

## Memorial fund raises over \$9,000 for local church playground

By Nicole Skelton

Rita Everett's selfless love for the Children's Ministry at First Baptist Church Clinton continues to surround the playground and the ministry she cherished in the form of a new playground fence. The fence was constructed thanks to the donation of Rita's memorial fund, which was distributed by her husband, Jerald Everett, 74. Rita passed away at age 73 on March 10, 2018, due to a rare cancer in her abdominal lining. She taught four-year-old kindergarten at FBC Clinton for about twelve years. Her daughter, Sonya Everett Skelton, 50, said that those were "some of the happiest years of Rita's life."

Rita and Jerald have been members of FBC Clinton for forty-seven years. They moved to Clinton in 1971 and decided to join FBC Clinton after extensively visiting churches in the Clinton area. Once they settled at FBC, Rita's kindness and selflessness became fixtures in multiple ways throughout the church. Jerald said one of his sweetest memories of Rita was when she brought watermelons to all of the new members of the church shortly after they became members.

"She always wanted to make



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The First Baptist Church Clinton playground has a new fence, a memorial to Clintonian Rita Everett, who worked for years with the FBC children's ministry.

sure the new members felt welcome," said her husband.

Rita very much enjoyed her time with the kindergarten kids. One of her favorite things to do was to teach them how to make homemade play-dough, as she also did with her children at home. She also enjoyed letting the kids do "show-and-tell". Jerald said he remembers

seeing Rita watching after the kids as they played on the playground.

"That is what makes the donation to the playground so special," said Jerald. Jerald says he remembers seeing their own kids graduate from kindergarten, a memory that makes the donation even more personal, as he recalls the importance his wife placed on their own children's learning and

success, as well as the encouragement she provided to many other kids.

Jerald's donation has also inspired others to donate to the playground in Rita's memory.

A coworker of Jerald's, Libby Douglas, offered a donation to the fund. She said she felt inspired by Jerald's generosity, and she wanted

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