

# Eswatini (Swaziland)

Africa: Southern Africa

Teaching the Bahá'í Faith

Bahá'í Geography - Eswatini

# Eswatini (Swaziland)

The Kingdom of Eswatini was named Swaziland until 2018. It is a small landlocked country 200 km north to south and 130 km east to west (17,364 sq km), with Mozambique to the north and South Africa on the other three sides. It has cool and mountainous highveld and hot and dry lowveld. It was British territory from 1903 until independence in 1968. The population of over 1 million has major health issues, with a life expectancy of 58 years and a median age of 22 years.

# Eswatini







Mbabane, Eswatini



Eswatini





Eswatini





Eswatini

© Gregory C. Dahl





Eswatini

© Gregory C. Dahl



# Knights of Bahá'u'lláh

Bula Mott Stewart (1908-2007) from America was the first Baha'í to arrive in Swaziland on 11 April 1954. Her knowledge of parasitology made it possible to find work, and she ran a medical laboratory for Albert Schweitzer. In 1955 Shoghi Effendi asked her to move to South Africa where she successfully taught the Faith despite racist laws.

Bula Mott Stewart





# Knights of Bahá'u'lláh

John Allen (1907-1980) became a Bahá'í when he married Valera (1902-1993) in 1925 and was a successful businessman with a car dealership in California. They decided in 1954 to pioneer to Africa, arriving in Swaziland on 19 April 1954. Their oldest son Dwight was Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for Greece, and their sons Dale and Kenton joined them in Swaziland later that year.

John and Valera Allen  
(right)  
in California 1954





Irma and Dale Allen  
John and Valera Allen  
Eswatini



# Teaching

The Allens began teaching immediately and were successful, forming the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Mbabane in 1955.



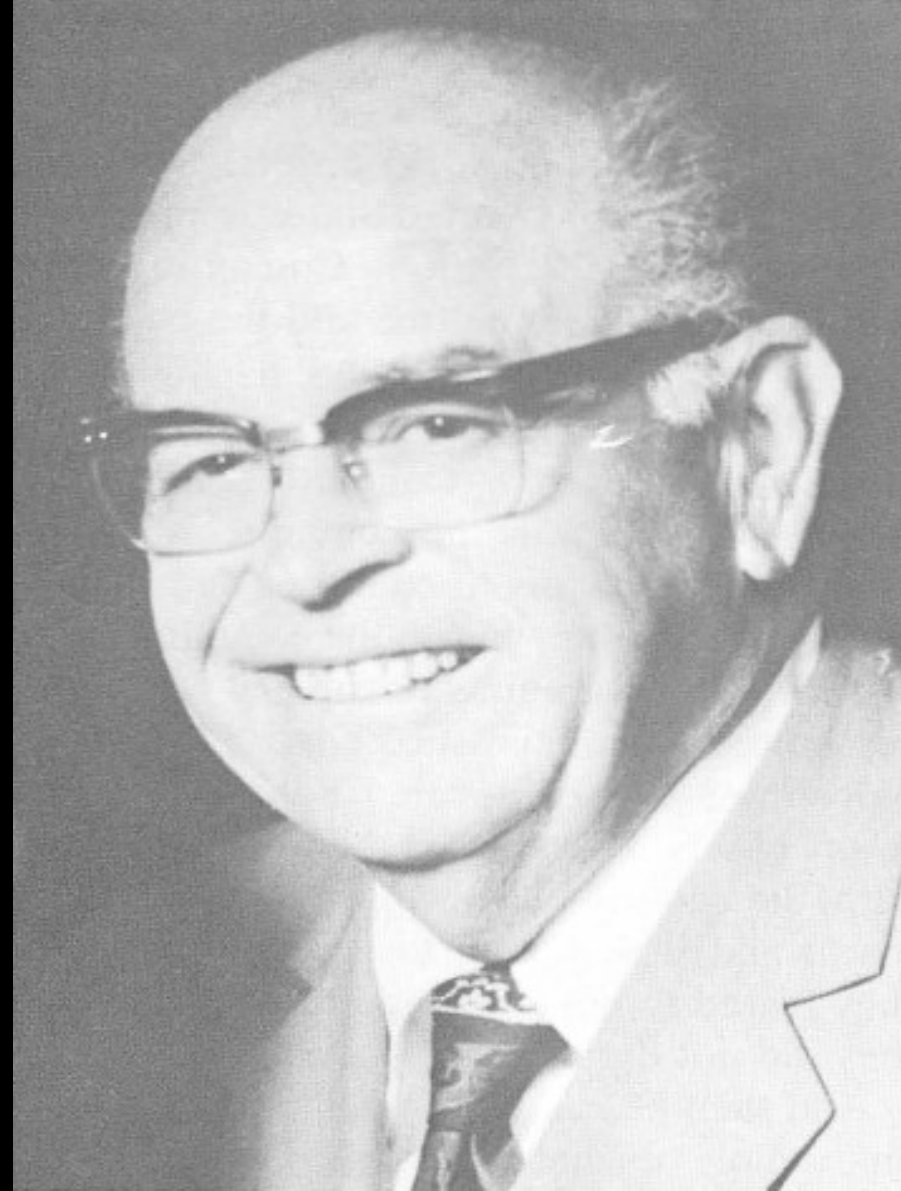


First Local Spiritual Assembly - Mbabane

# Teaching

Roads were mostly dirt in those days, and John always carried spares, and used his knowledge of cars to get around restrictions on interactions between whites and blacks, helping whoever had car problems. One day he stopped to help a man who had run out of petrol, and became friends with the man, who turned out to be Prince Manzini, the son of King Sobhuza II. The Allens were introduced to the king, enrolled several members of the royal family as Bahá'ís, and obtained official recognition of the Faith by the government.

John Allen





# Social action

John believed that pioneers should make things that would help the local people to become independent. His son Dale and his wife Irma arrived in 1960 and helped to revive the pineapple canning business. Kenton and his wife Mary helped remodel the cannery processing equipment during four years there. The project created hundreds of jobs. John worked with the Swazi government to help local people plant pineapples.



Bahá'ís in Eswatini 1973

# The Allens

John served as chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Swaziland when it formed in 1971. The Allens built and largely financed schools and local centres. John passed away in 1980 and Valera, still at her pioneer post, passed in 1993. Dale Allen also remained until his passing a few years ago, and his wife Irma Allen, an environmental educator, is still in Eswatini.