the Wake Forest College Enlargement Campaign. This was an effort to raise \$1½ million through the state's Baptist churches. He and his staff passed the goal with \$100,000 to spare.

In 1952 Easom became the first Brotherhood secretary for North Carolina Baptists. The men's organization was not well known and convention officials decided to tack on an added responsibility as Baptist Foundation secretary.

He used his organization and promotion genius to pack thousands of men into district and statewide Brotherhood rallies. In six years 1,400 churches had 50,000 men in Brotherhood.

In 1958 Easom retired, but promptly took a job as vice president and director of public relations for Union Trust Company, a chain of eight banks in Cleveland and Rutherford counties.

"This was my first work outside the church since I was a boy," he says. "I enjoyed every minute of it because it turned out that banking is just working with people." He retired again in 1961 but still keeps a full schedule.

A native of Smithfield, Easom

studied at Buies Creek Academy (now Campbell College) and Wake Forest College. A short career in journalism ended abruptly when he returned to school and spent his summers leading revivals for the late Fred N. Day Sr.

"He was a layman, a jeweler from Winston-Salem," says Easom. "He sent me and dozens more through college with offering received from the revivals."

After singing his way through World War I, and rising to sergeant in the infantry, Easom became director of education and music at Southside Church, Wilmington, in 1921. A year later he went in a similar role to First Church, Asheville, staying six years before his call to Shelby.

Mrs. Easom, the former Miss Margaret Stevens of Clinton, is the daughter of a country doctor there, the late Dr. John A. Stevens. Since their marriage in 1926 she has kept a scrapbook on her husband's travels and church work.

It bulges with folders and posters featuring Easom as director of music for revival meetings. Alongside are the preachers, including a "Who's Who" of Southern Baptists. Among them are R. G. Lee, George W. Truett, Ralph A. Herring, Theodore F. Adams, R. Paul Caudill, R. C. Campbell, Kyle Yates, J. Howard Williams, Zeno Wall, C. C. Warren.

Easom's first fund raising was for Gardner-Webb College in 1941, when he led an effort for a half million dollars for the school. The drive was a success and he came to be regarded as a money raising expert. Two years later he had a brief stint as acting president before Dr. Phil Elliott took the helm.

More recently he has served both Gardner-Webb and Wake Forest as

best known laymen. He has preached, sung or spoken in more churches than most people have visited.

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More recently he has served both Gardner-Webb and Wake Forest as trustee, becoming board vice chairman at the former. He is a deacon in First Church, Shelby; past moderator of Kings Mountain Association and former district governor of Kiwanis International.

The Easoms are doting grandparents to the two small children of their daughter and son-in-law, Dr. and Mrs. Robert B. Litton of Shelby.

In 1960 the Shelby Lions Club named Easom "Man of the Year." A few days later the Jaycees honored his son-in-law as "Young Man of the Year."

"Our real year for God's glory was 1930," says Easom. That was the time he and Dr. Wall preceded a 10 day revival meeting by organizing a week of prayer meetings in 161 homes. The special service closed with 217 additions to the church, most by conversion.

The twice retired Easom is now executive director of United Fund in Shelby and is in the employ of the Dover Textile interests in that city. He is director of music at Buffalo Baptist Church near Waco, leading the congregation in song each Sunday with the same fervor for which he is remembered by thousands of messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention in former years.



Familiar Pose—Thousands of Southern Baptists, in groups of a handful to 8,000 at a time, have lifted voice in song led by Horace Easom.