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From the desk of [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78229

27 August 1997

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Brian Lamb
% Book Notes
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Brian:

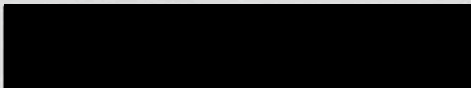
I Am an ardent fan of Book Notes & have purchased about $\frac{1}{2}$ the books you promote and feel guilty about not buying the rest.

I especially enjoyed Le Alan Jones, bought his book and wrote to him. I am enclosing a copy for you. Just thought you might like to read it.

Anyhow, Keep up the good work. I might go broke trying to keep up with all your books & you could be the death of me but I'll die happy!!

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

MEMORANDUM


San Antonio, Texas 78229

August 25, 1997

Mr. LeAlan Jones
c/o Scribner
1230 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020

Dear LeAlan:

I have just finished reading "Our America: Life and Death on the South Side of Chicago" by yourself and Lloyd Newman. What an extraordinary book. I also watched you on the television show, "Booknotes", being interviewed by Brian Lamb and I was really impressed with your poise and your answers. I told my friends that you are the most articulate 18 year old that I have ever heard. You were amazing.

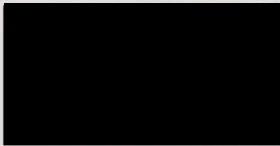
I am writing you this letter to encourage you to keep on with your studies and apply yourself rigorously to every task, as I am sure you will. You have talents that this country can use to get us out of holes we have put ourselves in, especially but not exclusively in regard to race.

You have not allowed your circumstances to determine your life style proving that deprivation does not necessarily lead to depravation. Your story reminded me of another one which took place some 150 years ago. A boy of 19 escaped from slavery where he was abased, abused, whipped with the cowhide and constantly told he was less than human, fit only for field work. He never believed these lies and under the most extraordinary and hazardous circumstances and against extreme odds he taught himself to read and write. In 1845, at the age of 27, he wrote his autobiography, "Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass."

To really see how good he was, read his Appendix (pp 71-76). Then compare this with William Lloyd Garrison's preface (pp VII-XIII) and Letter from Wendell Phillips (XV-XVII), both college graduates and literary celebrities. Douglass' writing, even at this juncture, is superior. Douglass continued to get better eventually publishing his own paper, the North Star.

LeAlan, I expect you to get better and better as well. Your initial effort is extraordinary but this is the time for you to double and redouble your efforts. You are an inspiration to me and to so many others whose childhood has been bleak and deprived, and I thank God for you.

Anyhow, keep the faith and keep-a-goin'!

Your friend and admirer,


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1. Man with a Mission article, Express-News
2. Frederick Douglass, Autobiography

Man with a mission hopes to save community

By J. Michael Parker
Express-News Religion Writer

A United Methodist Church layman wants to do more than talk about the plight of residents plagued by crime and violence on the East Side.

Robert Guinee, 63, left his engineering consulting firm to launch a ministry to help residents of two East Side public housing projects.

He calls his new mission project

the Potter's House.

Guinee said he planned to talk to many people in the area to learn what they need and want and how the church, through him, can help meet those needs.

And he's already found a center from which to operate his ministry.

Guinee has made a downpayment on a vacant 3,000-square-foot building at 2502 Ezell St. adjacent

to the East Terrace Homes. He's raised about half of the \$20,000 sales price through appeals from area United Methodist Churches and donations from various individuals.

With the help of volunteers from various churches, Guinee plans to renovate the building so it can be used for social events as well as worship services.

Once paid for, the Potter's

House is to be owned by the United Methodist Church. Guinee said he'd serve without pay, living on his military retirement pay.

"I'm not saying I'll solve the problem, but I intend to knock on doors of people over there and find out what their needs are.

"Rita Webb Smith did that in Harlem. That would make our situation look like Disneyland, but she cleaned up a whole city block," Guinee said.

"I figured if a 50-year-old woman can do it, why can't I?" he added.

Guinee is no stranger to crime and violence.

The retired Air Force major said he moved from his North Side home in 1986 to live in a small house a few blocks from the Wheatley Courts, an area plagued by drugs, crime and violence.

He said his house was burglarized seven times in 11 months, and police have advised him to move out. But he's determined to stay and change the area.

"I moved to this part of town to learn what life is like here and see if anything could be done," Guinee said.

He said that when he heard God's call to minister, he left his engineering business to his son.

"No man can serve two masters," Guinee said. "I couldn't handle the business and this, too."

'The Potter's House'

"The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: 'Come, go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear my words.'" Jeremiah 18:1-2.

Several years ago, a retired gentleman (USAF 21 years) came to San Antonio, Texas from Queens, New York. He heard the call (as in the scripture above) to a ministry in one of the ghetto areas of San Antonio. He became a Local Pastor in the Southwest Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church, and was led to the location of the building (2502 Ezell, presently owned by the Scottish Rite Grand Lodge, AF & AM of Texas, Inc.) which he plans to call "The Potter's House," a United Methodist Mission/Outreach/Church.

The man's name is Robert J. Guinee. He is a man of great faith and commitment. He lives on his own retirement salary and from his social security. He does not accept any salary, and plans not to. He has raised \$7,000 to purchase "The Potter's House," but he needs more. He needs to raise \$13,000 before July 15, 1993! He said, "This project, while done under the auspices of the United Methodist Church, will not be funded by the church. It will be funded by me." Some pastors have allowed Bob to preach from their pulpits, and while there, he takes a "love offering" which is put towards the purchase of the building. Once purchased, Bob will live on sight.

The building, has two stories, a kitchen, two large rooms . . . one for worship, the other to help house the homeless in the area. Bob has selected a small room on the first floor to be his living quarters. There are two bathrooms, one upstairs and one downstairs. He has received promises of help to renovate the bathrooms so that they will include showers.

It is Bob's intention, with the help of volunteers, to keep The Potter's House open 12 hours a day, 7

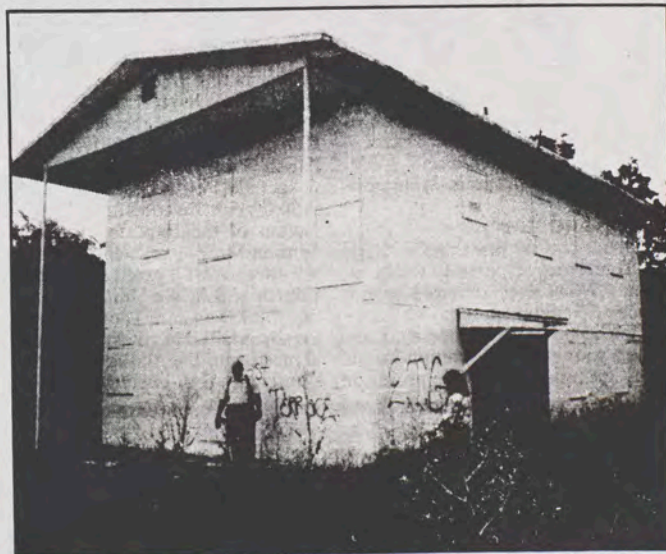


A man of great faith, Bob Guinee, outside The Potter's House. If you are interested in this project, you can write him: 3501 Pin Oak Drive, Apt. #101, San Antonio, Texas 78229.

days a week, to be a place of refuge, instruction, tutoring, counseling and worshiping, a place where someone, not only could, but would want to drop in for some conversation, (an alternative to the streets).

It is Guinee's belief, "that outreach is our primary mission of the Christian Church, as the community of His believers, meant to be a 'light to the world' and the 'salt of the earth.' Humbling ourselves, as a church, and reaching out to those of the Creator's family most in need, the least of Christ's brothers and sisters (Mt 25:40)."

Bob has great hopes for this project and feels that if the Lord has taken him this far, He will take him the rest of the way as well. He said that as the Lord once told Jeremiah, "Go down to the potters house, and there I will give you my message." he adds . . . "I intend to follow these instructions and listen for that message."



2502 Ezell — The Potter's House. Volunteers are needed! Call Bob in San Antonio at 210/341-6190.

Showdown pits East Side minister against city's housing authority

By THOMAS EDWARDS
EXPRESS-NEWS STAFF WRITER

A Methodist minister whose unfinished mission is located next to an East Side housing project scheduled for renovation says he is bracing for a David vs. Goliath battle against the San Antonio Housing Authority.

The Rev. Bob Guinee says he supports the authority's \$48.8 million HOPE VI project to turn the Spring View Apartments into a mixed-income neighborhood, but at the same time he fears he may be forced to move his mission to make way for some planned single-family dwellings.

Guinee, a 66-year-old Air Force retiree and former head of an engineering consulting firm, has spent the last few years raising nearly \$70,000 in private donations to renovate an abandoned two-story Masonic Lodge he calls Potters House at 2502 Ezell St.

"I'm willing to live here and stay here," Guinee said. He feels his mission dovetails

nicely with SAHA's commitment to revitalize the community. "They should be cooperating, asking what I need."

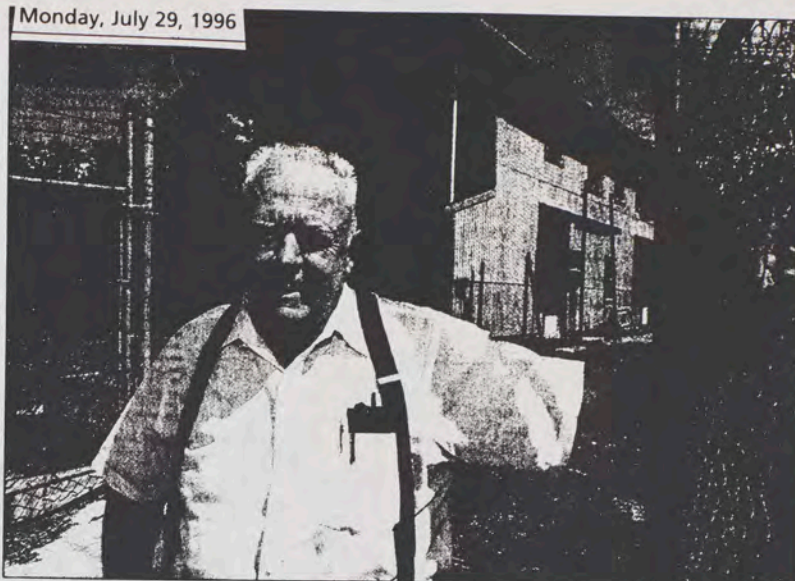
Guinee hopes the mission, located just north of Spring View, will serve as both church and haven for inner-city youth, the homeless and others in need of assistance.

While the building is being renovated, Guinee has conducted services in another nearby church. Construction at Potters House, however, has stopped for the moment.

"We've had one delay after another, and this one just sounds like the end," Guinee said bitterly.

The minister, who lives off his retirement and Social Security benefits, said he wants to act as a "moral compass" in the area for anyone needing help. He wants to assist children with their schoolwork, provide counseling and meals and help people find

Monday, July 29, 1996



CHARLES BARKSDALE / Staff

The Rev. Bob Guinee stands outside Potters House, a former Masonic Lodge he hopes to turn into a mission on the East Side.

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jobs.

Officials at SAHA praised Guinee's missionary fervor and stressed they want to find an equitable solution.

Diana Kinlaw, program manager for HOPE VI, said the housing authority wants to cooperate with Guinee and the Metro Mission Board of San Antonio, which holds the title to Potters House.

The board is a committee of the United Methodist Church, officials said.

"I expressed to them that we want to work with you," Kinlaw said. "We have not condemned anybody's property."

Kinlaw said she first spoke to Guinee and supporters about a year ago to brief them on HOPE VI. While the Spring View renovations will allow three other churches in the area to remain untouched, the Potters House is located on a strip of land where single family dwellings may be constructed.

"We do have a need for the property, but we felt we gave him and the Metro Mission Board adequate advance notice of our plans for the area," Kinlaw said. "I truly

thought we had a good relationship with them."

The Rev. Harold Sassman, district superintendent of the San Antonio District of the United Methodist Church, said until they receive more information from the housing authority, no decision will be made on what to do with Potters House.

"We want to serve people. They want to serve people. We hope they won't be a roadblock," Sassman added, indicating the church remains open to compromise.

"We're not at odds with them, we're just in stress with them," added Sassman. He said he supported HOPE VI but wished there was less "red tape."

The HOPE VI project is funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Kinlaw said federal guidelines allow them to acquire private property and make a comparable offer if they decide to do so.

The next step for SAHA is to conduct an independent appraisal and survey of Potters House. That information will be forwarded to the housing agency's acquisitions office. Once that is completed, SAHA likely will offer up a comparable site to the Metro Mission Board if

they decide they want the Potters House property, Kinlaw said.

The housing agency would then provide the owners with the funds to buy the new property.

"We want to work with them to find an alternative location in the same area on the East Side," Kinlaw said. There are about 10 alternative sites.

Guinee said he may seek legal help.

A SAHA letter sent in May detailing the survey and appraisal process states that Potters House "is located within the Spring View Urban Revitalization Demonstration area... This letter is not a notice for you to vacate your property... You will only be eligible for relocation assistance if a formal written offer is made to purchase your property."

Because of the pace of HOPE VI, which is just getting started, it may be a year or more before the matter comes to a head, officials said.

So far, there is no construction in the Spring View Apartments, although officials are hoping to have a groundbreaking ceremony in September.

The irony was not lost on Guinee, who noted that he hoped to

have the Potters House renovations finished about the same time.

The HOPE VI project calls for the Spring View Apartments to be razed and rebuilt at a cost of \$48.8 million as a mixed-income neighborhood with privately owned homes, subsidized apartments and commercial and medical facilities.

Officials at SAHA have billed it as an ambitious project that turns public housing into affordable housing while giving low-income residents a chance to become self-sufficient.

The HOPE VI Urban Revitalization Project was approved by Congress in 1993 as a \$1.5 billion program managed by HUD.

San Antonio received a \$97 million grant from HUD, with part of the money going to Spring View and the rest earmarked for later renovations at the Mirasol Homes on the West Side.

The project calls for the 421 units in Spring View to be reduced by half, and the remainder converted to comfortable, modern dwellings. Through attrition and the relocation of elderly residents, the subsidized complex is already half-empty, officials said.