



DEREK BEIGH, THE PANTAGRAPH

Annette Klinzing, executive director of Immanuel Bible Foundation, poses with a bell once used by Second Presbyterian Church in Bloomington that now stands as a memorial on the grounds of Broadview Mansion, 1301 S. Fell Ave., Normal. It will be dedicated at 4 p.m. Sept. 7.

Mansion to dedicate historic bell

Church's former bell stands as a memorial at Broadview tower

DEREK BEIGH
dbeigh@pantagraph.com

NORMAL — To hear music from the bell tower at Broadview Mansion would take Mary Winn back to some of the best days of her life.

"I used to walk over there and stand by the fence and watch when Jim went across to the bell tower, then listen to the bells play, then watch him go back to the house," she said. "I wouldn't bother anyone, just stand by the fence and watch and listen. That's what you do when you're young and in love."

Love brought Mary and Jim Winn, the first musician to play those bells and later her husband, together in the shadow of

the historic bell tower — just as it led to the tower's construction and 1940 dedication by mansion owner Margaret Van Leer in honor of her late husband, Bird.

Winn, who attended that dedication, will return next week as Broadview dedicates a new bell, identical to the biggest one Jim — who passed away in 2007 — played from the carillon inside the tower nearly 80 years ago.

The new bell, which sits at the base of the tower, is the first on the property at 1301 S. Fell Ave., Normal, since the original bells were removed in 1979 for safety reasons after 40 years of proclaiming morning and afternoon for Bloomington-Normal.

"We couldn't imagine a better guest of honor," said Annette Klinzing, executive director of Immanuel Bible Foundation, which oversees the mansion. "Mary had a very fond and close relationship with Margaret."

Winn, now a 95-year-old resident of Clinton, Iowa, said she looks forward to speaking, taking questions and showing off photos, including from the 1940 dedication and from Jim's final visit to the tower in 2006 for his 65th college reunion. He and Mary met at and graduated from Illinois Wesleyan University.

The dedication, 4 p.m. Sept. 7 at the tower, will let the three organizations responsible for bringing the bell celebrate the finished project with the public.

Klinzing worked with the town of Normal and Second Presbyterian Church of Bloomington — which the Van Leers attended — to bring the church's former bell to the foot of Broadview's tower and build for it a concrete base with marble plating and twin plaques about its legacy.

Though plans fell through

for the bell to be refurbished, Klinzing still hopes to revitalize the tower. After the bells were removed, it was all but abandoned, but the carillon stands, decayed and surrounded by dust and crumbling brick.

"Our dream is to have music again coming from the tower. Many people in the community have called and said, 'We really miss it,'" said Klinzing. "But it's a very expensive process. ... If anyone is interested in learning about the bell tower or how they can help, they can contact me."

Winn still hopes she'll hear sweet sounds at Broadview once more.

"I'm sure this will bring back some memories of good years back there," she said of the dedication next week. "I always loved that bell tower."

Follow Derek Beigh on Twitter: @pg_beigh