

‘The Cross and the Switchblade’ Author Elizabeth Sherrill Dies at 95

Elizabeth Sherrill, who authored one of the most famous books in Christian literature history, “The Cross and the Switchblade” about evangelist David Wilkerson, died Saturday, May 20. She was 95.

Sherrill, along with her husband, John, who died in 2017, launched Chosen Books in 1970. Both were faithful followers of Christ and a servant to many.

Rush To Press labeled Sherrill as a “supremely gifted writer and editor.” She wrote more than 30 books and 2,000 articles throughout her lifetime, including “The Cross and the Switchblade”; “God’s Smuggler,” about Brother Andrew; and Return from Tomorrow about the life of George G. Ritchie.

She is also well known for co-writing Corrie ten Boom’s bestselling memoir, “The Hiding Place,” which was first published in 1971 and co-written with John Sherrill and Corrie herself. Rush To Press says that the book “continues to reach generations today, with sales surpassing 3.5 million copies.

Chosen Books, co-launched with Guideposts magazine editor Len LeSourd and author Catherine Marshall LeSourd, focused on charismatic, Spirit-led titles.

Chosen also published Chuck Colson’s “Born Again: What Really Happened to the Watergate Hatchetman.”

Chosen Books has made a tremendous impact on the Christian publishing industry.

“Chosen Books dramatically elevated the profile and the impact of Christian publishing,” Jeff Crosby, president and CEO of

the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association, told Publishers Weekly. “Elizabeth’s gifts as a manuscript stylist, editor and publisher were enormous. She knew how to tell a story with power and with an economy of words, and the books she touched were brought to a mass market audience.

“I was privileged to chair ECPA’s recognition committee the year it awarded her and, posthumously, John Sherrill with our Kenneth N. Taylor Lifetime Achievement Award in 2018. And as a bookseller in the 1980s, I marveled at the way the books she touched and inspired readers toward belief.” {eo}

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