

The Church Pianist

Erma Hazel Ihnfeldt was born in Lewisville, Texas in 1916 to William and Susie Underwood. In 1933, she married Arthur Ihnfeldt. The two were married for 39 years before Arthur's passing in 1972. Their home throughout the years was the little white house on the corner of Sandy Lake and Lodge Road, which was recently moved to Coppell's Heritage Park. Even after Arthur's passing, Erma remained in the house before finally moving to Arkansas in 1999.

For many years, Ihnfeldt worked as receptionist for Dr. Tom Chandler in neighboring Grapevine, but many remember her best as the longtime pianist of Coppell's First United Methodist Church.

Fred and Judy Conger recall that Ihnfeldt was serving the church as pianist and treasurer when they first came to town in 1980.

"There was a chancel area that was up about two steps and the piano was on a side wall of the area," Fred Conger relates. "The whole chancel area sloped from the front to the back by several inches."

Because of the slope, any time Erma played she was forced to stick her left leg out and dig it into the floor to keep from sliding off the bench. It is an image that, over thirty years later, still makes the Congers smile.

Today, as the town of Coppell takes steps to forever preserve her home, it is pleasant to think a bit about the woman who give the building its story.

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