! Walter Schatz, who wrote the *Strobel History* noted above, is the son of Margaret Johanna Claire Strobel Schatz. He is a recognized art collector and connoisseur, active in Nashville and in the art world. For example he organized the exhibition, *Wittness to a Century*, of the works of Fritz Eichenberg with Yale University in 1995. He is also involved in the genealogy and family reunions of "Branch 2" in Nashville. We expect to add more of these Strobels to this tree.


Walter & Mary Schatz, 2009

! We also hope to clarify some of the connections between Branch 1 and 2. There is little doubt that we are related. Men named Martin Strobel from both branches each married wives named Schiel from the same German town. Their families both lived in Perry County, Indiana at the same time.

! For many years Walter has maintained a large Strobel family tree for what we call Branch 2. He has graciously offered to share a limited, privatized version of this data for integration into the *Strobels of Southern Indiana*, which we are in the process of doing. This will add hundreds of people spanning eleven generations. This is a careful work in progress.

! Father Charles Strobel, a first cousin of Walter, is well loved in Nashville for his charitable works, as was his mother. See the article *Nashvillian of the Year* below.

! Jerry Strobel, another first cousin of Walter, was manager of the *Grand Ole Opry* at the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville for thirty years.

! Tom Seigenthaler, a Nashville civic leader as well as a prolific sculptor and painter, was the husband of Veronica Strobel Seigenthaler. He died in 2004.

Charlie Strobel, **Nashvillian of the Year,** By Kay West, *Nashville Scene*, Dec 23, 2004
(excerpts from a much longer article)

While scores of Nashvillians drive past this building on a daily basis, barely noticing it's there, thousands more have made a deliberate, intentioned path to the Campus for Human Development, site of The Guest House, Respite Care, Odyssey and Room in the Inn. They come - those who have a home and those without - seeking a place of learning and teaching, of faith, forgiveness, healing, reconciliation and, most of all, love.

Standing at the gate is Charles Frederick Strobel, director of the campus and founder of Room in the Inn. He's known as "Charlie" to his family, friends and staff, and simply as "Father" to the homeless. A passionate advocate for the least among us, he's a man with a mop of unwieldy hair who's more often than not dressed in grubby, faded jeans and a T-shirt or tattered sweatshirt. Clearly, he's not a fashionable fellow. Nor can he tell a joke to save his life, those he helps are quick to say.

"Charlie is a natural in this life, in this world," says Rev. Becca Stevens, pastor of St. Augustine Episcopal Chapel on the Vanderbilt campus and a close friend of Strobel's. "That's why he moves freely with the homeless as well as with people of power. He walks with grace and is unafraid to speak the truth. If you know him for any length of time, he will eventually ask you where you are in the Scriptures. That's where he lives."

Strobel's story began March 12, 1943, on Seventh Avenue North in Germantown, then a tightly knit neighborhood of blue-collar multi generational families. The third of Mary Catherine and Martin Strobel's four children, he still lives in the house where he grew up. His father had been crippled in a childhood accident and was known as "Mutt" among family, friends and co-workers at the Nashville Fire Department, where he worked in dispatch. On Dec. 21, 1947, Mutt Strobel passed away, either from pneumonia or a heart attack. His widow was left with four children to raise: 8-year-old **Veronica**, 7-year-old **Jerry**, 4-year-old **Charlie** and 18-month-old Alice.

In keeping with the tradition of taking care of the families of fallen brothers, the Nashville Fire Department hired his mother to work in headquarters as the department's first female employee. Mary Catherine's two maiden aunts, Aunt Molly and Aunt Kate - who had mothered her after her own mother died in a fire when she was a baby - came to live in the home to care for the children while Mrs. Strobel worked and tended to countless people in need. "You couldn't

contain my mother," Strobel recalls with a wistful smile. "She was involved with everything. She'd go to church in the morning, visit someone in the hospital, go to the soup kitchen, drop some clothes or a sack of groceries off to a family after work. She knew life was precious; she couldn't bear the thought of anyone being alone without someone to care for them."

Close to his heart, then and now, was baseball. As a kid, he went as often as he could to Sulphur Dell, the city ballpark for the minor league team, just three blocks from his house. "You could see the lights and hear the crowds. I just loved baseball." Stan Musial, the renowned left-fielder for the St. Louis Cardinals, was his boyhood hero, and along with thoughts of becoming a priest, he dreamed of being a major league ballplayer. "It was watching games at Sulphur Dell by myself that I learned not only the game, but the game within the game. That's what makes baseball so compelling to me, the subtle nuances."

"When I came to Holy Name in 1977, we didn't see 'homeless' people, but there were poor people. People would come to the door of the church hungry, and we would make them peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. I remember telling the church secretary that I thought all we could do was hand out sandwiches. But, beginning in 1980, as national policy changed, the needs became greater - under the Reagan administration, programs for the poor were cut, and mental hospitals were emptied, many of [those turned out] Vietnam veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome. In 1983, Margaret Don at St. Henry asked if I would be interested in starting a soup kitchen. She recruited other congregations to come and cook, and that was the start of Loaves and Fishes."

Simultaneously, there were many other faith-based groups ministering to the poor, and The Salvation Army and Union Rescue Mission had long provided temporary shelter to those in need. But in the winter of 1985, from the window of his bedroom in the rectory beside Holy Name, Father Strobel saw a larger need, and a different way to write the story. He could see people sleeping in their cars through the cold winter night, seeking some semblance of safety in the parking lot of the church. Unable to reconcile their need with his comfort - and a warm building with plenty of unused space - he invited them inside to sleep.

His church was willing and congregants were supportive, and other groups stepped in to help, bringing cots, blankets and food. The winter passed, and by spring, there were enough people involved in the rudimentary shelter to keep it going. Matthew 25 was started at another site and remains one of Nashville's most successful permanent shelters for the homeless, offering job training and counseling for working men.

But it wasn't enough to shelter the hundreds who would be out in the cold in the winter of 1986. Strobel wrote a letter to the editor of both daily papers, explaining the concept of opening houses of worship to Nashville's homeless population. It was published, and by Thanksgiving of that year, four other congregations joined Holy Name.

But just weeks after the expanded program began, an unspeakable tragedy struck the Strobel family. On Dec. 9, while making her volunteer rounds, Mary Catherine Strobel went missing; two days later, her body was discovered in the trunk of her car. A man who had escaped from a prison mental ward was later charged in her murder and several others.

The front page of the Dec. 14 Tennessean reported that more than 1,000 people - most of whom Mary Catherine had personally touched—gathered for her funeral service. The family - led by Father Charles Strobel - called on them to forgive. "We know the answers are not easy and clear, but we still believe in the miracle of forgiveness," Father Strobel was quoted as saying. "And we extend our arms in that embrace.... There are still needs all around us, and we must attend to those needs."

At Catholic University, and many times after that, people would question Strobel's opposition to the death penalty. "How would you feel if someone close to you was murdered?" they'd ask. He always replied that he hoped he would feel the same way, never imagining he would ever be put to the test. "When Momma was killed, there was not one doubt in my mind what we needed to say as a family," he recalls. "Not only was capital punishment contrary to who she was, but it was against everything we were taught."

More congregations entered the fold, growing to 68 in 1987, 98 the next year and more than 100 the year after that. Its growth meant that it could serve 175 to over 200 people per night.

On any given night, there might be 50 to 60 people living in "this postage-stamp space," as Strobel calls it. While the residential area is quiet during the day, the rest of the campus bustles. All visitors first encounter the reception desk in the "support area," where questions are answered and bus passes, clothing vouchers and IDs are distributed. The area sees roughly 300 people a day. In the "day room" are seating and tables, computers, a telephone, a lending library and a large-screen television. Anyone using it must be engaged in a productive or positive activity. Phone messages—taken by voice mail - are posted for 30 days on a bulletin board. Likewise, mail - for up to 1,000 people - is distributed in the mornings and is held for 30 days. There is a campus store, where participants can redeem tickets for toiletries, articles of clothing and sundries.

"Room in the Inn is about hospitality," Strobel explains. "It should be no different than a dinner party, sitting together at a table. It is Eucharistic - the Last Supper in a different format."

The following season, with the first draft pick, they chose Lenny Frenette, an excellent ballplayer who'd recently moved to Nashville. "They were pathetic," Frenette remembers. "They were such a terrible team, it was awful. I told them that if they wanted me to play, we would have to put together a better team." Determined to improve their standings - and keep Frenette on the roster - they recruited better players and went from worst to first, playing in tournaments in Florida and on Doubleday Field in Cooperstown. And Strobel pulls his weight, Frenette says. "He's gotten better every year; we play against 18-, 19-, 20-year-olds, and Charlie can still hit an 80 mph fastball. He loves it more than anyone." The team is now called the Grey Sox - named for their hair color, not their footwear—and it gives Strobel great joy. "Baseball is therapy to me," he says. "When I'm on the field, nothing else matters. It is so important because it is not important. It's just the best game in the world."

When renowned social activist Dorothy Day - who had replaced Stan Musial as Strobel's hero - died, her obituary contained a quote that was an epiphany for Strobel. She noted that the poor and the homeless had been studied and researched to death, but that all they needed was love.

Strobel's view is that we're all put on this earth preparing to die. "We are the only species who knows that we will die, that everything else will go on but that our time on this earth is short. So, what do you do with that time? Do you want to just get all you can while you are here, or do you want to make a difference to others, to leave the world a better place?"