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### Draft Bio of Mildred Persinger

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Draft

Mildred Persinger, who was born in Roanoke and attended County schools, is a graduate of Hollins College. Her interest in international affairs began there and continued during her service on boards of national organizations, including the YWCA of the USA, the United Nations Association/USA, International Social Service, OEF International and the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace. These affiliations have led to participation in activities on five continents and to appointments to national commissions by two U.S. Presidents. As a representative of the 84-country World YWCA at the United Nations, she has just completed terms as secretary of the international Conference of Non-governmental Organizations, ("NGOs"), some 200 groups, including the Lutheran World Federation, which have a consultant status at the UN; and as a board member of the non-governmental committee on UNICEF. Presently she co-chairs the NGO Committee on Disarmament.

In the past 15 years, however, Mrs. Persinger's major focus has been the efforts of women in "Third World" countries, assisted and encouraged by the United Nations, to improve their often desperate situation. In connection with the 1975-85 UN Decade for Women, she headed the organization and management of a two-week program, in Mexico, for 7000 women and some men from 150 countries. That forum, or "Tribuna," was the first of three held in connection with intergovernmental conferences of the UN Decade for Women which brought delegates of the world's governments together to devise measures for the advancement of women.

Mrs. Persinger was also active in the leadership of similar events held in 1980 and '85, in Copenhagen and Nairobi. As follow-up she initiated and served as president for six years of a communication and training center for women in 150 countries which has been given credit for much of the momentum generated by the Decade program. She was also active in United States participation in the Decade as one of the organizers of the 1977 women's meetings in every U.S. state and territory and the National Women's Conference which brought 20,000 participants to Houston, including invited guests from 67 countries. She credits her involvement in international women's affairs to her work in the YWCA where every member is a member of the World YWCA, which gave her the privilege of knowing YWCA leaders the world over.