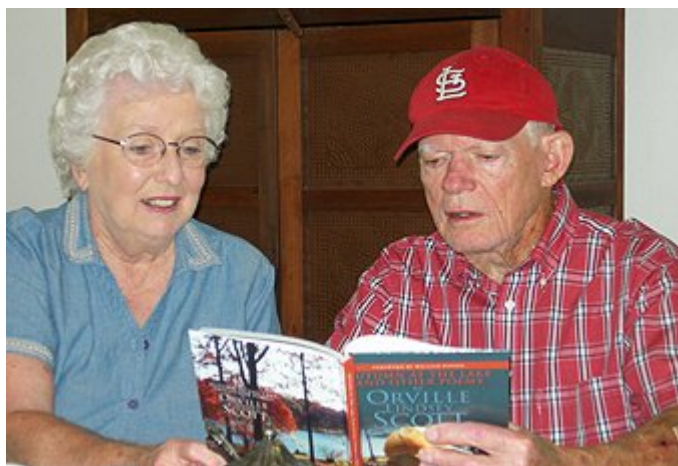


Book of poems a 'labor of love' for veteran Baptist writer

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GRAND SALINE—For Orville Scott, a 136-page self-published book of original poems represents a lifetime of precious memories, a testimony to God's goodness and a labor of love.

[*Autumn at the Lake and Other Poems*](#) features about 60 poems ranging from serious religious themes to whimsical verse.



Orville and Emma Jean Scott enjoy the family stories behind many of the poems and photos in *Autumn at the Lake and Other Poems*. (PHOTOS/Ken Camp)

Scott served four decades as a Baptist journalist, including a lengthy tenure as news director for the [Baptist General Convention of Texas](#). But long before he learned how to write a news story or human-interest feature, he developed an affinity for poetry.

"My mother loved poetry," he recalled. "She had the best scrapbook I ever saw, filled with poems she had clipped from newspapers all the way back to

1900."

As a child, he memorized poetry—often reading or reciting it to his younger brothers and sisters at bedtime. Teachers—first at his hometown of Carthage and later at Panola Junior College and the University of Texas—encouraged his love for the lyrical quality of language.

"It seems like every time in my life I came to a fork in the road, God put somebody there to help guide and encourage me," Scott said.

After he graduated with his journalism degree, Scott became managing editor of a trade journal. But he told a mentor, UT journalism professor DeWitt Reddick, he felt he was failing to fulfill God's purpose for his life.

Reddick told him he had just received a request from Lloyd Wright, public relations director for the BGCT, asking if he could recommend anyone as a press representative for the Baptist state convention. Reddick's recommendation subsequently led to Scott's long career in denominational communications.

Along the way, he wrote poems—often for family, friends and coworkers on special occasions, and sometimes simply because a particular scene or experience struck a chord that just seemed to call for a rhyme. Frequently, the printed program for the annual Texas Baptist Evangelism Conference featured a poem about that year's theme, each simply signed "O. Scott."

Before and after his retirement in 1996, friends told Scott he should publish a book of his poetry. While he dreamed of seeing his poems in a book, he questioned whether a publisher would find it commercially viable.

"A lot of people think rhyming poetry is passé—that it died with Longfellow," he said.

But Bill Pinson, BGCT executive director emeritus, and his longtime

executive assistant, Doris Tinker, convinced him and his wife, Emma Jean, they should not allow the dream to go unfulfilled.

The Scotts determined the book of poetry would be published, even if they had to finance it themselves. Realizing they needed help, Scott contacted a former coworker from the Baptist Building, Debbie Sheppard, now a freelance graphic designer.

"When we talked with Debbie about the job, she said, 'I'll take it.' We told her, 'We're going to pay you.' But she said: 'No way. This is a labor of love,'" Scott recalled.

Sheppard not only designed the book, filled mostly with original photos from the Scotts' family collection, but also helped them work with Christian Book Services/Carpenter's Son Publishing.

"We went through a file drawer with 50 years worth of material," Mrs. Scott said.

As *Autumn at the Lake and Other Poems* began to take shape, the Scotts tried to group the poems thematically and find photos—with Sheppard's guidance—to match the themes. Many of the poems and the accompanying photos have family stories behind them, Mrs. Scott noted, but they also tried to make them universally applicable.

"Where the poems were personal in nature, we tried to select ones that were adaptable—where anyone could put someone else's name in it and still find it meaningful," she said. "But there did come a point where we had to try to make sure each family member was represented and each grandchild was pictured the same number of times."

The manager of one local store has expressed his desire to see Scott's book distributed not only at his business, but also throughout the chain of which it is a part if the corporate headquarters agrees. Beyond that, Scott hopes a

few ministries close to his heart might be able to use the books in some way, whether they are sold or given away.

Mostly, Scott hopes the collected edition of his poems succeeds in doing what the ones he has given to so many people through the years have done—bring a bit of the joy of God's love into lives.

In the book's foreword, Pinson wrote: "Outstanding qualities of Orville's life, such as compassion, warmth and sincerity, have attracted a host of appreciative friends. He wrote in poetic terms that of all the works of the Master's art, 'the greatest to me is a caring heart.' Orville is indeed an example of the Master's art."

Autumn at the Lake and Other Poems by Orville Lindsey Scott is available through Amazon.com, from most booksellers or directly from the author at scott@grandsaline.com.