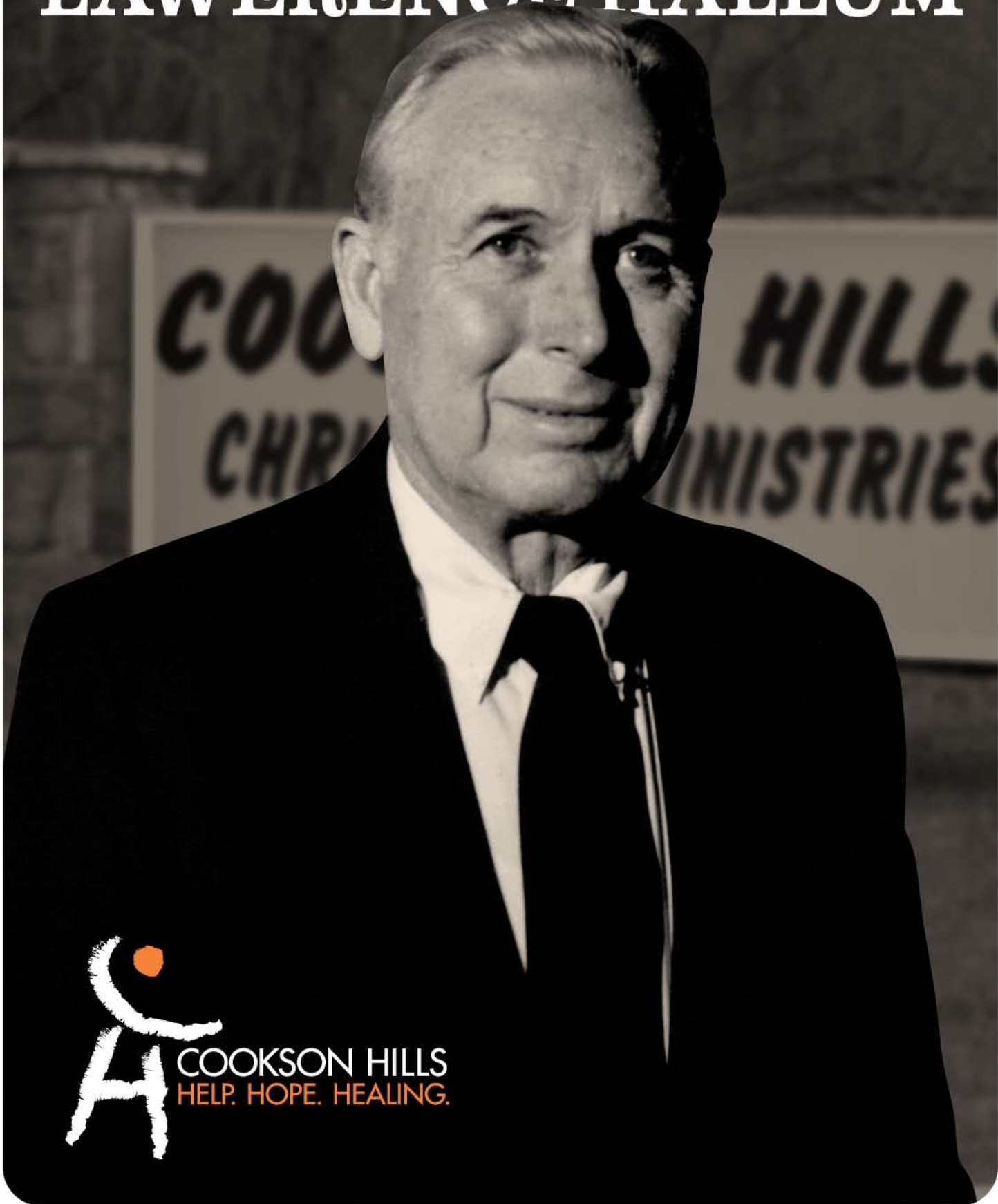


A LEGACY OF LOVE, HARD WORK, & CHRISTIAN SERVICE  
**LAWRENCE HALLUM**



**COOKSON HILLS**  
HELP. HOPE. HEALING.



**LAWRENCE DAVID HALLUM** was born January 4, 1920 in Clarksville, Arkansas, the third child and only son of eight children. The family was desperately poor after being hit hard by the Great Depression. Lawrence was doing a grown man's work at a young age to help support the family. He suffered from malnutrition and had a bleeding ulcer by age 16. In spite of many absences, he loved school and graduated from the eighth grade.

When Lawrence was 10 years old, the only work his father could find was clearing a 20 acre field of native timber. It had to be cleared to 18 inches below ground and to be ready for tilling. They had a shovel, an axe, and a cross-cut saw, and their only pay was from selling the trees as firewood. They lived in a tiny shack on the land. He told of going to school bare-foot because he had no shoes and hiding behind the school to eat his lunch of a biscuit with water gravy on it, so that his classmates wouldn't see his meager fare.

At age 18 he joined the Civilian Conservation Corps, a Roosevelt Works Projects program, and was stationed at Devil's Tower, Wyoming. Because of his stomach ulcer, he was rejected for military service. His family had settled near Pawnee, Oklahoma, so

after his time in the CCC, he returned home to find work wherever he could.

He met Nora Ellen Rountree (Ellen) at a farmhouse dance and decided to pursue her, although she was engaged to someone else at the time. His successful suit culminated in their marriage before the Justice of the Peace on May 25, 1940. The newlyweds lived with the groom's parents for a few months until they dragged a small chicken house out into the pasture and fixed it up as a cabin for their own. During their first winter, they moved Ellen's parents to Arizona and stayed several months to harvest vegetables. They ended up back in Oklahoma where their first child, Patricia, was born in August of 1941. They had two more children, Awynne and David, and countless foster children. Lawrence was preceded in death by Patty and David, and is survived by Awynne.

“

**What can I do for Christ  
is not as important as what  
am I willing to let Christ  
do in and through me.**

”

— LAWRENCE HALLUM

Lawrence became a Christian in 1947 and later enrolled in Midwest Christian College in Oklahoma City to learn how to preach. He graduated in the spring of 1951; however, because of not attending high school, he received a blank diploma. He was awarded an honorary bachelor's degree many years later by Ozark Christian College.

Called to take the helm at Cookson Hills, a struggling children's home in northeast Oklahoma, the Hallums left a successful ministry at Forest Hill Christian Church in Oklahoma City and moved to Kansas, Oklahoma in January 1961. He was a hard worker and always provided well for his family. The specter of poverty and hunger followed him throughout his life, and his own childhood gave him a heart for children in need. Lawrence served the ministry of Cookson Hills from 1961 until 2008 when he was robbed of his memory by the onset of Alzheimers. ■

## A Daughter's Memories

By Awynne Hallum Thurstenson

The smell of oak burning in a wood stove will forever take me back to January, 1961 when we moved to Cookson Hills. The winter was unseasonably cold, and the poorly insulated buildings were heated with wood.

It was the beginning of a great adventure for me, and a long, hard journey for Mother. It just depends on your perspective, I guess. Daddy put me in the driver's seat of our car, with a loaded trailer hitched to the rear bumper. He and Mother climbed into the cab of a rented truck, tucked my little brother between them, and took a long, last look at the big white two-story house that held so many happy family memories. Back then it took five hours to drive from Oklahoma City to Cookson Hills: Five hours from the comfort of city living, a big church family, a steady income, and a warm house.

We were warmly greeted when we pulled into Cookson Hills, and many eager hands helped unload truck and trailer. There were about 25 kids receiving care in two houses, and there was a two-room building that served as dining room on one end and elementary school on the other. The children were full of hugs and smiles, and I fell in love at once. I was half-way through my senior year of high school. I went from a class of 240 people to a class of 27; from walking six blocks to a very modern building to riding a school bus loaded with raucous back-woods rascals.

Our new home wasn't quite as posh as what we left behind. The men had quickly poured a slab of cement and built a simple, two-room building over it. The cement wasn't dry when we moved in. The big room was our living room and the main office for the children's home, and the smaller room was the master bedroom. The walls were not insulated. They had connected a very tiny trailer house to the building, which served as bedrooms for my brother and me, and had the only bathroom facilities for the house. Everything in the trailer was miniature. I loved my tiny room, with all its little shelves and drawers, and the ceiling that rounded over to the end of the trailer. The only heat was from a big wood stove in the living room. That stove about cost Mother her sanity. She would get a good fire going, get warm enough to

function, and then forget to throw in more wood until the house got cold. We only ever had two temperatures: hot and cold, and usually it was cold.

I don't want to give you a negative picture. Everything about this setting was romantic to me. I loved the primitive element, the interesting people, and the bumpy school bus ride. I had been plucked from my predictable life and plopped down right in the middle of my best dream.



On the other hand, Mother landed in a bit of a nightmare. She was designated secretary and bookkeeper by virtue of being married to Daddy. She found the office tasks woefully behind—letters unopened, money not accounted for, unhappy people wondering why their gifts weren't acknowledged. She spent hour after hour at her Underwood typewriter or bent over the ledger book. She wouldn't lay her head on the pillow until every piece of mail was answered and every dime accounted for.

Daddy had the truly impossible job of maintaining workers, disciplining kids, and raising support. His goal was that when someone said "children's home" the first thought to cross anybody's mind would be "Cookson Hills." He immediately hit the road on weekends, telling people about Cookson Hills, giving them the opportunity to invest in the lives of children.

During the week he was bombarded with problems of every size. Somehow he managed to dream of the future. He could picture houses spread out on the hillsides. He even took Mother up in the woods one day and showed her where he was going to build their house near a young pine tree. She said, "Pie in the sky!" I'm happy to say, she did live in the spacious house he built for her on that spot, and now the pine tree is a towering giant. ■



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## THE HALLUM STRATEGIC ACTION FUND



“People need to give. I believe this. *Information that brings inspiration, without opportunity for expression, will cause depression.* Cookson Hills gives people an opportunity to give. Even after they’re dead and gone, Christian people live on when they help train kids. Only God knows the influences that continue on and on and on.”

– LAWRENCE HALLUM

Like Lawrence, would you like to live on in the life of a child? *The Hallum Strategic Action Fund* has been established as a legacy that lives on through the efforts of those who continue to offer help, hope,

and healing to children and families in crisis.

The family has asked that memorial gifts be designated to this fund and may be sent to:

**Cookson Hills  
Hallum Strategic Action Fund  
RR 3 Box 200  
Kansas, OK 74347**

Cookson Hills offers Estate & Gift planning services free of charge and without obligation. Email [rbayless@cooksonhills.org](mailto:rbayless@cooksonhills.org) or call 918-597-2192 or for additional information.

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