

Albion Fellows Bacon's work 'unexplainable good'

ERROR

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In response to the tragedy at Columbine High School, Kevin McChesney of Colorado Springs, Colo., wrote a composition for handbell choirs entitled, "Make Me An Instrument of Thy Peace."

McChesney's goal was to have handbell choirs perform his piece on or near Easter and focus on the reality that "while there is random and unexplainable evil in the world, there is also random and unexplainable good."

community-minded activities of Albion Fellows Bacon in Evansville in the late 1800s and early 1900s, definitely fit under the category of "unexplainable good."

Mrs. Bacon, a well-to-do, "frail, gentle woman," managed to get more social legislation passed than any other person in Indiana. She was nationally known for her housing reforms and her work on behalf of children.

Albion Fellows Bacon wrote all the bills she sponsored and hand-carried them through the House and Senate. One of the bills she sponsored created the Indiana Department of Probation and its juvenile probation department. She also worked on child-labor laws and school-attendance laws.

She had a major role in establishing Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis in 1924; "a state hospital where all of Indiana's children could be treated." And, she chaired the Indiana

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Child Welfare Commission and helped organize the Child Welfare Association of Indiana.

In a lengthy newsclipping from the Evansville Courier & Press newspaper, I learned these facts about this lady who did not set out to be a reformer. My friend, Jackie Hanes, thought I would be interested in that article, so she enclosed it with her recent letter.

Jackie knew I had a been a volunteer at the Evansville women's abuse shelter that bears the name: Albion Fellows Bacon Center. At the women's abuse shelter I had seen a framed, faded newsclipping hanging on the wall. It was about Mrs. Bacon. The article was very brief and I don't remember seeing any listing of the "unexplainable good" she had done for the city.

The idea of a women's abuse shelter had not occurred to anyone back in Mrs. Bacon's day. In fact, women had not even gained the right to vote when Albion Fellows Bacon began her good works.

Mr. Bacon tolerated his wife's activities but she was considered a radical even by some of her friends. "It was laid on me," said

Mrs. Bacon, "to right these terrible wrongs," and she had "a determination to make things better if it took a lifetime."

Often she felt like she was just "one woman's voice." She would have welcomed more supporters, some teamwork. Tomorrow's Hope Child Advocacy House, located in Kokomo, is a modern-day example of teamwork; a concerted effort by a multi-disciplinary team to confront the "random and unexplainable evil in the world" that targets children.

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April 23, 1998, was the grand opening of the Tomorrow's Hope House, a little yellow house nestled in a friendly location; a place where young victims and their families can be assisted and supported in a less intrusive, less traumatic setting.

The multi-disciplinary team includes the Howard County Sheriff and the Kokomo Police departments, Child Protective Services, the Prosecutor's office, Victim Assistance, mental health, social organizations, and the medical community. Albion Fellows Bacon would have been proud to work with this team!

Dorothy Word is a retired teacher and Kokomo resident.