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IMMANUEL BIBLE FOUNDATION TO DEDICATE BELL AT BASE OF BROADVIEW MANSION TOWER

Special Guest Will Be Mary Winn, Widow of First Carillon at Bell Tower

NORMAL, Ill. – A 2,000-pound bell that once hung in the tower at Bloomington’s Second Presbyterian Church has found a new home at the base of the Broadview Mansion bell tower. Immanuel Bible Foundation invites the public to attend a bell dedication at 4 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 7, **in front of** the bell tower at Broadview Mansion, 1301 S. Fell Ave., Normal.

Construction of the 110-foot tall Broadview bell tower was completed in 1939 and dedicated on Sept. 29, 1940, by Margaret Van Leer in memory of her late husband Bird Van Leer who died in 1933. Originally the tower housed 10 bells. The largest, weighing 2,000 pounds, bore the inscription “Dedicated to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Bird Colladay Van Leer, 1867-1933, by his wife Margaret Langstaff Van Leer, 1939. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord. Come before his presence with singing.”

The bell that formerly rang at Second Presbyterian Church was removed when the church was demolished in 2004 to rebuild at the same site. Since the new church didn’t have a bell tower, it was eventually stored at Felmley Dickerson’s storage area. Now on loan to the Foundation, the bell was installed on a 4-by-4-foot display at the base of the Broadview bell tower earlier this spring.

Attending the bell dedication on Sept. 7 will be Mary Winn, 95, of Clinton, Iowa, whose husband, James Winn, was the first carillon at Broadview. James played the bells until his graduation from Illinois Wesleyan University in 1941. Mary graduated from IWU in 1943.

The Winns continued a friendship with Margaret Van Leer through the years and Mrs. Van Leer attending their wedding in 1943. Mrs. Van Leer last hosted the Winns at Broadview in 1948 and the women continued a letter-writing relationship for many years after.

At the dedication, appreciation also will be extended to the Meek family, Town of Normal and Second Presbyterian Church for their efforts in facilitating the placement of the bell and plaques in front of the bell tower.

The Mansion will host an open house after the bell dedication and Mrs. Winn will answer questions about her friendship with Mrs. Van Leer. Illinois Wesleyan University has invited Mrs. Winn to tour the campus on Friday before she returns to Iowa.

The bells at Broadview used to ring twice a day. They were removed in 1979 due to structural concerns regarding the tower and replaced with an audio system, which no longer operates.

The Immanuel Bible Foundation, which oversees the Broadview Mansion, seeks to enrich the community through faith and study, music and art, and historical preservation.

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