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Nora Kendall Noble, RN '57, Lt. Colonel, USAF (Retired) From: Voices (2012) by Dr. Evelyn Wicker

I am the youngest of two daughters born to Rev. Joseph Kendall and Dr. Aggie Nora Kendall-Simpson in Maxton, North Carolina, on August 5, 1936. At the age of fifteen years I was baptized by the late Reverend Wertz at her home church of Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church in Maxton. My fondest childhood memories include my church girls' leader, Mrs. Etta McLaughlin. She took us on Vacation Bible School day trips to Jones Lake in North Carolina. At the age of sixteen I was inspired by God to seek a career in the military.

On December 31, 1960, I joined the United States Air Force as a First Lieutenant at Dyess AFB in Abilene, Texas. Eventually I became a staff nurse and was later promoted to Captain and stationed between Wiesbaden, Germany, and the Bangor, Maine, AFB. I attended flight nursing school in San Antonio, Texas, and became a flight nurse at Rhein-Main Air Base near Frankfurt, Germany. Eventually I was promoted to Standardization Evaluation Flight Nurse, which made me responsible for administering flight-nurse qualification exams in the Air Force. I had an early promotion to Major and in 1968 I volunteered as a flight nurse in Vietnam. Following a one-and-a-half-year tour in Vietnam, I went to McGuire AFB in New Jersey and then to Andrews AFB in Maryland where I was again promoted, this time to charge nurse supervisor of the Outpatient Clinic. In 1976 I received the Bachelor of Science degree from the Air Force Institute of Technology via Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. Later I became a primary nurse practitioner and eventually was promoted to the military position of Lieutenant Colonel. Following this promotion I was sent to Denver, Colorado, as the Chief Nurse of the Air Force Reserves Nurses.

In Denver I was blessed with my most precious gift from God, the birth of my daughter, Celia Kendall, in 1981. Eventually I was promoted to full Colonel and was deployed to Elmendorf AFB in Anchorage, Alaska. In Alaska I was dual-hatted as the Alaskan Air Command Nurse and Chief Nurse of the Elmendorf Medical Center.

In June 1984 I left Alaska and was transferred to Newark, Ohio, as the first female base commander of the Newark Air Force Station. I retired there in 1987 after completing twenty-seven years of consecutive military service.

Upon my arrival in Newark I immediately joined the Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church. The Lord blessed me in Newark and I married the Widowed Reverend Dr. Charles W. Noble Sr., pastor of Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church on November 9, 1985. The wedding ceremony was a jubilant affair, with the sanctuary filled to capacity and the members delighted with how God has restored the church with a very talented and capable First Lady. I am the longest-serving first lady in the history of Shiloh.

Following my military career I co-founded with my husband the Par Excellence Learning Center and accepted the full-time position as its administrator. The center opened its doors despite the considerable odds on August 25, 1987. In 1988 I was able to get the new elementary school fully accredited in a year's time, which had never been done before in Ohio.

My community and civic roles have also been extensive from the time I first began public speaking in high school. I was a member of the Advisory Nursing Council of Central Ohio and a board member of the Private Industry Council. I served on the YWCA board of directors and was a member of the United Way Planning Division, a board member of the center of the Visually Impaired, a board member of the Licking County Aging Program, a board member of the SCORE program, and a past president of the Ohio State Medical Board.

I have had the opportunity to speak on the local, state, and national levels throughout the country. I have served as a Sunday School Teacher, a Hattie Jackson Guild Girl advisor, a Shiloh Women's Player Breakfast Leader, a choir member, a teacher, and an orator for the Eastern Union Missionary Baptist Association and the Ohio Baptist General Convention. I have also served as past chairman of the Baptist Pastor's Minister's Wives and Widows of Columbus and Vicinity Ministry.

I have also been privileged to be the first Black female Colonel to become the Command Chief Nurse of the Air Force Reserve Nurses, the first Black Air Force nurse to become the Command Nurse of the Alaskan Air Command with a dual hat, the first female to command the Newark AFB in Newark, Ohio, the only Black female in my Aeromedical Evacuation to be promoted to Major one year ahead of all my contemporaries, the first Black Air Force Colonel to be placed in the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame, and the first female in Ohio to establish a private fully accredited elementary school in nineteen months.

On May 11, 2003, I was awarded the Doctor of Humane Letters from Tri-County Bible College and Seminary in North Carolina. In 1990 I was inducted into the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame. I also received the Vietnam Service Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Air Force Longevity Award, the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, the Air Force Organizational Excellence Award, the Meritorious Service Medal with two oak-leaf clusters, and the Legion of Merit Award with one oak-leaf cluster. I hold a teaching certificate in grades K-8 from the state of Ohio. My husband and I were invited to the inauguration of President George H. W. Bush and were included in the President's "inner circle."

My faith has been my leading force in life. The most influential persons in my life have been my grandparents, the late Reverend Henry and Maggie McRae, and my late mother. My mother was my mentor and "my everything." My lifetime aspiration has been to motivate people to live a healthy and spiritual life. My faith has also been key in my twenty-five years as a cancer survivor. A favorite scripture for my daily living is "Cast all your cares upon Him; for He careth for you," 1 Peter 5:7.