

Ella McCartt Smith, Executive Director
Morgan Scott Project for Cooperative Christian Concerns.

Born August 17, 1943, the 10th of 18 children born to Pleas and Annie McCartt. They raised 14 of us to maturity. Four died before their 1st birthday.

We lived in an old 4 room log cabin, in a remote section of Morgan County Tennessee. Water was carried from a spring, we washed our clothes on a scrub board, used kerosene lights, and had an outhouse.

My father worked in the log woods sawing down trees with a cross cut saw and skidding them to the saw mill with mules. The most money he ever made was \$1.00 an hour.

Both my parents had to quit school at an early age, like 3rd grade. They didn't have a lot of book learning, but they had common sense and were very resourceful. There wasn't anything my Daddy couldn't fix with a rusty nail and hay bail wire. We raised and canned all our food, but flour, and sugar. My mother didn't need to go to the grocery store to fix a delicious meal. She used a treadle sewing machine to make our clothes out of hand me downs from cousins and flour sacks. Our sheets, curtains, dish cloths and underwear was made from flour sacks.

Both my parents had to quit school by 5th grade, but they believed education was important and going to school was not an option. We walked 1 1/2 miles to catch the school bus, and yes, it was up hill both ways.

My goal as a child was to graduate from high school, get married and leave this area and never come back. I was tired of being poor, and I was tired of people calling me one of those poor little McCartt children.

I did graduate from high school in 1961, got married to my husband William (Bill) Smith, who was in the Navy and I did leave Morgan County. We lived a lot of places and were blessed with two wonderful boys. My boys loved the country and wanted to live here. So when it came time for my husband to retire the decision was made for the family to move back to Tennessee. Yes, against my better judgment I did agree to move back. It was the best decision I ever made and I can't imagine living any where else.

After moving back to Tennessee we owned and operated a restaurant for 29 years. During those years I was very active in working to make a difference in my community. I was involved in starting the Mountain People's Health Council, The Scott County Women's Shelter, was a Court Appointed Special Advocate for Children (CASA) volunteer, and volunteered with Appalachia Habitat for Humanity. I wanted to make a difference in my community and the lives of others.

When we sold our business I became involved with Morgan Scott Project. It was having some difficulty at the time. I believed Morgan Scott was a wonderful organization that over the years had made a difference in the lives of a lot of families. I felt God calling me to give my time to this organization. so I stated volunteering with Morgan Scott and 2 years later I became the Executive Director. I love my job and I feel like I am making a difference.