

# Honoring the Heroes Among Us

## Gail F. Moulds

By Ken Deacon

**O**f all the things that the St. Pete Bar Foundation has gotten right, the one thing that stands out is selecting Gail Moulds to be one of the 2013 Heroes Among Us. I have had the great privilege of having Gail as my partner for many years and there is no one who is more caring, giving, and compassionate than Gail. Not only to those who are relatives, friends and acquaintances, but most importantly to those who are seriously in need.

Gail has always been interested in education and, prior to going to law school, she was a chemistry teacher at Shorecrest Preparatory School. After graduating from law school,

Gail came to Harris, Barrett, Mann & Dew in 1985. After working with me at Harris, Barrett, Mann & Dew, she went back to education at the then St. Petersburg Junior College in 1989 to work as legal counsel for the school. However, Gail never lost that passion for the courtroom and she returned to Harris, Barrett, Mann & Dew in 1991. On October 1, 1999, Gail and I set up Deacon & Moulds, P.A. Weston Smith became a Partner in 2006 and the firm is now Deacon, Moulds & Smith.

Gail is heavily involved as a volunteer at her church's food pantry, delivering and distributing food to those less fortunate. She serves on the Board of Governors at Pinellas Community Church and was previously on the Board of Directors of St. Petersburg Christian School. Her devotion to God and the church has been of particular benefit to me since Gail and her husband have season tickets to the Rays and I get to use her seats on Sunday.

Gail understands the needs of others, particularly those in third world and developing countries, and the severe shortage in education, sanitation and health in those countries. She has participated in a series of mission trips. Initially going with a church group to Belarus, Russia, in 1996, she and her mission group visited schools and medical facilities where they provided education and training.

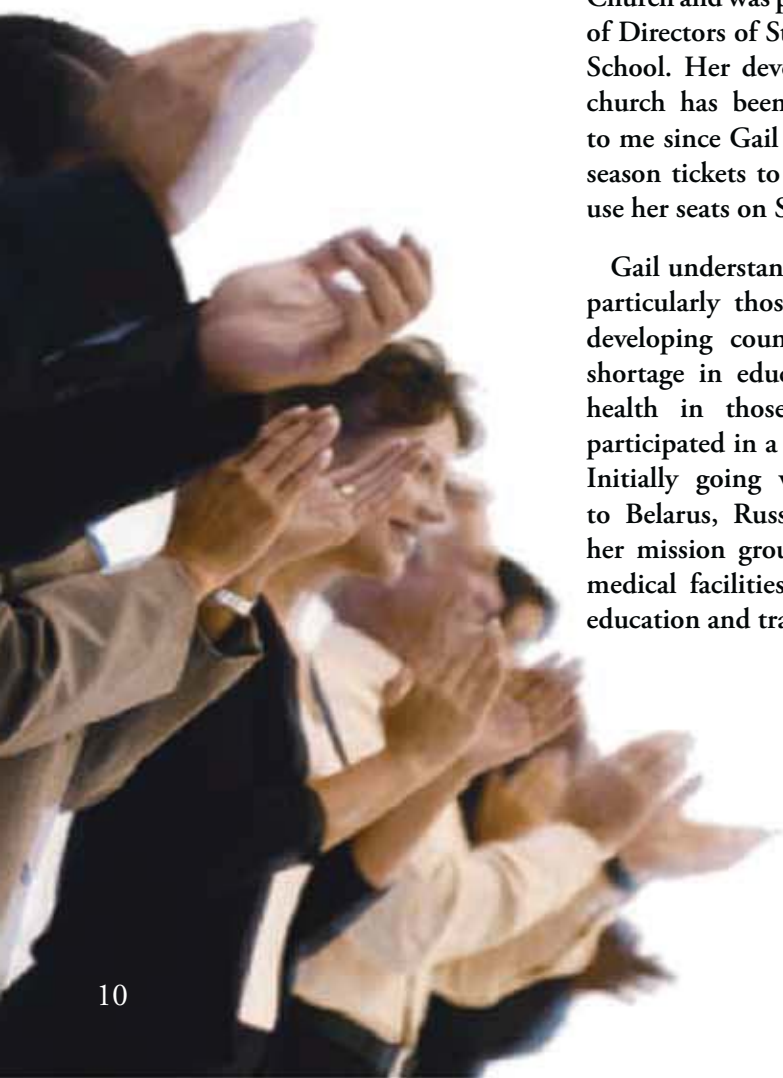
While she was in Belarus, she met a local Belarusian (if there is such a word) girl, Luda, who told Gail that her one desire was to visit America. Gail told her that if she came, she could stay at her home. Not surprisingly, Luda called and said that she was coming to The United States and, as promised, Gail said, "Stay with us." While Luda was in The United States, she learned about democracy and the benefits of this country, particularly all the neat things offered by Publix.

Gail's next mission trips were to Nicaragua, which she visited twice in 1999 and again in 2003. In Nicaragua, Gail and her group worked with a church that was involved with Compassion International to expand the facilities to provide after-school care and education to Compassion International children.

Several of Gail's mission trips have been to Kenya. She visited Kenya in 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011, and she is scheduled to return to Kenya in 2013. In Kenya, the mission group worked with Spring Valley Academy in their ongoing projects. They built bathrooms and delivered food to families in the "slum" of Spring Valley. They also worked to reduce parasites in the school children and succeeded in reducing parasites in children from over 90% to less than 10%. Through the efforts of Gail's 'church, they help provide food for 300 children, two meals a day.

Gail's group also provided funding for the school at Spring Valley and for children to attend high school. It wasn't all work. Gail did get to go on a few safaris, where she marveled in the scenery and the wildlife.

The group's latest project in Kenya is to build a dormitory (the Talitha Koum Rescue Center) to house 150 young



girls. Female child abuse is rampant in Kenya and these dorms are to help keep those children from being abused. The plan is also to help build a medical clinic in the building as well as a sewing school. On a return trip to Kenya, in 2013, they hope to help complete the dorm building and to work with local physicians to help provide medical care.

In 2011, Gail convinced her otherwise reluctant husband, Jim, to accompany her and the group to Kenya. In 2012, Gail went with the group to Chiapas, Mexico. While they were there, they built a church.

While Gail has always shown empathy for the severely needy, her compassion isn't restricted to those in third world countries. She is equally giving and sharing to friends, relatives and others who may need help. Recently the Children's Pastor of her church, a father of four, had a car that would no longer run. So Gail gave him her SUV to use until such time as he could get another car.

Gail's house is affectionately known as The Moulds Motel. Gail is always putting up friends and relatives who visit Florida who might otherwise not be able to afford to come here. It is not unusual for Gail to have distant cousins and other relatives from West Virginia or Pennsylvania visiting for extended periods of time. When they do visit, Gail often does most of the cooking and a lot of the entertaining.

Recently, a young female cousin, Kaitlyn, called Gail from her college, Evangel University in Springfield, Missouri, and told Gail that she and some others from her school were competing in a cheerleading contest in Orlando. Of course, Gail offered



her home so that the kids could come and compete. Gail was expecting her cousin and probably a couple of others. When they showed up at Gail's house, there were twenty-one students; both boys and girls. This did not faze Gail. She had them sleeping on air mattresses and every bit of furniture in the house. A couple of the guys even slept on the patio chairs out by the pool.

Gail has been married to Jim for 41 years and their daughter, Brooke, is the mother of Gail's two grandchildren: Jackson and Logan. To say that Gail is a doting grandmother would be a gross understatement. Gail's son-in-law, Brandon, works with the Veteran's Administration outside of Atlanta, Georgia. Gail and Jim simply place their car on auto pilot and it gets to the grandkids' house.

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“Anyone who does anything to help a child in his life is a hero to me.”

~ Fred Rogers