



Firemen At Minshew Home

## Friends Help Ease The Loss

Small town people are good about turning out to help when a tragedy happens.

Belton and Mattie Lee Minshew experienced the destruction of their home by fire, and today their friends have helped locate a temporary home and furnishings to begin again.

"I watched them build our house — brick by brick," Mattie Lee sighed. "The workmen used to kid me by asking how many bricks they had laid that day!"

"I'd always say I didn't know. But, when you live next door to where workers are building the house you plan to live in the rest of your life, it's hard not to keep an eye out the window," Mattie Lee said.

Shortly after graduation from Kenansville High School, Mattie Lee married Belton Minshew and together they watched workmen build the home they lost January 21 to fire. — their home for 43 years.

"That's home to me," Mattie Lee said. "When we rebuild it will be in

that same spot. We want to rebuild as soon as possible, but we're settled in a nice warm house, thanks to our friends, and I know there's no push.

"I've not even looked at house plans," she continued. "I had no reason to before now; I thought I had the house I would spend the rest of my life in." The Minshew's home and personal belongings were estimated to be a 75 percent loss by Warsaw Fire Department officials. Firemen from Warsaw, Kenansville and Magnolia fire departments were called to the Minshew home about sunrise on what is being recorded as the coldest day in the history of our state and area.

As the Minshews watched, firemen battled blazes and water freezing before it could extinguish flames. Finally, air bags were brought from Kenansville to help control the fire because water froze on the house after being sprayed from hoses.

"Some of the firemen remarked that another few minutes and we

would have been gone," Mattie Lee explained they had been alarmed by a smoke detector in the house.

"I know those firemen will never really know how we appreciate what they did," she said. "My son, Kenny, is a fireman where he lives, and he said he'd never seen a group of more dedicated men. And, I think of how each one of them is a volunteer." Among the volunteers on the Warsaw Fire Department is Jimmy Creech, who helped organize the community efforts to assist the Minshews.

"Jimmy has been my main support," Mattie Lee said. "Not only is he my pastor, he's a good friend. He was right there to listen and comfort and help me have the strength to go through this all."

"And, out of it all, he's helped me see the blessings within the disaster," she said. Creech was one of many who came to the aid of the Minshews. Almost two weeks after the fire, Mattie Lee and Belton are beginning to organize the gifts of bed, bath and kitchen linens and articles. Food from the community still feeds the couple and salvaged articles like cross stitch have been reframed and hung to help make a house on Hill Street home for the Minshews.

"It's so hard to imagine what it would be like to lose everything," Carol Moore said. "I keep thinking about them. It's on everyone's mind, I think."

"When I first got there, my first impulse was to get her (Mattie Lee) something to wear," Carol said. "When we first started picking up stuff after the fire, it was all frozen. Items like dishes and small furnishings were collected by volunteers and taken to the Warsaw United Methodist Church to be cleaned. Volunteers worked more than two days cleaning items salvaged after the fire."

"It could have been me and my family," Carol said. "Helping them was just something I wanted to do. And, I wasn't alone."

"You didn't have to call anyone. It seemed like people just came and they all seemed to know what to do to help," Carol said. "Even today I don't feel like I have done anything special."

"I guess most of all, I wished, I could have felt some of the hurt for her," Carol said. "And, then maybe I'd feel I had done all I could. But, like everyone else, I did all I could to help them out of love for the couple."

Volunteers provided valuable assistance. Some of the assistance came from people who learned through their loss to fire in the past. Al and Jean Smith, who suffered a similar loss through a fire, assisted in the effort to help the Minshews.

"That's what it is, it's just like a death," Jean Smith said. "And, none can know what it's like. But we had been through the same experience with a fire and felt we knew what they were feeling."

"Since we had been through it, when different ones came to us wanting to do something, we could help give them a direction," she said.

"But unless you've been through a fire," Jean said, "you can't imagine or tell someone what it's like."

## JSTC Nursing Graduate Pursuing Career In Anesthesia

DeWayne Byrd, a 1981 graduate of James Sprunt Technical College's associate degree nursing program, has the distinction of being the youngest student ever to be admitted to the Durham County General Hospital school of anesthesia.

Byrd was admitted to the program in Sept. 1983 and is scheduled to graduate in May 1985. He is a native of Mount Olive.

After completing the ADN degree at James Sprunt, he went on to earn the B.S. degree in nursing from East Carolina University, graduating in May 1983.

Byrd explains his early acceptance at the school of anesthesia in this way:

"The school of anesthesia normally requires applicants to have had two years of clinical work experience after their graduation and licensing," he explained. "But since I received my R.N. license after graduating from James Sprunt, I was able to work at Pitt Memorial Hospital while I completed my B.S. and count that work experience toward the school of anesthesia's entry requirement. This is one way JSTC's program was a big advantage for me."

Byrd went on to say that the program was also helpful to him in completing the Bachelor of Science degree at ECU. "The two-year program at JSTC provides intensive training and practice in the clinical aspects of nursing. When I enrolled at ECU, I was able to receive advance placement through the junior year for all of the clinical training I had received at JSTC. Most of what I had to take were the general education courses."

The two-year program at the school of anesthesia will qualify Byrd as a certified Registered Nurse anesthetist, enabling him to work in all areas of patient anesthesia. He explained that the difference between an "anesthetist" and an "anesthesiologist" is that the anesthetist is a registered nurse who completes a two-year program at a school of anesthesia, whereas an anesthesiologist is an M.D. who completes a three-year residency in anesthesiology.

Like a physician, an anesthetist can specialize. Byrd is interested in working with children and hopes to get a fellowship at a children's hospital to specialize in children's anesthesia. He doesn't rule out attending medical school in the future, either.

"From working in the field, one thing I've learned is that medicine changes quickly; there are constantly new things to learn," he said.

Byrd speaks highly of the nursing program and instructors at JSTC. "From my own experience, I can say that students get a good education they need to be competent nurses. The emphasis is on clinical practice, and the exposure to different clinical areas is broader than in many other programs," he said.

"I give lots of credit to my instructors, too. Pam Williamson gave me my interest in pediatrics, and Gayle Weeks (director of the

Gifts, money and food continue to make way to the Minshews. Support came from all areas of Duplin and some adjoining counties, Mattie Lee pointed out gifts from people she did not know.

"We appreciate everything that everyone has done," Mattie Lee said. "And, I don't know how everyone could have been better to us."

"Just an example," she began to cry, "I received a \$100 check the other day from my graduating class. That was 40 years ago when I graduated from Kenansville High School in 1945. There were only 18 of us then, and a couple have died since."

"I don't know how I can ever really thank everyone," Mattie Lee said.

program), has been an encouragement and driving force over the years. She always had faith in my abilities and encouraged me to go on with my studies."

The associate degree in nursing

program is a two-year curriculum at JSTC. It prepares graduates to take the state board exam and to obtain the registered nurse license. In 1984, JSTC graduates achieved a 95 percent passing rate on the state boards.

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