

# A Tribute

Natalie Gordon

Timothy, St. Paul's "own son in the faith," is known to have served Paul in his official duties as an apostle and has also been called his secretary. The word "secretary" does not appear in the King James version of the Bible, but the word "secret" appears a number of times. A secretary is a "secretary." Secretaries know both the characteristics of marked excellence and the less superior qualities of their employers; they know "secrets" such as no one else can know. Perhaps Timothy could have shared with us little-known secrets about Paul. Most of the secrets known to a secretary can be shared as an inspiration to others. This is the case with me after many years of working closely with Dr. J. C. McPheeters. I am giving here briefly some of the important secrets I can reveal in tribute to my employer--"a giant from the Ozarks."

His faithfulness to the regular exercising of his body is no secret; he has repeatedly emphasized the benefits of his physical program orally and on the printed page.

I have frequently observed his willingness to do the special or routine task himself, even as he asks it of others. When he calls upon a group to make a gift to a cause he, himself, first gives to that cause. He is the exemplar of the one who never spares himself.

Another secret is that he has made it a rule of his life never to say an unkind word about his fellowmen. Even when he has seemingly been under persecution, he upholds his enemy in prayer and refrains from being critical.

His friends are aware of the many hours he spends in secret prayer, and I can witness to some of the remarkable answers to these prayers which have been his open reward. I stand firm in the knowledge that the fine seminary buildings, the promising growth of Asbury Seminary, and the spiritual blessings resting on the faculty, staff and student body would not be manifest without his toiling in prayer.

No one has a better opportunity to witness to the virtue of patience in an employer than a secretary. I want to thank Dr. McPheeters through this page for his exemplified witness of patience to myself and his co-workers.

Dr. McPheeters has poured out his soul and energy without ceasing in the cause and for the doctrines for which the Seminary stands, and has made no secret of his faithfulness in proclaiming the fundamental beliefs to which he is dedicated.

These are some of the secrets which I have observed and which I am privileged to put into these pages. It has been a high and rewarding privilege to serve Julian C. McPheeters as his personal secretary.