

HARDING

SPRING 2017

70
YEARS OF SERVICE





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PHOTO BY SCOTT HUCK



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At the faculty and staff recognition dinner April 21, President Bruce McLarty presents Chancellor Emeritus Clifton L. Ganus Jr. with his unprecedented 70-year service pin. Ganus was honored in March with the Distinguished Chair of History and Political Science. See page 6.

PHOTO BY ASHEL PARSONS

PHOTOS BY JEFF MONTGOMERY



Senior status

By BRUCE D. McLARTY, president

IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE I am completing the fourth year of my presidency. I think of it as my senior year, having begun my first year with the freshman students in 2013. This senior class of 2017 is the one I began with, and they will always have a special place in my heart. See page 26.

I am sure my fellow seniors can identify with what a ride this year has been, filled with accomplishments, challenges and blessings.

Our athletic teams have taken us to new heights this year with the football team having its first undefeated regular season and going as far as the national quarterfinals. Our Lady Bison basketball team won its first Central Region tournament and advanced to the Final Four. The Rhodes-Reaves Field House literally rocked as the women beat the number one seed for the regional title. Our Lady Bison softball team has already delivered an historic winning streak with 27 wins.

Another highlight of the year has to be our first campus read program. Eric Metaxas, the author of the chosen biography *Amazing Grace: William Wilberforce and the Heroic Campaign to End Slavery*, came to campus as part of the American Studies Distinguished Lecture Series in early January, and I was honored to be interviewed on his radio show in New York City in March. Having never been to our campus before January, Metaxas told his radio listeners, "I was astounded to see what's going on at Harding," calling us "strongly Christian." He said, "Harding was a surreal experience. It was an author's dream." After we discussed why the University chose his book, Metaxas told how "Wilberforce did what he did because of his faith in Jesus Christ" and encouraged our students by saying they "can change God's world through their major. Ministry is whatever you are doing wherever you are."



Celebrating our chancellor emeritus, Dr. Clifton L. Ganus Jr., who turned 95 on April 7, ranks as another highlight. His family gave him a most appropriate honor on March 21 by establishing the Clifton L. Ganus Jr. Distinguished Chair in History and Political Science. See page 6. This endowment provides the resources for dreams, and his family hopes it will trigger others to do likewise. That day this University just got better. As this Harding icon humbly accepted the honor, he said, "I have been so blessed to have a Harding family ... It's a journey that's been great fun." He concluded, "Harding is a great place. Keep it that way." We plan to do just that in our community of mission.

I wish all the best to the class of 2017. May God bless you in the journey we began together as you go forth as lights into the world. 🙏

HARDING

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PHOTO BY JEFF MONTGOMERY



What is your favorite memory from Spring Sing?

Q Drum solo in the early 1980s. The drummer was on a pedestal that lifted up. Fantastic!

JOAN MILLER, '97
Bedford, Texas

After Sept. 11, the hosts, hostesses and ensemble singing "United We Stand." I was working on crew backstage, and it was a showstopper!

JENA FRITZ ENCIZO, '06
Shannon Hills, Arkansas

My favorite memory is every year when the show ends on Saturday night. I love when all the clubs pack the Benson awaiting the Sweepstakes Award. After the winner is announced, the winners rush the stage in excitement, and the hosts and hostesses start singing "United We Stand."

It is always so moving to me because we are all family during that moment, and I remember the excitement [you] feel when you win. It's just a special moment in time that only Harding students and alumni understand.

JULIE TRACY, '98
Searcy, Arkansas

Undoubtedly, it would have to be when I met my (now, but then future) husband during line tryouts for "Toys," the 1990 Sweepstakes Award winner!!

SHANNON BLACK ADAMS, '94
Greenville, Mississippi

I wasn't accepted into a club my freshman year. I didn't let that keep me from participating in Spring Sing. I remember my mom, a Harding grad, telling me how much fun it was and how much it impacted her. I took her advice and



joined a group for Spring Sing. I fell in love with the girls as well as the whole experience. Spring Sing not only helped me figure what club to join the following year, but it helped me find some of my lifelong friends as well as break out of my shell. I fully grasped the "Harding experience" when I decided to be a part of Spring Sing. The countless hours of practice and hard work creates a bond like no other! Spring Sing every year is one of my fondest memories of my Harding career. I wouldn't trade my Spring Sing experiences for anything.

RACHEL CLARK, '14
Maumelle, Arkansas

Knights' "Show Heard Round the World" with Harrison Waldron ('15) directing was one of my very favorites!

Laurie Hodges Bishop, '79
North Richland Hills, Texas

The ... wait for it ... camaraderie.

STEPHEN PETERS, '00
Spring, Texas

I love how, even though we are competing against each other, we realize it's all fun, and our unity is in Christ. I get chills every time I hear everyone singing "United We Stand."

AMY PEURIFOY, '96
Wylie, Texas

My favorite memory from Spring Sing back in the 80s is the applause Tofebt and Fraters got for our clockwork with our glow-in-the-dark hands as part of the show "On the Radio." We were a small group, but we were proud of our show and took our performance seriously. I will always be glad I decided to participate in Spring Sing!

DONNA SLACK ITSON, '83
Montgomery, Alabama

My favorite memory of Spring Sing is jersey night — when we all we wear our club jerseys and run our shows — and everyone gets to watch for the first time.

KAYLIE RENÉE ROSS, STUDENT
St. Charles, Illinois

NEXT ISSUE'S QUESTION:
What is the best way for Christians to be a light to the world?

Email your answer to this question to hardingmag@harding.edu or write us at *Harding* magazine, 915 E. Market Ave., Box 12234, Searcy, AR 72149-5615. Your response could appear on this page in our fall issue.



Daffodils surround a whimsical sculpture donated by Bob and Sandy Brackett in the secret garden, an addition to the First Ladies Garden completed in 2016.

PHOTO BY JEFF MONTGOMERY



After the signing ceremony, Clifton L. Ganus Jr. is greeted warmly by his oldest son, Cliff Ganus III.

Distinguished Chair honors Ganus

IN MARCH, WITH DONATIONS from the Ganus family, the University established the Clifton L. Ganus Jr. Distinguished Chair of History and Political Science in the College of Arts and Humanities. The endowed chair will serve to enhance the level of teaching and learning of history and political science not only in the department but also throughout the University.

“Most people know Dr. Ganus as an administrator for the University and an effective speaker and preacher,” Senior Planned Gifts Officer Don Kee said. “Generally, only former Harding students over age 70 know him as an outstanding history teacher and chairman of the history department. Dr. Ganus was a dedicated student and teacher and an accomplished historian.”

Ganus joined the faculty as professor of history and chairman of the department of history and social science in 1946. An archived letter from former student Bill Diles ('58) notes Ganus was “knowledgeable, interesting, professional and left every indication that [he] had the best interest of the student at heart.” Ten years later Ganus was appointed as vice president, and he became Harding’s third president in 1965.

The distinguished chair appointment in his

honor will be awarded to candidates showcasing excellence in teaching and potential to make a difference through use of the accompanying funds. The first appointment will be named in fall 2017. The endowed funds to be used by the chair will potentially cover research and publications, travel expenses for field trips, equipment and materials, expenses of special seminars and conferences, and visiting lecturers in the history and political science fields.

“The concept of an endowed chair is really neat because the financial gift recognizes the honored individual and the faculty member who fills the position, and it continually supports the mission of the college or department,” Provost Marty Spears said. “Our hope is to establish endowed chairs in every college or department to honor supporting individuals and distinguished faculty in that area.

“Chancellor Emeritus Ganus is of course a legend at Harding, and his career began as a history professor who had a reputation for making history come to life. I believe this honor will be very special to Dr. Ganus because it acknowledges and supports his beginning as a faculty member at Harding.”

College of Education CAEP accredited

IN DECEMBER 2016, Cannon-Clary College of Education became the first higher learning institution in Arkansas to receive accreditation from the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), the single-specialized accreditor for educator preparation in the United States.

“This recognition reflects a commitment from everyone in the College of Education, as well as our many professional partners in the field, to further our mission of preparing excellent educators who are ready to teach with a strong skill set and an even more powerful mindset,” Dr. Donny Lee, dean, said. “We are grateful that we can make a difference providing teachers, leaders and counselors for schools in Arkansas and literally all over the world.”

Although Harding is the first in Arkansas to complete the new CAEP standards accreditation process, the College of Education has been accredited by the National Council Accreditation of Teacher Education every seven years since 1961.

The CAEP Standards, adopted in 2013, reflect the voice from the education field on what makes a quality teacher. CAEP accreditation ensures that there is solid evidence that graduates are competent and caring and that staff are dedicated to continuous program improvement.

For students like junior Caitlin Harris, a birth to kindergarten and special education major pursuing licensure, the accreditation is recognition of the quality teachers in the College of Education.

“Every professor I have ever had in the College of Education has gone above and beyond to help me succeed,” Harris said. “My professors provide me with so many opportunities to observe, plan and teach lessons. One of my favorite things is that our professors practice what they preach. They are truly experts in their field, and they do everything they can to pass that knowledge on to their students.”

PHOTO BY JEFF MONTGOMERY

PHOTO BY JEFF MONTGOMERY



Treat others how you want to be treated, and even when they treat you bad, you treat them better.

JODIE, Indian Hills Elementary first grade

Her speech made me feel like I should be more nice to people.

FORD, Harding Academy third grade

Even though they were yelling at her, she acted calm and still went to school. She also prayed for them. She can be an example to us that we can do the right thing no matter what other people think.

JONATHAN, Harding Academy third grade

Her lecture was amazing. It almost made me cry. I learned about how her experience was challenging and sometimes lonely. From her speech, you learn how, even when life brings you down, you can persevere and get through it.

AUSTIN, Greenbrier Middle School eighth grade

No matter what your age, you can still make an impact on the world.

LILLYN, Greenbrier Middle School seventh grade

Ruby Bridges inspires local students



Everyday STUDENT

SENIOR TRUETT KEENER'S EXPERIENCES ARE PREPARING HIM FOR A CAREER IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE



CHOOSING A PATH In high school, senior Truett Keener from Millersburg, Pennsylvania, did not anticipate attending college. When he visited Harding's campus in 2013, he discovered an environment and career path he wanted to pursue. "I wanted to experience what it's like living in a community where there are a lot of Christians — a lot of believers and followers of Jesus. After touring the campus and looking at all the different departments, I realized criminal justice is something that would be very consistent with my interests down the road."

A PURPOSE Keener is majoring in criminal justice and plans to enroll in a police academy after graduation. He said a career in law enforcement would provide him with opportunities to positively influence his surrounding community. "For me, I found that the purpose of our life is to live for the Lord, to surrender to him, and to do and live as God would have us to live. With my passion to reach out to people and to help people who are in need, it's a career that I believe in, and it's a career that I see a lot of need for more Christians."

OUTREACH During the fall 2016 semester, Keener interned at the White County Sheriff's Office. He worked with deputies, detectives, jailers and bailiffs and experienced various patrol calls and courtroom procedures. During his four years at the University, Keener has been active with several community outreach programs, spring break missions, and the Student Association, and he has served as a resident assistant. "There is such a large population of incredibly warm-hearted people here who really love Jesus and to me that has been the absolute highlight of being here especially given that there is such diversity in nationalities from all over the world."

FRUITFUL EXPERIENCES From leading mission trips to participating in student committees, Keener said his time at the University has prepared him for his future. "Every opportunity that we have, whether we take it or not, we learn something from, and through that it betters us so that it broadens our horizons, experiences, abilities and capabilities. I would say these definitely helped prepare me for my goals in the future. These four years here at Harding have been fantastic — so many experiences, so many opportunities, a lot of great people. My experiences here at school — in the classroom as well as interacting in an internship — have more than prepared me to start out with a criminal justice career."

— Savanna DiStefano

PHOTO BY JEFF MONTGOMERY

HEARD in CHAPEL

MARCH 27, 2017

"When we will allow him, the road God chooses may be long — it may be winding. But nevertheless, wherever he leads us, that road is always going to bring us nearer to him. God left us the answer key for every test that we take in this life. He gave us the correct response for every question we have to answer."

Dr. Mike Justus ('74), member of the University's board of trustees

MARCH 23, 2017

"I'm learning daily that I'm part of a bigger picture. As a college student, I've realized the world we live in is about expectations. I've learned to be content where I am. Instead of falling to my knees to give up, I fell to my knees in prayer. Jesus can fix us in a way that no one can ever tell we were broken."

Heidi Abston, senior accounting major from Searcy

MARCH 20, 2017

"I believe in a God that is all powerful — all knowing. The only problem is I don't know. I don't have all the powers. I'm not going let any of this keep me from having the faith that I have. I pray that you don't let these struggles keep you away from who God is and what he can do for you."

Aris Ortiz, senior mathematics major from Ola, Arkansas

MARCH 14, 2017

"I believe firmly in my heart that it's God who decides what it means to be made in the image of God."

Dr. Dennis Matlock ('96), chair of the department of chemistry

FEB. 20, 2017

"I challenge you to walk in love so that the kingdom is expanded."

Tom Brandon, author

FEB. 13, 2017

"Our culture wants to define your singleness as a detriment, and that's not what the Bible teaches. The question for me is not, 'Are you single? Have you got somebody?' The question for me is 'What are you doing with your singleness?'"

Dr. Brian Simmons, professor of communication at Oklahoma Christian University

OCT. 28, 2016

"There is a tug-of-war between the values of our culture and the values of our faith. Harding can prepare you to exercise the character you build here when you leave for the rest of your life."

Dr. Swaid N. Swaid ('73), neurosurgeon

EVENTS

JUNE 4-9

National Leadership Forum

Students in ninth through 12th grade study the traditions and ideals upon which America was founded as a part of National Leadership Forum. During the weeklong program, they develop leadership skills, hear from nationally known speakers, attend lectures, and participate in discussions. www.harding.edu/nlforum

JUNE 8-9, JULY 13-14 AND AUG. 16-17

Summer Stampede

Stampede, the University's required summer orientation program, is a great time for incoming freshmen to meet their fellow classmates, build their class schedule, and prepare for their first semester of college. www.harding.edu/stampede

JUNE 10-15, 17-22 AND 24-29

Uplift

A Christian camp on campus, Uplift provides classes and speakers for campers to grow spiritually as well as plenty of time devoted to recreation and entertainment. Campers stay in residence halls and eat in the campus cafeteria. Uplift is open to students between seventh grade and their freshman year of college. www.upliftonline.com

SEPT. 21-24

Global Missions Experience

UNASHAMED: SHARING FAITH IN THE FACE OF PERSECUTION
Nearly 1,200 students are expected to attend Global Missions Experience, enjoying experiential learning and networking with missionaries from around the world. Held at Tahkodah, the Experience will include 25 hands-on learning

stations, a market experience, training in the discovery Bible study method, and classes on how to use all kinds of majors in God's mission. www.harding.edu/gme

SEPT. 24-27

Lectureship

RIGHTEOUSNESS FROM GOD: THE REVOLUTIONARY MESSAGE OF ROMANS
Lectureship attendees can look forward to learning more about the remarkable influence of the book of Romans throughout history and in the hearts of countless believers; participating in uplifting worship assemblies; and above all, experiencing a deeper awareness of the nature of our salvation. www.harding.edu/lectureship

For a complete list of events, visit www.harding.edu/calendar.

BY THE NUMBERS

HALL OF FAME

1989

Year of first induction

100

Total number of inductees

5

Number of women added this year, the most in any induction class

15

Total number of coaches inducted including four in this year's class

27

Number of inductees associated with the football program, the most of any sport

11

Total number of induction classes

15

Number of sports teams represented, including the first women's soccer inductee this year





Klein leads 20 years of Arkansas Capitol tours

WHEN LORI KLEIN, PROFESSOR of political science, began teaching courses on Arkansas state and local government in 1996, a trip to the Arkansas State Capitol was already included in the structure of the class. Klein wanted her students to have the same experience previous classes had, so she gathered her students as well as her infant son and a babysitter to venture around the Capitol. She led her 20th annual tour Wednesday, Feb. 1.

"I take them for one reason: you cannot replace seeing things with your own eyes," Klein said. "I can talk to you all day, even tell you great war stories. You can read the best books on theory and on practice, you can watch all the 'House of Cards' episodes you want, but there is no substitute for being there meeting the people who work so hard as public servants — seeing the beautiful building and taking in the perfectly imperfect process that is a legislative session."

Students from Klein's class met Gov. Asa Hutchinson, Speaker of the House of Representatives Jeremy Gillam from Judsonia, and Senate President Pro Tempore Jonathan Dismang ('01) and Rep. Les Eaves, who both

represent the Searcy area.

The students were recognized by both chambers of the Arkansas General Assembly and were seated in the Senate gallery reserved for special guests. They were given the opportunity to sit in senators' chairs on the state Senate floor and attended a private session with Hutchinson.

Senior Rachael Brimberry said students were treated as future members of Arkansas government as well as guests.

"As Harding students, it made us proud to see many Harding alumni taking a role in our state government," Brimberry said. "It helps reaffirm that Harding has a larger impact on the state of Arkansas and other states as well as the nation by creating leaders who will promote Christian principles."

According to Klein, in the last 20 years, a Supreme Court chief justice, a governor, a House speaker, a Senate president pro tempore and other state government officials have come from White County. Klein said students make connections between classroom lectures and reading to real-life people and responsibilities.

"The students get to meet people who were

in their seats just a few years before who are now making a major impact on policy in the state of Arkansas, and they come away with a better appreciation for the complexity of the system," Klein said. "The drive to be of service is strong in the Searcy community, so the drive for public service is strong here as well. It's one of many reasons why 'It's great to be at Harding.'"

During the trip, the group visited alumna Caroline Pruitt ('16) who is currently working in the governor's office of correspondence at the Capitol. As they were visiting Pruitt's office, the staff director walked in and announced a future job opening. According to Klein, seniors on the trip now hold her business card. Klein said she wants her students to meet people working in government and understand how many of them have ties to Harding, and such opportunities are found outside Searcy.

"Although government may seem very intimidating to the average citizen, it is more inviting than it appears," Brimberry said. "Government is made for the people, by the people, and the legislators proved this point by making us feel welcome."

Theatre offers new majors

THE DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ADDED three new majors and revised its two current majors. Beginning fall 2017, bachelor's degrees in acting, design and production and theatre education for grades 7-12 will be added along with enhanced theatre and education K-12 majors.

"Theatre arts at Harding University is about creating a collaborative community on an artistic mission," said Dr. Steven Frye, chair of the department. "Students are guided in this collaboration by a talented faculty and staff who strive to model Christian values and vision in the creative process, in scholarship, in mentoring and in service."

The design and production major will have four concentrations including set design, costume design, production, and light and sound. According to Frye, changes in curriculum have been made to better equip students for the job market. He said programs were influenced by common theatre practices and standards set by the National Association of Schools of Theatre.

Drew Holley, a freshman theatre major, said he plans to take advantage of the upcoming programs.

"My primary focus is acting, so the fact they are adding that as a major is fantastic," Holley said. "I feel the upcoming theatre majors will not find it so difficult to define or pick their major."

The department of theatre also offers minors in theatre, costume



Makanna Mason and Claire Hayostek perform in Katt Stinnett's one act "The Traveling Sisters."

design, lighting and sound, set design, acting, and technical theatre for various nontheatre majors.

"These new programs, coupled with a strong production program, a resident summer theatre program, internships and professional networking, provide students with the tools they need to succeed and develop as theatre professionals," Frye said. "It allows students to truly become a jack-of-all-trades and master of one in theatre education."

PHOTO BY ARIGAIL COOPER

MY VIEW

GINGER BLACKSTONE

Media's role

The term "fake news" has populated numerous headlines and been used as a definition for completely fabricated news stories. In a December 2016 Pew Research Survey, 64 percent of adults said they believe completely made-up news has caused a great deal of confusion about the basic facts of current events, and 23 percent admitted to accidentally or purposefully sharing a made-up news story. In a world where content from countless news sources fills our social media feeds and web browsers, how can we stay informed on current nation- and world-wide events that affect our lives? We talked to former CNN producer and Assistant Professor of Communication Ginger Blackstone about her perspective on fake news and the role of media in America.

FAKE NEWS. As a longtime journalist and current media researcher, the rhetoric and confusion is disconcerting. According to the Pew Research Center, 64 percent of Americans are greatly confused about the basic facts of current events. So how can you tell when news is believable?

First, pay attention to the language of a story. Separate fact from opinion. Is this someone's interpretation of events? Is someone sharing his or her feelings about how something ought to be? Or is this researched information attributed to a reliable source with facts, figures and data? Is the source nonpartisan? Is it trustworthy? Turn on your inner skeptic.

Is there bias? Yes. We're all biased. A dozen people can witness a car crash, and each one will tell police something different. Are they all lying? Not necessarily. But just as officers interview multiple people, we should seek a variety of reputable perspectives.

A theory called the hostile media effect suggests audiences have a tendency to perceive news that corresponds with their beliefs as "objective"; conversely, they perceive news that challenges their beliefs as "biased." News we don't like may still be true.

Remember that mainstream news operations take their reputation and credibility very seriously, yet mistakes happen. Maybe a trusted source relayed incorrect information. Perhaps a reporter misinterpreted facts from a complicated document. But most of the reporters with whom I worked tried to get it right.

Consider that politicians have had an interesting relationship with the press even in the early years of our nation. The

forefathers who authored the First Amendment later passed the Sedition Act of 1798, which made it a crime to speak or publish false or malicious statements against the U.S. government. Politicians like transparency as long as journalists report on others' misdeeds rather than their own.

But, if not for journalists, who will weed out corruption among our leaders? This is not a partisan issue but one of holding all of those in power accountable to the people. While President Donald Trump is experiencing a strained relationship with the press, fellow Republican and former President George W. Bush recently held that the media is "important to democracy."

I happen to agree. But that is my opinion ...



PHOTO BY JEFF MONTGOMERY



NEWSMAKERS

BUSINESS OFFICE

John Noah became director of the business office in January, replacing Molly Douglas who retired in May.

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES

Dr. Ginger Blackstone, assistant professor of broadcast journalism and electronic media production, won first place for her paper "The Eyes Have It: Television News, Fear Triggers, and the Race for Viewers." Blackstone also won the 2017 Harwood Outstanding Dissertation Award for her doctoral dissertation "The Worst of Times: The Prevalence and Power of Fear in Television News." She claimed both awards at the Broadcast Education Association convention in April in Las Vegas.

Professor of Art John Keller's painting "Langshan Mountains Landscape" was selected to be displayed in the National Art Education Association's Member Exhibition in the NAEA Studio and Gallery in Washington, D.C., from October 2016 through April 2017.

Student publications staff members were honored at the 2016 Southeast Journalism Conference in February for their work on The Bison newspaper. Senior Sawyer Hite ranked seventh for Best Newspaper Page Layout Designer. Junior Jordan Doyle, senior Hannah Moore and alumnus Hunter Beck ranked fourth for Best Public Service Journalism. Senior Garrett Howard ranked ninth for Best Arts and Entertainment Writer, and senior Amanda Floyd ranked third for Best Press Photographer.

Dr. Jay Walls, associate professor of music, was named director of the University's Arts and Life Concert Series in March.

COLLEGE OF NURSING

Dr. Cathleen Shultz, former dean and professor of nursing, became chair of the National League for Nursing's Commission for Nursing Education Accreditation Board of Commissioners in January.

The Nursing Student Association chapter was named a National Student Nurses Association Stellar School Chapter at the National Student Nurses Association convention in April in Dallas. The chapter president is senior Cami Ash. Ash and seniors Rachel Bow, April Hunn, Emily Jones, Kayla Rogers and Alexa Santamaria claimed six out of 10 scholarships from the Arkansas Nursing Student Association that were awarded to attend the convention.

Patty Smith, assistant professor of nursing, contributed an article "Organizational Perspectives on Rapid Response Team Structure, Function and Cost: A Qualitative Study" to the Dimensions in Critical Care Nursing journal in January. Her article "Organizational Perspectives of Nurse Executives in 15 Hospitals on Impact and Effectiveness of Rapid Response Teams" will be published in The Joint Commission Journal on Quality and Patient Safety in June.

OFFICE OF THE SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

Dr. Jim Carr was named vice chairman of the Higher Education Coordinating Board in January. The board is charged by state law "to coordinate higher education in Arkansas and to assure an orderly and effective development of each of the publicly supported institutions of higher education."



Fourth in the nation

By SCOTT GOODE, assistant athletic director for sports information



ON AUG. 21, 2016, WOMEN'S basketball assistant coach Weston Jameson posted on Instagram a picture of the team's first meeting of the school

year — a cookout around the pool at the home of head coach Tim Kirby. Along with the team photo, Jameson wrote, "The journey of 1,000 miles begins with a single step. We are excited to go on this journey together!"

Lady Bison basketball took many journeys during its 2016-17 season, the most successful in program history. Its ultimate journey, to the NCAA Division II Elite Eight in Columbus, Ohio, was not quite 1,000 miles — only 677 — but seven months to the day from the time the photo was taken at the cookout, the Lady Bisons accomplished something none of them will ever forget.

Not only was it the successful journey that made this team great, but it also was the fortress they established at Rhodes-Reaves Field House.

The team's first trip to Missouri was enough to make Lady Bison fans wonder what this season had in store. The opener was against Minnesota State Moorhead in Kansas City, Missouri, a neutral site that allowed the two Central Region opponents to meet halfway. The teams met at Johnson County Community College and were ready for a 2 p.m. tipoff, but something was missing — officials. Delayed

more than an hour, the team returned to the locker room where it sang songs, did the mannequin challenge and bonded until it was time to play. The game actually began with only one official (a second arrived later). Harding won the game 62-54 led by junior Syndey Layrock's 25 points. Moorhead won its next 15 games and ended its season in Searcy of all places at the

two more GAC victories on the road to move to 4-0 in conference play.

Harding's second loss of the season came Dec. 6 at Christian Brothers. It was the last game starting guard Riley Rose would play for a while. Rose, a Searcy native and a transfer from Missouri State, had to miss the next 12 games due to a heart condition.

Just before Christmas break, the Lady Bisons started an eight-game winning streak with a home victory over Crowley's Ridge and then reeled off seven straight GAC wins to start 2017. The winning streak came on the heels of tragedy that struck New Year's Day when Kennedy Hogue, the 17-year-old sister of sophomore Caroline Hogue, died of complications from ulcerative colitis. The entire team attended the funeral, and Kennedy's memory helped inspire the team the rest of the season.

"The team immediately went to be with her," says Kirby. "You could see how that was comforting to Caroline and her family. After that, her teammates individually made sure that she had the support she needed."

In the second game of the new year, a 72-69 win Jan. 7, Harding trailed Southeastern Oklahoma 65-39 with 1:03 left in the third quarter. According to sports analytics website Inpredictable.com, a team trailing by 26 points with only 11 minutes left to play wins only once in 250 games. Those odds could not take into



The Lady Bisons celebrate after winning the regional title to advance to the Elite Eight in Columbus, Ohio.

PHOTO BY JEFF MONTGOMERY

For the latest sports information, visit www.hardingsports.com.

BY THE NUMBERS

50.0 Percentage of 3-point field goals made by Bison basketball senior Will Francis, which led NCAA Division II. He made 83 of 166. Bison basketball finished the season 14-13.

60:1 Sophomore Syndey Jones shooting percentage, becoming only the second Lady Bison basketball player to shoot more than 60 percent for a season. Chelsea McCarty's 61.2 percent in 2005-06 is the school record.

997 Minutes played by senior A'ndrea Haney during the 2016-17 season, tying the school record set by Emily Prysock in 1997-98.

59', 91 1/2" Senior Josh Syrotchen's Harding record in the 35-pound weight throw during the indoor track season at a meet in Pittsburg, Kansas. He held the previous record of 57 feet, 1 inch.

9.43 Junior Raianne Mason's Harding indoor 60-meter hurdles record set at a meet in Pittsburg, Kansas, breaking the previous mark of 9.47 by Synda Veitenheimer in 2004. She also teamed with sophomore Chelsea Howard, freshman Ashley Reinert and sophomore Kaylin Turley to break the 4x400-meter relay record.

next. They only thought about the game they were about to play. Then when the season is over, you look back later and think: 'Man, that was some kind of run!' That kind of thinking also helped us once tournament play started."

With the regular season championship in its pocket, Harding moved on to the GAC Tournament in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, where they met up with an old friend and good-luck charm, James Droz, a student with special needs the team adopted in 2012 during its annual community service bowling outing prior to the tournament.

Droz had plenty of reason to cheer for the Lady Bisons again this season. Harding opened the tournament at Bruin Field House with a resounding 77-45 victory over No. 8 seed Arkansas-Monticello. In the semifinals, Harding cruised to a 67-48 win over No. 5 seed East Central, setting up the Lady Bisons' third meeting with No. 2 seed Arkansas Tech in the finals. It was a classic.

Arkansas Tech's Cheyenne North made a layup with 1:27 left to give the Golden Suns a 73-69 lead. They did not score again.

Lady Bison Haney went coast-to-coast and made a left-handed layup with 1:18 left to cut Tech's lead to two. She had a steal on Tech's next possession, and the Golden Suns fouled

Hogue, who made both free throws and tied the game at 73.

With 16 seconds left, Tech's Calli White missed a driving layup. Hogue rebounded and found Rose racing down the court. Rose passed to Padgett in the left corner. Her attempt at a game winner was deflected, and Jones came from the far side of the court, stepped in front of a Tech player, pulled down the rebound, spun to her left, and laid the game-winning layup off the glass. The points were Jones' 29th and 30th of the game.

"That game was Syndey Jones' coming out party," Jameson says. "She had been getting better through the year, but that game she figured out that she could be the best player on the floor."

After a serious dogpile near midcourt, Harding cut down the nets, claiming its second GAC Tournament championship in three seasons. Jones was named tournament MVP, and Haney and Hogue were named to the All-Tournament team. With the victory, Harding earned an automatic berth into the NCAA Division II Central Region Tournament. The next questions were: Where would the tournament be and whom would Harding play?

The NCAA announced those answers later that night: Searcy and Arkansas Tech — again. Harding earned the right to host even though



it was the No. 2 seed. Top-seeded Emporia State plays its home basketball games at White Auditorium in Emporia, Kansas. The arena also hosts the Kansas State High School Activities Association 6A state basketball championship the same weekend as the NCAA Division II Central Region Tournament. So hosting duties went to the No. 2 seed: Harding.

The Lady Bisons entered the Central Region Tournament a perfect 12-0 at home. It was only the second time in program history that women's basketball won all its home games. They needed three more home wins at Rhodes-Reaves Field House to claim their first Central Region championship.

In game one, the team faced a familiar opponent. For the fourth time and second-straight



Sophomore Sydney Jones goes up for two as the Lady Bisons defeat University of Central Missouri 66-58 in the semifinals of the regional tournament. Jones scored 13 points and had 10 rebounds.

2016-17 LADY BISONS

- 31-4 record, the most wins in a season in program history
- GAC regular season champions for the third time in the last four seasons
- GAC Tournament champions for the second time in the last three seasons
- NCAA Central Region Tournament champions
- First appearance at the NCAA Elite Eight
- Advanced to the NCAA Final Four
- Fourth in the final WBCA Coaches Poll, the best finish in program history

game, Harding took down Arkansas Tech 59-46. The two teams have a long history that began in 1984, and much of it was dominated by Tech. The teams played at least once every season after that, and Harding did not earn its fourth win against Tech until 2014, 30 years later. But Harding owned the 2016-17 season. The fourth win over Tech sent Harding into the regional semifinals against 19th-ranked Central Missouri of the Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association.

Harding scored 13 of the game's final 15 points to come from behind and defeat Central Missouri 66-58. Rose's basket with 3:06 left snapped a 56-56 tie and put Harding ahead for good. A pair of Hogue free throws pushed the lead to 60-56, and the Lady Bisons made six free throws down the stretch to win the game.

The win moved the team into the regional championship where it faced the nation's sixth-ranked team, Emporia State. The first half looked bleak for the Lady Bisons, trailing 38-24 at halftime, and Emporia State pushed its lead to 18 points early in the third quarter. But this Lady Bison team had another surprise in store.

Harding stormed back, using its vaunted inside game and a smothering defense, and with 41 seconds left, Jones showed off her late-game magic again hitting a layup that gave the team its first lead since early in the first quarter. An Emporia State turnover and foul sent Rose to the free throw line where she made one of two. Emporia's 3-pointer at the buzzer missed, and Harding won 58-56 before what many believe was the loudest crowd ever to see a game at Rhodes-Reaves Field House for

its first-ever 30-win season.

Finishing 15-0 at home, the team headed to its first NCAA Division II Elite Eight in Columbus, Ohio.

The trip to Columbus proved interesting. The NCAA sent the Lady Bisons to Columbus in four different groups with layovers in three different airports. With no delays, however, the entire team arrived at John Glenn Columbus International Airport.

Mentions of the Elite Eight were visible throughout the city – billboards, ads in the airport and especially in the team hotel, Sheraton Columbus Capitol Square, where even the key cards for the rooms displayed a welcome to the Elite Eight.

"It felt different than a normal trip," Jameson says. "Columbus gave us a police escort to the ho-

PHOTO BY JEFF MONTGOMERY



The noise level in Rhodes-Reaves Field House is deafening as the Lady Bisons come back from an 18-point deficit early in the third quarter to defeat No. 1 seed Emporia State 58-56 in the regional finals.

PHOTO BY JEFF MONTGOMERY

tel. That makes you feel pretty special. They did a lot for the teams to make them feel important."

One of the highlights of the trip for the team was the pretournament banquet held at COSI Columbus, a science museum and research center. The teams witnessed science experiments and viewed animals from the Columbus Zoo. The most memorable part of the night might have been the introduction of Mason Parker to the Lady Bisons. Parker, a bouncy, energetic 8-year-old, is part of the Make-A-Wish program and immediately became part of the team. He joined the team at events, practices, games, and even helped encourage them pregame and postgame in the locker room.

Parker made a special connection with several players on the team including Haney. In a Facebook post following the tournament, Haney

said, "I cannot put into words how blessed I, and my whole team, was to get to know Mason! What a joy he was to be around. He has such a positive attitude that was so fun to be around!! He was definitely our good luck charm! I will never forget this experience and the impression this sweet boy made on my heart!!!"

After a day of events and practice, Harding was ready for game day at host Ohio Dominican University. The Lady Bisons received the No. 4 seed in the tournament and took on No. 5 seed Queens College from Queens, New York. Queens entered the tournament ranked 15th nationally and featuring Madison Rowland, the NCAA Division II national player of the year.

Buoyed by a large traveling contingent with several players, including Harding's "Sixth Man Band" and cheerleading squad, the team erased an

early deficit and turnover problems to race ahead of Queens and claim a 73-69 victory. Jones led Harding with 22 points and 17 rebounds, the most points and rebounds by any Lady Bison in an NCAA Tournament game.

The victory sent the Lady Bisons into the Final Four and a matchup against the nation's No. 1 team, undefeated Ashland. Ashland is based in nearby Ashland, Ohio, only 80 miles away from Columbus. The two teams battled before a national television audience on CBS Sports Network with Harding losing 90-77 to the team that went on to win the national championship. Hogue led Harding with 24 points and 12 rebounds in the game.

The loss ended the journey but not before Lady Bison basketball's seven-month odyssey resulted in their best season ever. 🏆



HALL OF FAME grows to 100

By SCOTT GOODE

Photography by JEFF MONTGOMERY

On Friday, Feb. 3, at a ceremony in the David B. Burks American Heritage Building Founder's Room, Bison Boosters inducted new members into the Harding Athletics Hall of Fame. The 16 members of the 2017 Hall of Fame represent the 11th induction class and bring the total number of inductees to 100.

FRONT ROW:
Mildred Groover
(posthumously for Hugh Groover)
Karyl Bailey
Daniel Kirwa
Kendyl Washburn Bryan
Jimmy Sloan

MIDDLE ROW:
Alicia Williams Leverette
Julius Kosgei
Bridget Benson
Justin Cone
Manuela Nesheva Harris

BACK ROW:
Rick Jones
Lewis Walker
Aaron Farley
Matt Hall

NOT PICTURED:
Lori Hendricks Piland
Gil Truitt

KARYL BAILEY, OUTSTANDING COACH

- Harding's first head volleyball coach in 1983
- Compiled a 370-273 record in 16 seasons as head coach
- Won five AIC regular-season championships and his 1991 team advanced to the NAIA National Tournament
- Won more than 30 matches in a season four times including a school-record 43 wins in 1989

BRIDGET BENSON, BASKETBALL, 1993-97

- Third in career scoring at Harding (1,803 points)
- Two-time all-conference and all-region — played two seasons when Harding was not in a conference
- Second at Harding in career steals (201), third in blocks (103), fourth in rebounds (878) and fifth in assists (377)

KENDYL WASHBURN BRYAN, SOCCER, 2004-07

- Three-time all-conference and one-time all-region, two-time Academic All-District and 2007 Academic All-America
- Appeared in *Sports Illustrated's* Faces in the Crowd
- Harding's career leader in goals (48) and points (112)
- 2007 Gulf South Conference Player of the Year and 2008 Berryhill Award winner

JUSTIN CONE, BASEBALL, 2002-05

- Three-time all-conference, 2005 all-region (Bison baseball's first all-region player in NCAA)
- Harding's career leader in hits (219), home runs (47) and RBIs (198)
- Played in 194 games as a Bison with a .363 average, 47 home runs and 198 RBIs
- 9-5 with a 3.60 ERA and six saves in 34 career appearances over 90.0 innings

AARON FARLEY, BASKETBALL/GOLF, 2000-03

- Three-time all-conference, two-time all-region, 2003 All-American
- 2003 GSC Player of the Year and Berryhill Award winner
- Second in career 3-pointers (206), sixth in assists (416), sixth in steals (150) and eighth in points (1,539)
- Made a school-record 88 consecutive free throws as a senior
- 2003 men's golf leader in stroke average

HUGH GROOVER, OUTSTANDING COACH

- Harding's first men's basketball coach after the program was re-established in 1957
- Coached the Bisons for 12 seasons, including Harding's first winning basketball season in 1963-64
- Coached Harding to a then-record 17 victories in 1968-69, his last as head coach
- Also coached track and field and tennis
- Served as athletic director from 1969-77

MATT HALL, BASKETBALL/GOLF, 2004-08

- Three-time all-conference, three-time all-region, two-time All-American and three-time Academic All-GSC
- Three-time conference player of the year and 2005 regional player of the year
- Second in career scoring (2,227 points) and scoring average (19.2) at Harding
- Holds Harding's career record for free throws made (634)
- 2007 Academic All-GSC in golf and 2008 Berryhill Award winner

MANUELA NESHEVA HARRIS, VOLLEYBALL, 2006-09

- Three-time all-conference, three-time all-region, and 2007 All-American
- Two-time Academic All-District
- Harding's career leader in kills and aces
- Harding won three regular-season conference championships in her four years with a 101-34 record

RICK JONES, DISTINGUISHED COACH/ALUMNUS

- 1977 Harding graduate
- Has won six state championships at Arkansas' Greenwood High School
- 2012 National Federation of High School Coaches Coach of the Year
- Has a 251-65 career record and 121-17 record at Greenwood

DANIEL KIRWA, TRACK AND FIELD/CROSS-COUNTRY, 2008-10

- 13-time All-American and four-time national champion in track and field
- Three-time conference champion and three-time regional champion in cross-country
- Twice finished in the top seven at the national cross-country meet

JULIUS KOSGEI, TRACK AND FIELD/CROSS-COUNTRY, 2004-08

- Nine-time All-American and one-time national champion in track and field
- Four-time all-conference and all-region, including the 2006 regional champion in cross-country
- Twice finished in the top four at the national cross-country meet
- 2009 Berryhill Award winner

ALICIA WILLIAMS LEVERETTE, TENNIS, 2006-09

- Harding's career leader in No. 1 singles wins (70)
- Ranks second at Harding in career doubles wins (66)
- 2009 Berryhill Award winner

LORI HENDRICKS PILAND, VOLLEYBALL, 1992-95

- Two-time All-American
- Two-time AIC MVP
- Harding was 72-28 during her junior and senior seasons

JIMMY SLOAN, TRACK AND FIELD/FOOTBALL, 1988-92

- Four-time All-American in pole vault, three-time indoors and once outdoors
- Holds Harding's indoor pole vault record at 16-6
- Won the 1990 AIC pole vault at 15-5
- Played 22 football games with 43 receptions for 555 yards
- Had six touchdowns in 1991-92

GIL TRUITT, DISTINGUISHED COACH/ALUMNUS

- 1956 Harding graduate
- Served 33 years as a teacher, principal and basketball coach at Mount Edgumbe High School in Sitka, Alaska
- Inducted into the Alaska High School Hall of Fame in 2006
- Led Mount Edgumbe to the Southeast Conference Class B championship

LEWIS WALKER, TRACK AND FIELD/FOOTBALL, 1959-62

- Harding's starting quarterback for the football team in 1959-61 and also played defense and returned kicks
- Won the 1959 220-yard low hurdles at the AIC meet and placed second in the 120-yard high hurdles, second in both events in 1960 AIC meet, second in the 120-yard high hurdles in 1961, won the high hurdles and placed third in the low hurdles in 1962

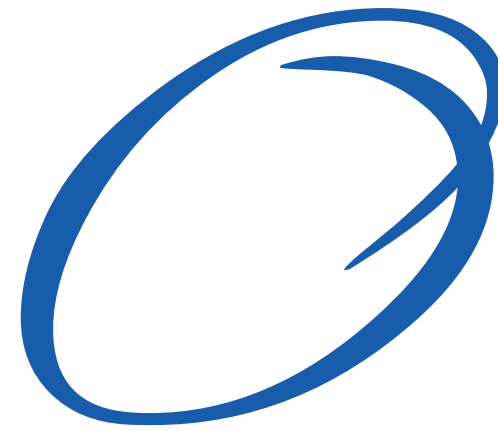
First ladies

GARDEN PARTY



By JENNIFER HANNIGAN
Photography by JEFF MONTGOMERY

Leah Gentry Burks,
Louise Nicholas Ganus
and Ann Hutson McLarty



In a brisk March morning, first ladies Louise Ganus, Leah Burks and Ann McLarty gathered for tea under the colonnade in the First Ladies Garden. Upon sitting down at the table together, Burks remarked how nice it was for them to still be in the same place as many past university presidents and their wives tend to leave after retirement. The three women, who collectively make up more than 50 years of Harding's history, share a special bond having served in the same role. Through their connection, these first ladies of Harding are able to provide support and understanding for each other that few others can.

As to be expected when three friends meet up, the conversation turned to their shared experiences and the memories of being first lady.



Louise Nicholas Ganus

FIRST LADY FROM 1965-87, WIFE OF DR. CLIFTON GANUS JR.

I TOOK SPEECH CLASS UNDER SISTER [WOODSON] ARMSTRONG. She said to me, "Honey, you're the only person I know who puts two syllables in 'and.'" I loved her very much.

I HAD TO LEARN A LOT FROM [FORMER FIRST LADIES] MRS. ARMSTRONG AND MRS. [SALLIE] BENSON. Mrs. Armstrong gave me an Emily Post etiquette book that I used when we had guests and dinners. Mrs. Benson had me serve a lot, sit at the head of the table, and help her. It helped me to learn what to do when my time came. The dinners were up to the women. They had to cook, clean and have them in their home. There was no catering. I had friends and my daughter, Debbie, helping me.

THE HOUSE WAS LIKE GRAND CENTRAL STATION. We didn't have hotels. We kept the guests in our homes. Everyone from men playing faculty/staff softball to dignitaries, parents wanting to bring their kids to look at the school came through there. We lived in the Rock House [now the campus ministry house on Market Avenue] and built the house we're in now in 1961. We knew we needed a house that could keep guests.

THE EARLY FIRST LADIES HAD FLOWER GARDENS. I would make arrangements for the dinners from those flowers. I was one of the founding members of the Searcy garden club, Greenkeepers. We

made corsages. We didn't have a florist in Searcy. That was part of it, being able to pull off those things together. It was a lot to do. I'm thankful I was healthy, and Cliff was healthy.

I BEGAN ASSOCIATED WOMEN FOR HARDING. When we were in New York, I was a member of the Columbia Dames while Cliff was in school there. We did activities together. I enjoyed being a member of that group and supporting that school. So I brought that back to Harding. We wanted an activity group. It's grown to different towns.

I WROTE INDIVIDUAL LETTERS TO THE WIVES OF BOARD MEMBERS. I didn't type back then, and I wrote individual letters inviting them to come to the meetings with their husbands. That created a relationship with them that became helpful. They went back to their communities and got help for the school, raising funds.

I HAD TO WORK AFTER MY FRESHMAN YEAR. I had a scholarship the first year, but after that I had to work. I worked for Dr. [George] Benson in college and learned to sign his name on letters exactly as he did.

I LOVED BEING FIRST LADY. I really enjoyed it, and I've loved having Harding as a part of our lives. I was just fortunate enough to come to Harding and meet Cliff Ganus. It has been a wonderful life.


Leah Gentry Burks

FIRST LADY FROM 1987-2013, WIFE OF DR. DAVID B. BURKS

MY PHILOSOPHY WAS WHATEVER I NEED TO DO, THAT'S WHAT I'LL DO. My family came first, which meant the children and David, and I would support him in whatever way I could. Whatever he asked me to do, I'd try to do it.

MY FIRST PRIORITY WAS FAMILY, SO UNTIL THEY WERE OUT OF THE HOME, I REALLY TRIED TO KEEP AN EVEN KEEL. I didn't travel with David as long as they were at home, but when they left and got married, then I could start doing projects. But I remember Dr. Benson came to me one day and said, "Whatever you do, don't forget your family."

WE TRIED TO BE CONSIDERATE OF OUR CHILDREN'S LIVES BECAUSE THEY WERE STILL AT HOME WHEN DAVID BECAME PRESIDENT. It affected them probably more so than it did us. We tried to keep things on a normal keel. When we built the house, we purposely put a staircase right inside the backdoor so that when the kids came in from their activities, they wouldn't have to go through the crowd, they could just go up to their bedrooms. If they wanted to come down, that was fine, but if they wanted to go up there and have their own time, they could. We tried to be a normal family and stress the importance of family.

THINGS DIDN'T CHANGE THAT MUCH WHEN DAVID BECAME PRESIDENT BECAUSE HE HAD ALWAYS BEEN ACTIVE. We always entertained; it was just on a bigger scale. We always had lots of company. We still do.

THE HARDING COMMUNITY IS ALWAYS THERE TO HELP. I guess when I had my cancer, that was probably the biggest example. They were there. They were very supportive. I did what I could, and they were understanding. I think the part that really impressed me was all the notes I got from all over the world. The

concern I got. I'm a very private person. I didn't realize all these people were out there. They showed how much we're a family.

MRS. GANUS TOLD ME THE SAME THING I TOLD ANN: JUST DO IT YOUR OWN WAY. Don't try to copy someone else. There's enough stress without trying to be somebody you're not. For Louise, it was a different time. It was a smaller campus. She had a hard act to follow with Mrs. Benson. She was supportive. If I had any questions, I could always call on her. We're so different that I just tried to be myself.

I WOULD NEVER HAVE DREAMED GROWING UP ON A FARM IN ILLINOIS THAT I WOULD BE ENTERTAINING DIGNITARIES IN MY HOME. That we would have Mikhail Gorbachev in our living room or Barbara Bush sitting by my fireplace and asking about my children or Margaret Thatcher talking to my daughter-in-law and giving her advice on her newborn baby. I found Barbara Bush to be the most personable. After it was all over, she could have said she was tired and left, but she sat down and patted the seat and said, come, sit and talk to me.

I HAVE LOVED WATCHING THE STUDENTS DEVELOP FROM COMING IN AS FRESHMEN. We had a home Bible study, and since our home was nearby, we had a lot of freshmen. And I've been able to watch them grow over the years and have their own families. It's kind of like children. You prepare them all their lives to leave and then when the time comes and they do, you don't want them to.

AS THE TIMES HAVE CHANGED AND THE COLLEGE HAS CHANGED, I BELIEVE GOD HAS STEPPED IN AND GUIDED. There was a need, and I think he was responsible for choosing and making it possible.



Leah Burks carries flowers from the First Ladies Garden, Louise Ganus holds the Bible given to her at graduation in 1942 by Woodson Harding Armstrong, and Ann McLarty's tea cup features Sallie Benson's favorite color: pink.



Ann Hutson McLarty

FIRST LADY FROM 2013 TO PRESENT, WIFE OF DR. BRUCE MCLARTY

I THINK I HAD AN ADVANTAGE IN THAT BRUCE WAS ON THE CABINET, AND SO I GOT TO WATCH LEAH FOR ABOUT SEVEN YEARS BEFORE ALL OF THIS, SO THAT HELPED ME IN KNOWING WHAT TO EXPECT. It wasn't an overwhelming task when the time came, and then I had these two to seek advice about whatever I was wanting or needing. Leah never made it look difficult, which was wonderful. That doesn't mean that it wasn't, but she never made it look that way.

ONE OF THE BIGGEST THINGS THAT SURPRISED ME ABOUT BEING FIRST LADY WAS THE PACE. We vacillate from it's crazy to it's insane. The pace is unrelenting. It's constant. You have to make your peace with that; otherwise, it would drive you nuts.

IT TOUCHES ME DEEPLY WHEN SOMEONE WILL SAY, "I PRAY FOR YOU AND BRUCE DAILY!" And I may not even know them. I always say, "Please keep on because we're always going to need that."

I WAS A NURSE AT THE CAMPUS CLINIC FOR 20 YEARS, AND WATCHING THE STUDENTS MATURE AND LAUNCH IS ONE OF THE MOST FULFILLING THINGS. It's just great to see the difference because there's a big difference from a freshman to a senior. It's so exciting when the freshmen come because they are so excited. And then, at the end, they're kind of melancholy when they leave. It's fun to meet up with them later on.

FAMILY LIFE IS A DAY-TO-DAY THING, DAY-TO-DAY WORKING ON BALANCE. It's not looking too far ahead so it's not so overwhelming. I'm having to try to make sure we get the time with the grandkids and our daughters that we really want to have. We take advantage of the Christmas break and other times and then I'm free at other times. You can stay so busy that there's no time to do anything with family.

WHEN BRUCE WAS NAMED PRESIDENT, THE FIRST THING THAT WENT THROUGH MY MIND WAS, I'VE GOT TO TALK TO MRS. BURKS AND MRS. GANUS. The neat thing was that they gave me their support. That was the best thing. Mrs. Ganus said, "I live right next door. You can come talk to me any time."

IT'S THE KNOWING THAT SOMEONE HAS WALKED THIS BEFORE. We got to talking one time as the three couples and said, you know, it's a rare thing to be in this position and know that there are two other couples who understand your world.

THEY NEVER DID GIVE ME ANY ADVICE — AND I THINK THEY DID THAT ON PURPOSE SO THAT IT WOULD ENCOURAGE

ME TO MAKE IT MY OWN. In any incoming first lady's mind, you wonder, "How in the world am I going to live up to her?" And there's no way to equal it. I just have to go my own path. There's a continuity that's been fun, for all of us to be here. It's been great to have them. ☺

The First Ladies Garden

CREATED TO HONOR THE FIVE WOMEN who have served the University as first lady, the First Ladies Garden also serves as a way for students, alumni and friends to celebrate the women who have helped shape their lives and is a visual reminder of the impact women have had on Harding. As Women for Harding worked to raise funds for the project, the idea was that every family has a woman who has served as its first lady, and those mothers, grandmothers, sisters and friends are represented throughout the garden.

Completed in 2016, the corridor sits between Stephens, Shores and Pryor halls and links older portions of campus to the newer Legacy Park area. Included in the addition are a colonnade, fountain, outdoor classroom and secret garden. Each first lady — Woodson Armstrong, Sallie Benson, Louise Ganus, Leah Burks and Ann McLarty — has a garden named in her honor with her favorite flowers.





A place at the TABLE

By SHELBY DIAS
Photography by SCOTT HUCK

Finding community while earning a doctorate proves to be a journey worth taking for Mac Sandlin and his family.

IN JUNE 2014, MAC SANDLIN, associate professor of Bible, and his wife, Jenni, moved from Searcy to Cedarville, Ohio, with their three children — Elijah, Josie and Judah — for Mac to pursue a doctoral degree in theology at the University of Dayton. Both born and raised in Beebe, Arkansas, Mac and Jenni were accustomed to frequent family visits and hefty Sunday-afternoon home-cooked meals before moving away from their hometown. After dinner one evening, they discuss how different it was having their first Sunday lunch in their new home.

“We get here that first Sunday, and we don’t know anybody at church,” Mac says before taking a bite of panna cotta Jenni made for dessert. “We come home and cook a big Sunday lunch, and no one is eating it. The walls are bare because we just moved in — it was so sad. We were homesick and lonely. While we are eating, the Jehovah’s Witnesses knocked on the door. I was so excited to have people there.”

“He always wants so many people in the house,” Jenni interjects.

“I asked them, ‘Do you want to come in, sit down and have a glass of tea?’” Mac continues. “They wouldn’t come in. Even the Jehovah’s Witnesses wouldn’t come in and visit with us. So yeah, it was a pretty lonely first few months.”

Since then, the Sandlins have made connections at UD and Xenia Church of Christ. Mac finished classes in May, and the family will soon return to Searcy so he can resume his position in the College of Bible and Ministry. Looking back, Jenni says it’s easy to see God’s hand at work over the last three years.

“I was excited because I like a little adventure, but it was also scary because we had never been totally on our own before,” Jenni says. “Our family is very active and involved in our lives, so to come here with no one we knew was kind of scary. But it worked out really, really well. If we had to move away, it could not have happened any better. We love this little place, this little town.”

MAKING ADJUSTMENTS

Cedarville is a small, quiet college town of 4,000 people located just outside of Dayton. With one school building housing the entire district and mom-and-pop restaurants that close every summer, it has a Stars Hollow or Mayberry-like appeal for the Sandlins.

Twice a week, Mac commutes 30 miles from Cedarville to UD, a Catholic institution with about 11,000 students. Jenni says Mac’s responsibilities at UD are one of the biggest adjustments for them.

“We sometimes wish we were closer to UD because he has his life there and then our life here,” Jenni says. “The biggest difficulty has been how we live together. He was gone a lot, especially that first year. He is occupied with what is going on at school and gets exhausted. He’s a very hands-on dad, so during the busy school times the difference really shows.”

In his first year, Mac took night classes and served as a graduate assistant while considering topics for his dissertation. Continuing his own classes and competence exams over the past two years, Mac has taught Introduction to Religious Studies, one of two required religion classes for UD students. The class provides an overview of religious studies, the Bible, Christian theology, and Christian engagement with other religions.

“On Tuesday, I gave a lecture on the prophets and wisdom literature,” Mac says. “That was one lecture in this course, but it’s an entire semester at Harding. There is some overlap with classes I taught at Harding because the biblical stuff is all the same. There is some new stuff like Vatican II documents that I teach.

“I’m not Catholic, and I tell them I’m not Catholic, but I’m also respectful of the environment. I frequently will say, ‘Catholic doctrine says this on this topic.’ They sometimes ask what I would say, and I feel free to say what I would think.”

Among his own professors and colleagues, Mac says he felt welcomed from the start regardless of religious differences.

“They have been incredibly hospitable to me. There are a number of social customs that are normal to Catholics that are not normal to me, and they are always very accommodating. I think part of that is the Marianist emphasis on community, hospitality and friendliness. They try to make me feel at home, and they are very respectful of who I am and where I’m coming from.”

FINDING COMMUNITY

“The joke with Marianists is ‘There will be food,’” Mac says sitting down for lunch with Anthony Rosselli, a friend and fellow graduate student.

UD was founded in 1850 by the Society of Mary, a Roman Catholic religious order characterized by community and hospitality. The university’s emphasis on coming together is visible throughout the campus culture. For example, all university housing has a front porch — a requirement and a gathering place for neighbors.

“There’s really an emphasis on cultivating friendliness,” Anthony says. “Everyone has a place at the table.”

Anthony is Catholic but not a Marianist. He and Mac recall the new employee dinner where they met and were introduced to Marianist history.

“In all of the rhetoric from the school, there’s an emphasis on community,” Mac says. “Hospitality and community are key Marianist traits, and they take it seriously.

For them, community is best expressed by the table, the sharing of a meal. For our orientation, they did a Marianist table setting ceremony, and it was beautiful.”

From tablecloth to bread, salt to plates, every portion of the ceremonial table setting signifies an important aspect of the Marianist tradition. Even though no one in their graduate cohort comes from a Marianist Catholic background, Mac and Anthony agree all of them embrace the ethos. This statement is reiterated as they debate who will pick up the check.

“You’ve fed me too many times at your house; let me pay,” Anthony insists.

“I guess we will just have to invite you over again now,” Mac counters as Anthony takes the check. Anthony explains how community has colored his experience at UD.

“It’s a different environment in this program compared to others,” Anthony says. “We all work closely in this one space and grow close throughout the process. There’s a feeling of collegiality among all the graduate students you won’t find on other campuses. That’s what I value most about being here at UD. It’s a strenuous program, but people are glad to be a part of it because of that community.”

That feeling of collegiality persists even as students of various faith backgrounds sometimes clash.

“Part of what happens here is I fight and argue with my Catholic friends about various topics, but I also learn a lot from them,” Mac says. “Our conversations can get heated, but there is a spirit of charity and agreement in our attempts to understand each other. We want to come together.”

A PERFECT FIT

Finding his place at the table at UD was beneficial to Mac, but it was finding a church home that helped the whole family adjust to their new surroundings. When deciding on which congregation to visit first, Mac’s dad insisted they visit Xenia Church of Christ — he had lived with some members while selling Bibles during summer 1969.

“I told him it was silly that he thought anyone would remember him or still be



One of the frequent guests at Mac and Jenni Sandlin’s table is Dick Moore.

there,” Mac says.

Sure enough, the greeter at the door remembered Don Sandlin as the young man who lived with his parents one summer decades ago. As the service continued, the family was impressed in other ways, and it was enough for them to come back without visiting other area churches. They felt that Xenia had what they needed.

“They were very inviting,” Jenni says. “Judah was going to the nursery, and there were two ladies in there who were so nice. They just loved the kids. I kind of get teary-eyed thinking about it. They loved my kids, and they doted on them. For a momma, that’s a pretty big deal. It made me feel comfortable.”

“On that first Sunday, the preacher called an audible — ‘I was going to preach this sermon, but I don’t think it’s ready yet,’ that sort of thing,” Mac says. “I was impressed that he said that, and I was curious about what his pocket sermon would be. His hip-pocket sermon was this textual sermon where he walked us through the book of Lamentations. I was amazed.”

“They also had a small group program, and that was what really sold us,” Jenni adds. “That was a huge thing for us because it was an instant community. We started with a group

and have been with them the whole time.”

Their small group comes together and shares a meal every Sunday night. Jenni mentions the congregation is smaller than their church in Beebe, and there are fewer families with small children like them.

“There are some people our age, but not many. That’s been good and bad.”

“It’s nice to know you have people there with a lot of wisdom who care about you,” Mac says. “There are people there like Dick and Diane Moore — we see them and think that’s how we’d like to be. We like them, and they are our friends, but I also admire them. They are like surrogate parents or mentors to us.”

While it’s clear how Xenia Church of Christ was the perfect fit for the Sandlins when they were in need of community, the church was also in need of them. The members are quick to explain how the Sandlins have affected the congregation.

One woman states very seriously that she is already mourning their departure. During Mac’s class, there are so many people that some latecomers edge around the multipurpose room and sit on the floor.

“Mac and Jenni have this really positive, helpful spirit of encouragement,” says the

“So I have to do it **quickly**, and I have to do it **exceptionally well**.”

church’s preacher Chuck Forsythe. “They immediately came and got engaged. They have been a source of great encouragement. In addition to Mac’s great scholarship, he embodies the principle of Barnabas, of serving and blessing other people. I have tremendously high regard for that.”

The church in Xenia is accustomed to people coming and going because of its proximity to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. Several congregation members are currently serving in or retired from the Air Force. Just as it is with some of the military families, the congregation knew the Sandlins’ stay would be temporary.

“When they leave, it’s going to leave a big hole in the church on a lot of levels because they’ve made substantial contributions,” Chuck says. “I actually believe the church will go through a period of mourning or grieving, but I think that’s good. Certainly we’d love to keep them, but we understand he’s needed.”

One of the contributions cited is the improvement of the church’s adult education program. Mac worked with an education committee to develop a five-year curriculum plan, and he invited professors from Harding to lead a Bible teacher seminar in order to better equip teachers in the church. Dick Moore, the elder over education, says connecting members to those educational resources has been a huge blessing.

“One of the challenges that we’ve always had is having really good classes. We always had plenty of people willing to teach, but they didn’t always have the skills to help. There always needs to be a sharpening of the saw where we take our own people and equip them to be better teachers. That’s why we started having the teacher seminar.”

The annual seminar has been offered four times with more than 30 people in attendance each year, including some from other area congregations.

“We were here about two years before the Sandlins came,” says Jamie Fee, a friend and small group member with the Sandlins. “It’s just a night and day difference in the teaching of classes because people are really internalizing how to teach a class better — how to teach a Bible class better. That has been a huge

contribution from Mac, and it leaves a legacy.”

According to Dick, Mac has led a class every quarter and has been a popular teacher.

“It will be a challenge to replace him, but we are much better equipped for it now than we were. He has gotten to know people. If you walk into a new place with 200 people you aren’t going to know everybody, but if you stand up front for class they are going to know you. He has done a very good job of knowing people and paying attention to people.”

It’s those personal relationships that seem to have made a quieter but bigger impact on the members.

“Mac has been supportive privately and publicly of the ministry I’m engaged in,” Chuck says. “He’s also been a great sounding board for me. It’s refreshing to have someone you can talk to as a peer, who can give you new insight and can challenge your thinking — and give you an outrageous reading list.”

“I talk to Mac much more as a peer than as a person who is younger than my son,” Dick says. “He’s wise and gives good advice. It’s refreshing to talk to him because he has insights and perspective.”

As the Sandlins’ time in Xenia comes to an end, Dick admits it’s hard to acknowledge the impending goodbye.

“Being in the Air Force and moving every three years or so, I’ve had that experience where you build friendships and then have to move on. I still have ties with people and still visit them,” Dick says. “So we will come to Harding and visit, and they will always have an invitation to be here with us.”

COMING HOME

Mac finished his classes and exams at UD in May and will now return to Harding to teach and work on his dissertation about ethics and the Holy Spirit, which he will complete in one to two years.

He plans to teach an upper-level Bible class about the Holy Spirit — a topic he says he wouldn’t have felt competent to teach before coming to UD. In addition to teaching ethics and theology courses, he hopes to continue teaching freshman Bible.

“Oh, I love freshmen,” Mac says. “They come to us and don’t yet know what college

is. I love getting to help teach them that. I always give a speech and say, ‘College is a place you come to read books, so we are going to read books in this class.’ I also want them to know college is a place to be nurtured and to be challenged. For me, teaching the text of Scripture every day grounds the more philosophical and abstract thought that I do.”

Feeling prepared to teach some more challenging material, Mac admits getting to this point was no easy feat. Pursuing a doctorate has been one of the toughest things he has done.

“I’ve certainly never seen him work this hard or be this stressed,” Jenni says.

“If I had not done well in my master’s program, it would have been a disappointment to me and my family, but that was still only my thing,” Mac says. “What I’m doing now reflects on the University, so I feel pressure not just to get it done but to do it well. If I do poorly here, then I’m letting down all the people who made it possible for me to come and do this. So I have to do it quickly, and I have to do it exceptionally well. It has to be the best I can do.”

The pressure is on, but for a good reason. Mac is the only person in his program at UD who has a job waiting for him, and he says that’s an enviable position to be in. As part of Harding’s academic leave package, he has continued to receive a portion of his salary while pursuing his degree.

“Harding makes it possible for me to be here. Their generosity makes it possible.”

As part of his contract for academic leave, Mac has committed to teach for twice the length of time he’s been away.

“I wouldn’t want to leave anyway,” he says with a grin. “I want to be at Harding until I die.”

Nearly three years later, the scene in the Sandlin dining room is a far cry from Mac’s lonely lunch anecdote from when they first moved. There are family portraits on the wall and children’s toys stacked in the corner. There is a heaping platter of pulled pork barbecue and extra chairs pulled up to accommodate guests from church. It’s noisy and friendly, and if anyone knocked today, they’d still find room at the table. 🍴

FELLOW FRESHMEN

President and seniors reflect on their year as freshmen together



Addressing the class of 2017, President Bruce McLarty hosts the senior dinner April 24, 2017.

By HANNAH OWENS

Harding University started its 90th year with the ceremonious tradition of convocation on the morning of Aug. 15, 2013. Incoming freshmen and their families gathered in Benson Auditorium to celebrate the University's newest students and the states, countries and territories they represent. "When I was named the next president of Harding," Dr. Bruce McLarty said to students in the ceremony, "I knew before I ever saw your faces that I would have a very special relationship with this year's freshman class because, you see, we get to be freshmen together."

POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE

At the beginning of the 2013-14 school year, McLarty, who officially took over as the University's fifth president June 1, 2013, had much in common with the 1,261 students from all 50 states and 43 nations and territories.

"As we make this journey, as we start together, I think we're going to have a special sense that we understand each other," McLarty said in his convocation address.

For many new students, this event was their first official introduction to Harding and its newest leader. Senior Sara Denney was one of those students, coming to Harding from Missouri knowing one other person.

"It was very comforting knowing Dr. McLarty acknowledged all the fears and was even vulnerable enough to admit that he felt some of those fears, too," she says.

To an audience of incoming students and their parents, McLarty

initiated a request from students, something he has repeated in all convocations since. He asked students to raise their right hands and recite, "I give my word that I will not leave Harding until I have gone and talked with Dr. McLarty."

"The message I wanted to deliver that day was that if we work together, every student at Harding University can succeed," McLarty says. "Mainly, I didn't want students to leave for any of the wrong reasons. Sometimes students give up when there is a relatively simple solution at hand if they only knew where to find the help they need."

After convocation that year, McLarty returned to his office to find a student waiting to uphold that pledge. He said it gave him a chance to direct the student to a place on campus that could help and to make a new friend in the process.

"In these last four years, a number of students have taken me up on the promise," McLarty says. "Most were already packed up and ready to leave, but a few have given me the chance to help them find

PHOTO BY KAZU FUJISAWA



President Bruce McLarty meets his fellow freshmen at Impact 2013.



The Rhodes Rowdies high five President Bruce McLarty at the 2015 Arkansas Tech University game.

a solution to some problem they were facing. I don't know how effective the pledge has been in helping students find a way to stay at Harding, but I am confident that it has been a way to communicate to students and parents how much we care."

PART OF HISTORY

"A neat thing about this class is that every experience I have had as president, they have had as students," McLarty says. "Everything that's gone on these four years on the Harding campus, we have shared together, and there will never be another group where we are as parallel as we are at this moment."

McLarty's inauguration ceremony was held Sept. 20, 2013, at 2 p.m. in Benson Auditorium on campus, and more than 100 colleges and universities across the nation marched in the ceremony's processional representing their respective schools. Faculty, staff, students and guests from all over gathered to experience a rare event for the University.

Senior Drew Howerton came to Searcy from Berryville, Arkansas. As a trombone player in the band, he arrived on campus earlier than the rest of the freshmen and missed out on many Impact activities, but he had the opportunity to play on stage during the inauguration ceremony. McLarty's inaugural address theme, "A Community of Mission," was an idea that resonated with Howerton.

"I kept the [printed] speech, read over it and sent it to people," Howerton says. "It was just really great the way he talked about the emphasis on community, and that's what this is, what he wants it to be and continue to be."

LEARNING AS YOU GO

"Freshmen have a steep learning curve. It's like we're drinking out of a fire hose. There are more things coming at us than we can possibly grasp at any given time. We're learning as fast as we can," McLarty said at convocation. "We don't have to try to prove to each other that we know it all. We know there's a lot that we've got to learn."

McLarty made the move from full-time pulpit minister at College Church of Christ to vice president of spiritual life at Harding in 2005. He said stepping away from the pulpit was a career move that broke his heart because he enjoyed it so much.

"I thoroughly enjoyed what I was doing there, but I felt that this was a different ministry that might well be the move I needed to make at this point in my life, and I saw it as an opportunity to have great influence on the Harding campus," he says. "So I gave it five years before I would question it. And I remember it dawning on me in year six that I blew through the time I had established without even realizing it."

When then President David B. Burks announced his retirement, McLarty said people asked him if he was going to apply. His response was always, "I want to be ready if called." He officially applied for the position in May 2012 and was announced as the University's fifth president Nov. 1, 2012.

"I think in the entire first year almost everything was a first; there is a sense of newness throughout the first year that is inescapable," he says. "I immediately identified with the freshmen because I remember being a freshman. Being a freshman is an exciting, wonderful, terrifying time, and there's just nothing quite like it. I don't think most of us want to go through it again, but there's nothing quite like it."

"There was something about being a freshman and being overwhelmed and fearful, and then knowing that the person who was in charge of everything was feeling the same thing I was feeling," Denney says. "If Dr. McLarty can get through his freshman year of being in charge of everyone, we can get through our freshman year of our roommates we don't know and meeting our new best friends."

HUMILITY AND HUMOR

"I think it's easy in positions of leadership to become distant or almost arrogant, but you don't get those vibes from Dr. McLarty," Denney says. "He is humble and will smile at you and say hey on the sidewalks even if he doesn't know you."

Howerton, who plans to attend physical therapy school in the fall and pursue medical missions following graduate school, remembers a chapel where members of the Harding community wrote confessions on cardboard signs and shared them with the audience in chapel.

"Dr. McLarty wrote 'Failed missionary in Africa,'" Howerton says. "I haven't forgotten that because that's big and bold for somebody to get up there and say. Maybe his mission wasn't there, but it's here, and it's being able to lead and encourage in the ways that he does and convey to the whole student body, faculty and staff that where you are is a mission, and what you do is a mission no matter what field it's in — no matter where you actually are."

21ST CENTURY PRESIDENT

When he was first named president, McLarty immediately knew he wanted to have a presence on social media and engage with the student body in that way. He remembered a story Dr. Burks told him about a student who asked what the president did besides read announcements in chapel.

"Having heard about that and knowing about Twitter, those two things just came together," McLarty says. "I thought I could at least take people who want to go on the ride with me and travel with me. So the students are keenly aware of where I've been and things I've been a part of. They've gotten to experience the presidency in a big way if they wanted to."

McLarty has learned about students' habits and personalities on social media, and he has developed a voice that students seem to connect with and enjoy engaging. During one instance of his presidential freshman year, the engagement came in a giant, unexpected rush. All you have to do is say the words "optional finals," and the senior class of 2017 knows exactly what that means.

During fall 2013, winter weather threw a wrench in the University's finals week. Students caught on to another university's decision to make their final exams optional due to weather, thus creating #optionalfinals. Tweets to McLarty began flowing in by the hundreds asking for finals to be made voluntary for students. However, optional finals didn't prove to be an option at Harding.

"This is going to be the last group of seniors that I can really talk to about that, and they all know," McLarty says. "It's been a predictable laugh line for four years around here, but this group of freshmen probably soaked it up more than any other group on campus because they were new."

"Whether it's public speaking or social media, humor is the riskiest thing in the world," McLarty says. "For me, the safest territory in the arena of humor is self-deprecating humor. If you can poke fun at yourself, that's safe. My code from before I started was never be negative, never be sarcastic."

JUMPING INTO STUDENT LIFE

"Just look around campus any year, and you can see it in the eyes of the freshmen — once we all settle in and get into our routine, I don't know if anybody enjoys the University more than freshmen," McLarty said at convocation. "Freshmen have a sense of wonderment about this place. We see it for the marvelous adventure that it can be."

From his freshman academic year as president until now four years later, McLarty has immersed himself in student life, activities and culture. He joined his fellow freshmen in embracing opportunities to meet people and participate in events all over campus.

"Whenever you talk to him, he is genuinely interested in you and what is going on in your life," senior Will Francis says. "I'm sure being president of the University that he is constantly in conversation with people, but every time someone talks to him, he is interested in that person. He tries to connect with students in so many ways and is truly making a difference at Harding University as president."

One afternoon, Howerton was having lunch in the cafeteria when his friends and he saw McLarty walking around.

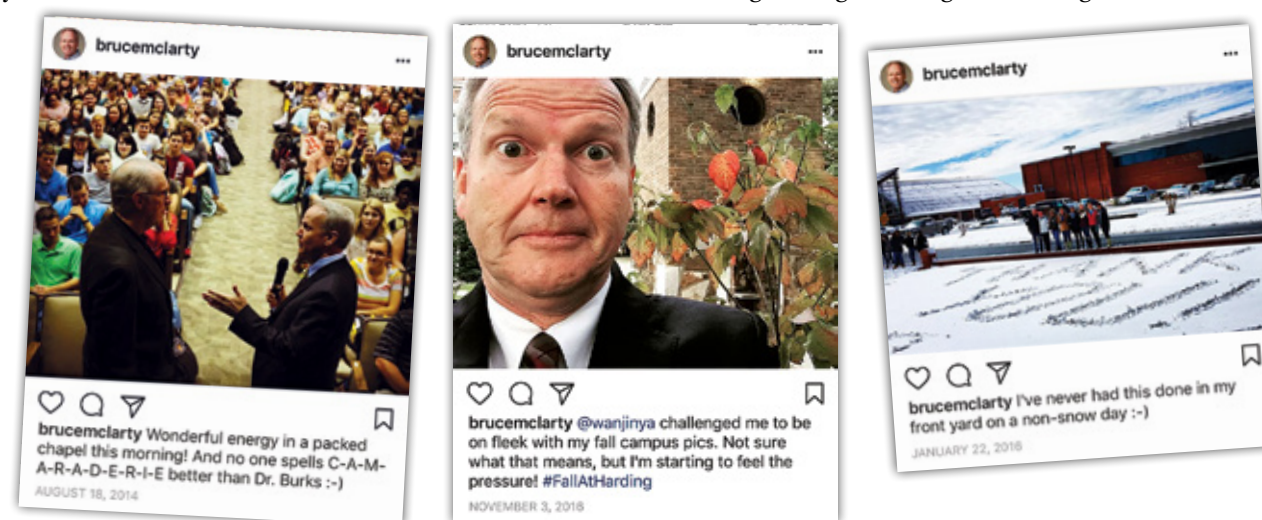
"Someone was like, 'What if Dr. McLarty came and sat with us? I wouldn't know what to do,'" Howerton remembers. "He got his drink, I waved at him, and then he came over and sat with us for lunch. He's a people person and makes every person feel important and special while at the same time he's very good with large groups of people."

McLarty says leadership today requires different skills and behaviors than it did when he was in school.

"One of the biggest differences socially from my era as a student in the 70s and these students today is leadership today requires relationships," McLarty says. "I don't think it did in my day. I think then there was a natural respect for the position. Today, I think students' expectation is that in order to follow a leader they insist on having knowledge of a person and what they do, so there are relationships that leadership comes from."

"He just seems to be the biggest fan of all the students," Denney says. "That's encouraging now as a senior, and even though I don't know Dr. McLarty on a personal level, I feel like he will be there cheering for us graduating and wishing us the best." 📱

LEFT PHOTO BY GRANT SCHOL, RIGHT PHOTO BY JEFF MONTGOMERY





Connections



Send us your news! Let us know about your wedding, birth, job change, promotion, award, retirement, etc. Email your items to alumninews@harding.edu or write Harding University, Office of Alumni Relations, Box 10768, Searcy, AR 72149-5615.

1956

Lawrence Barclay was named professor emeritus of Bible and biblical languages by the board of regents of Amridge University in June 2016 after 57 years of teaching (1959-75 at Faulkner University and 1967-2016 at Amridge University). He has been involved in deaf ministry for 45 years and currently serves as minister to the deaf at University Church of Christ in Montgomery, Alabama. His wife, **Joanne Agnew** ('57), taught many years at Alabama Christian Academy and Faulkner University and also was a media specialist in the Faulkner library. They have two sons, Nathan and David. (236 Harvard Road, Montgomery, AL 36109)

1967

David E. Smith was awarded the Fay Boozman Award, given annually to a physician who has demonstrated excellence in Christian faith and

personal life, integration of faith into the practice of medicine, and commitment to community service and public health. He was a founder of Heart Clinic Arkansas and served as a cardiologist for 35 years. In 2012 he became director of supportive medicine at Baptist Health-Little Rock where he serves as chairman of the medical ethics committee. He is one of the founders of the Haiti Christian Development Project and has worked on short-term and development projects there since 1985. He also leads a group of physicians, dentists and eye specialists for clinical trips each year. After completing a master's in bioethics, he has taught molecular biology, biochemistry and pre-med students at Harding each fall since 2000. He serves on Harding's Missions Advisory Council and has helped develop a third-world village for training missionaries at Camp Tahkodah. He has been a deacon at Pleasant Valley Church of Christ for several decades and has been chairman of the missions committee. For almost 40 years, he taught a Wednesday night

Bible and ethics class for medical students. He has worked in public health as chairman of the ad hoc physician orders for life sustaining treatment committee in an effort to enact legislation in Arkansas regarding patient care at the end of life. He and his wife, **Linda Byrd**, have three children, **Jennifer Green** ('94), **Luke** ('96) and **Susie Madden** ('00). (15 Shawbridge Lane, Little Rock AR 72212)

1978

Donald "Buzz" Ball has been named movie magic coordinator for B&B Theatres. He travels to all 51 locations in nine states training staff and management in guest relations, employee etiquette and guest experience. He has been with the company for more than five years after spending 35 years in the newspaper industry. He and his wife, **Lanette Mahle**, have two children. (710 S. Lincoln St., Neosho, MO 64850)

1982

Jo Matthews Umberger has been named vice president of philanthropy for New Life Behavior International. She has used her speech communications and education degree in business and missions. She and her husband, **E.C.** ('81), worked with an indigenous church in Adelaide, South Australia, in the 1980s before returning to the U.S. They have a son. (2902 Persimmon Place, Rowlett TX 75088).

1985

Todd Dewayne Edwards completed his doctorate in professional counseling from Mississippi College on Dec. 16, 2016. He and his wife, **Anne Taylor**, have three children, Emily, Allison and Joseph. (1916 Scenic Drive, Brandon, MS 39047)

1996

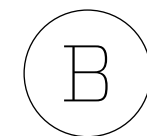
Phillip Shero has been named president of MasterMinds Leadership. He and his wife, **Laura Rice** ('94), have three children, Malachi, Israel and Annalise. (7625 Chestnut Drive, North Richland Hills, TX 76152)

Jason Wiles was honored with the Excellence in Teaching Award at the 60th National Conference of the Association for College and University Biology Educators. He is a tenured professor of biology at Syracuse University. (1235 James St., Syracuse, NY 13203)

2001

Scott and **Shannon Humphrey Sadik** announce the birth of a daughter, Kennedy Isla, June 19, 2016. Scott is an engineer, and Shannon is in real

Passionate business



ETHANY HALFORD ('07) AND **AMANDA JERKINS** ('01) heard about each other through their husbands and mutual friends for years before meeting. The "style soul mates" soon teamed up to create Whoa, Wait. Walmart?, a media platform featuring fashionable items and deals at Wal-Mart.

Halford and Jerkins both graduated from Harding with degrees in fashion and interior merchandising. In 2013, Halford began a blog where she shared various stylish items from Wal-Mart and similar stores. After joining with Jerkins, the friends created an Instagram account for that same purpose, titled Whoa, Wait. Walmart?, which currently has a following of more than 94,000.

"The business side of it keeps evolving into new aspects, but the basis for starting it was sharing things with people because we really love being able to say that you don't have to go spend tons of money on this item because you can still have great style and save a lot of money," Halford said. "Amanda and I both live on a budget, so it's really genuine."

Whoa, Wait has become a full-time job for Halford and Jerkins. Halford currently resides in Bentonville and shops and posts from stores in northwest Arkansas while Jerkins explores stores in the Nashville, Tennessee, area.

In February 2017, the duo launched their clothing line Whoa, Wait, which is available at Walmart.com. Halford and Jerkins work closely with a designer in Los Angeles that sells apparel to several stores.

"When the designer contacted us, it was a really great direction for

PROFILE | BETHANY HALFORD AND AMANDA JERKINS



Amanda Jerkins and Bethany Halford

us to take," Jerkins said. "We were so thrilled, we definitely had aspirations of getting products into Wal-Mart, so that is something that we were working toward, but we didn't know exactly what that path would be and how it would look."

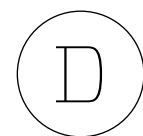
Halford and Jerkins hope to expand their clothing line into multiple categories in Wal-Mart stores.

"We are just so thankful for all the opportunities that keep coming our way. We work really hard, but we had a really fun time building this brand," Halford said. "Just seeing Whoa, Wait continue to grow really is my goal, and see what else God sends our way because, when we started, we did not know exactly where it would take us, and it has been such an amazing journey to just watch that unfold." 📱

— Savanna DiStefano

Performing at Pearl Harbor

PROFILE | DON EUDALY



DON EUDALY ('78) IS AN ATTORNEY in Little Rock, Arkansas, but he considers himself more of a musician than a businessman. On Dec. 7, 2016, Eudaly performed an original song at the 75th National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Commemoration at Pearl Harbor in Honolulu.

His song, "White Sailor Hat," was inspired by a story told about his father, who served in the Navy in the South Pacific. When his parents were returning from mission work in New Zealand in the mid-90s, they visited the Pearl Harbor Memorial and saw where his father's childhood friend was killed during the attack on Pearl Harbor.

"My mother saw him standing on the point where the Arizona is, and she said he was

really somber," Eudaly said. "There is an air force base there, and as two jets came and circled and flew back over where they were — he was not standing too far from the flag that was whipping in the ocean breeze — he stood, straightened up and saluted as the jets flew over."

Eudaly recorded the song in 1996, and it was played on the radio for the 60th anniversary of Pearl Harbor. Eudaly was invited by the Navy and the state of Hawaii to perform the song for the 75th anniversary after Eudaly's sister sent a copy of the song to the Navy.

During the memorial event, Eudaly met several war survivors who shared their personal experiences with him.

"It was a real honor to be invited," Eudaly said. "The survivors were so sharp and got to tell stories. Just talking with those guys was a real honor."

Eudaly has performed "White Sailor Hat" at several other military memorials, including the Vietnam memorial in Missouri. He has also written and recorded songs and jingles for local radio stations.

While at Harding, Eudaly majored in business and performed with the traveling trio The Time of Day, which he appeared with on "The Gong Show" in 1977. He previously worked in the advancement office until enrolling in law school in 2008. 📱 — Savanna DiStefano



estate. (157 Hamilton St., Rochester, NY 14620)

Sarah Terry married Zachary Lehr on Oct. 29, 2016. Sarah is a senior account executive with inVeritas, and Zachary is a public affairs specialist for the Arkansas Military Department. (1322-B Kavanaugh Blvd., Little Rock, AR 72205).

2002

Tim Bewley, senior vice president and financial adviser at Pinnacle Financial Partners, has been named 2016 Young Leader of the Year by Young Leaders Council, a Nashville, Tennessee-based nonprofit organization. He has served on the YLC board of directors for the past five years. A recipient of Nashville Business Journals' 2016

Power Leaders in Finance, he also is a member of the 2016 class of The Nashville Health Care Council Fellows program. He is past chairman, secretary and board member of AGAPE. He completed Bel-



mont University's executive leadership program in 2013. He and his wife, **Holly McCulley** ('03), have three children, McClain, Easton and Reagan. (103 Wickham Court, Hendersonville, TN 37075)

2003

Tyler Matlock was named head baseball coach at Newberg (Oregon) High School. He and his wife, **Jessica Burger** ('05), have a daughter, Bristol. (2203 Sam Parrett Drive, Newberg, OR 97132)

2004

Philip and Claire Davidson Draper announce the birth of a daughter, Miriam Margaret, Nov. 14, 2016. They also have a son, Zeke. (904 Sky Valley Trail, Smyrna, TN 37167)

Josh and Heather Guthrie Payne announce the birth of a daughter, Lydia Eve, Sept. 13, 2016. Josh is vice president and branch manager for Louisiana Land Bank. (130 Schneider Lane, Lake Providence, LA 71254)

2005

Scott ('04) and **Alison Brown Colvin** announce the birth of a daughter, Iris Faith, Sept. 26, 2016. They have three other children, Sophia, Silas and Josiah. (97 Coldspring Drive, Harvest, AL 35749)

2007

Peter ('09) and **Tara Curtis Snell** announce the birth of a daughter, Ruby Charlotte, Dec. 15, 2016. They have another daughter, Lena. (265 Betty Jo Lane, Memphis, TN 38117)

2008

Keenan and Lauren Rae Tish Carlton announce the birth of a son, Jace Harold, Nov. 21, 2016. They have another son, Tucker Judson. Keenan is a police officer for the city of Clarksville, Tennessee, and Lauren is a graphic designer. (3325 Marrast Drive, Clarksville, TN 37043)



2009

Jeffrey ('07) and Debbie Deacon Jones announce the birth of a daughter, Eliza Jean, Dec. 24, 2016. Jeffrey is a staff accountant, and Debbie is a teller supervisor. (11956 Meadow Run Court, Maryland Heights, MO 63043)

Caleb ('10) and Kristi Kridlo McNiece announce the birth of a daughter, Sophie June, Jan. 15, 2017. Caleb is educational audiologist for the Mid-Shore Special Education Consortium, and Kristi is a reading specialist at Sudlersville Middle School. (25455 Adams Landing Road, Denton, MD 21629)

2012

Samantha Simpson graduated cum laude from Belmont University College of Law in May 2016. She passed the Tennessee Bar Exam in October 2016 and was admitted to practice in the Tennessee Bar in November 2016. She is working as judicial law clerk for the Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals. (2021 Traemoor Village Drive, Nashville, TN 37209)

2013

Lacey Brown was named Teacher of the Year for Jim Allen Elementary in Pensacola, Florida. She teaches third grade. (11746 Old Course Road, Cantonment, FL 32533)

2014

Jackson Petty ('16) married Ashlyn Bolton on July 2, 2016. Jackson is in his first year of dental school at University of Tennessee Health Science Center. Ashlyn is an assistant teacher for elementary girls at Youth Villages, a residential mental health facility. (610 Rienzie Drive, # 201, Memphis, TN 38103)

Passages

Harry Robert Fox Jr. ('44), 95, of Orem, Utah, died Jan. 1, 2017. As the son of missionaries, he lived in rural Japan until he was 14. After college, he and his wife, Jeri, served as missionaries in Japan for 10 years where he was co-founder of Ibaraki Christian University. When they returned to the U.S., Harry taught in the Bible department at Pepperdine University for two and a half years. He then served two years as a preacher for Northside Church of Christ and then as a social worker for Los Angeles County for 20 years until his retirement in 1983. He and Jeri continued to serve many congregations in various ways in California, Oregon and Utah until her death in 2015. He is survived by four sons, Ken, John, Larry and Jerry; four brothers, Logan, Sterling, Clinton and Arnold; 20 grandchildren; and 26 great-grandchildren.

Leo Brant Campbell ('49), 88, of Bartlett, Tennessee, died Dec. 7, 2016. His greatest passion in life was Ford/Lincoln Motor Co. He was active in his

church family, serving as a deacon and an elder at different congregations. He enjoyed fishing and traveling with his wife. He was preceded in death by his wife of 66 years, Gwen Futrell ('50). He is survived by two daughters, Claudia Curtis ('75) and Carol Parker ('76); four grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren.

James Monroe Elliott ('49), 90, of Memphis, Tennessee, died Jan. 24, 2017. He ministered as a preacher, leader and elder in Florence, Alabama; Monmouth County, New Jersey; and Memphis, Tennessee. He was a professional educator who earned his Doctor of Education at Rutgers University. He taught all levels of students throughout his career and served as the chair of the business department at Brookdale Community College in New Jersey. He is survived by his wife, Gloria Brannam; two children, Debra Baird ('79) and Don ('80); six grandchildren; and two great-grandsons.

Eddie Ray Campbell ('53), 85, of Searcy, died Dec. 15, 2016. His decades-long career and life of



service began and culminated at Harding where he served more than four decades in the counseling department and as dean of men. He also served as a minister in Florida, Georgia and Texas and at Downtown Church of Christ in Searcy where he was as an elder for 32 years. He was preceded in death by his wife, Kathryn Roberts ('54), and a daughter, Linda Kay Garvey ('77). He is survived by four children, David ('75), Danny ('83), Julianne Young ('88) and Mindy Sue ('07); and 14 grandchildren.

Ann Petree Egle ('56), 82, of Holladay, Utah, died Nov. 10, 2016, from leukemia. She worked as a laboratory tech at Cottonwood Hospital after her children were older, sang and recorded with the Jay Welsh Chorale, and at age 47 climbed to the top of Mount Olympus with her daughter. She housed strangers who needed room and board, served at the homeless shelter kitchen, rescued abused children, donated to charitable organizations, made dolls for orphans, and blessed her family by sewing professional-grade clothing. She was preceded in death by her husband, John "Jack," and five of her siblings including her twin brother, John ('56). She is survived by a sister, Harriet Garner; two children, Evie Wilson and John; seven grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.

James "Jim" Carroll Christian ('57), 83, of Searcy, died Feb. 20, 2017. Jim coached and taught for more than 30 years in Marked Tree, Griffithville and Searcy, Arkansas. He was a member of the Arkansas High School Coaches Association for 30 years. He also was a member of the Arkansas Officials Association and spent 42 years officiating high

Communication giant

By PAT GARNER, professor of speech

MY FIRST LENGTHY TRIP outside of East Texas was taken during spring break 1969. I, along with several other debaters, traveled from Searcy to Arizona State University in Tempe riding across the West in a three-seated station wagon. Dr. Evan Ulrey was driving. Mercifully, I have forgotten the details of the car ride. But there is much I do remember about that journey. We stopped at the Grand Canyon. We drove up to Meteor Crater in northern Arizona. While we attended Pi Kappa Nationals at ASU, I smelled orange blossoms for the first time, heard Van Cliburn in concert, and was entered in the Championship Cross Examination Division of debate by Evan.

My debate partner was Wayne Dockery, and he and I tried valiantly. Alas, there were no awards for sarcasm in the guise of refutation. Had there been, first place would have been ours.

We eventually returned to Searcy by way of Juarez, Mexico. What a trip! I saw so much, things I had only read about. In a sense, this trip was a microcosm of what Evan did for me over the years. He took a young man from East Texas who had dreamed and read about so many different things and opened up a portion of the real world to him.

I had never been on Harding's campus when I came here in fall 1967. I knew I wanted to major in Bible. But my adviser was chairman of the department of speech. Along with Greek, he enrolled me in his class on argumentation. I never questioned why he placed me in this specific class. I just went. I remember that first class period. We used Brockriede's book that spoke of logic, analysis and the Toulmin model. It was all so new to me, but it was enticing. And in front of me in this class was a Christian man, urbane, sophisticated and elegantly clad teaching it all. And I wondered, "Why was he wearing a ring on his little finger?" From that very moment, I knew I was where I belonged. And here I have remained for 45 years.

Debate followed me from high school into college. I suspect Evan put me into that argumentation class in order to recruit me — and recruit he did. I changed my major to speech and Bible because of Evan. And I followed him on debate trips across most of the southern and central United States over the next four years. I even went with him and his family twice on campaigns in Europe.

Most people recognize him as a teacher and debate coach. But I saw still another side to him. To me he was a mentor, a calmer-down-in-chief, who helped guide an excitable young man into more thoughtful ways of being.

From a professional point of view, I have no reluctance in saying

that Evan Ulrey was an academic visionary. Even as he was teaching speech, he saw the future of our discipline in communication. He urged and supported me in pursuit of a M.S. and Ph.D. in the field. Often I would return to Searcy from graduate school, and he would ask



me what types of courses I was taking. His curiosity never waned. During all of this time, he was active in what was then speech communication. He held virtually every possible office in Pi Kappa Delta and the Arkansas Speech Communication Association.

His significant legacy at Harding remains strong. It remains in the number of faculty members who sat under his tutelage. It remains in the Ulrey Performing Arts Center and in the three departments that have evolved from

the original speech department of his day. Theatre arts, communication sciences and disorders, and communication now account for more than 425 undergraduate majors at the University.

As I sit in my office in the Reynolds Music and Communication Building, I consider the 49 years I have been associated with Harding. Thinking of Evan lets me know that I am here standing, as it were, on the shoulders of giants. As I look into the future for my students, children and grandchildren, I pray that I might have the vision, discernment and courage of those in whose footsteps I attempt to walk. 🙏

Evan Ulrey ('46), 94, died March 13, 2017. He earned the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in speech from Louisiana State University. Returning to Harding in fall 1950, he was named chairman of the speech department and coached the debate team to successes on state, regional and national levels. He served as national president of Pi Kappa Delta and was in its hall of fame. He also was named the state's outstanding teacher by the Arkansas Speech Communication Association and received the Distinguished Teacher Award at Harding in 1969. He was an elder at College Church of Christ for more than 30 years, serving as chair of the missions committee, chair of the Avanti Italia committee, and member of the board of Zambia Christian Schools. He helped found the International Care Foundation and was chairman of the board. He traveled extensively to various mission points in Africa and Europe, leading several campaign groups to Germany, France and England. He is survived by his wife, Betty Thornton ('52); three children, Rebecca Ann ('76), Bonnie Barnes ('76) and Robert ('82); four grandchildren and two step-grandchildren; and four step-great-grandchildren.

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING FILE PHOTO



Dedicated on May 12, 1967, the \$1.3 million science building was funded in part by a \$50,000 contribution from Arkansas Gov. Winthrop Rockefeller. The single-story building contained the R.T. Clark Research Center, which had been commissioned by NASA for research purposes, in addition to laboratories and classrooms. After additions in 1984, 2004 and 2014, the now-named Pryor-England Center for Science and Engineering looks a little different: a three-story structure boasting labs from anatomy to zoology.



doctorate in special education, he began teaching deaf education at University of Arkansas where he taught 12 years. Moving to Overland Park, Kansas, in 1982, he was minister of the deaf and a counselor at Overland Park Church of Christ. In 1993, he began his private family and marriage counsel-

ing practice. In 2000, he added the position of minister of First Church of Peculiar (Missouri). In addition to his wife, Mary, he is survived by five children, **Matthew** ('82), **Elizabeth Straughn** ('83), Lisa, Joseph and Jennifer Hardesty; 12 grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

PASSAGES | JOE HACKER | 1930-2017

Innovative educator

By ALLAN ISOM, retired professor of Bible

IN 1961 DR. JOE HACKER and his wife, Joan, moved to Searcy where he became chairman of the Bible department, serving in this capacity until 1974. Hacker was a creative education curriculum designer with the unique ability to see educational opportunities on campus as well as in foreign countries, and he designed programs that would address those needs.

Hacker wanted Harding's students to have a worldwide mission view of people in other countries. He organized international campaigns, which provided opportunities for students to go to other countries during the summer to do mission work in cooperation with foreign churches.



He also was a driving force behind short-term study abroad excursions that were a precursor to the University's international studies programs.

Hacker started the visiting missionary program on campus. This was done to expose students to a person who teaches Bible to people in another culture.

One of the first things Hacker did was to measure incoming Harding students' recall of well-known Bible facts. He found Harding's students lacking in comparison to students in other religious schools outside our fellowship. Redesigning the Bible curriculum, he encouraged his faculty to emphasize Bible facts. By the sophomore year, Harding's students achieved higher scores than did students in those other religious schools.

Sensing a need for well-trained Sunday school teachers in our churches, Hacker started a summer program to train Bible school teachers called Bible School Workshops. He and three or four teachers also would hold weekend Bible school workshops in churches across the country.

Wanting a well-trained faculty, he sent teachers to get doctorate degrees in preaching, counseling, and both Old and New Testaments. Hacker would not consider hiring a person as a faculty member unless that person had had a successful ministry in a church setting.

In 1974 Dr. Hacker and several others envisioned a program that would allow nontraditional students to come to the campus and study the Bible called the Christian Communication Program. The first class began that fall after he transitioned to Lubbock Christian University.

Hacker made a long-term significant contribution to religious education programs at Harding University. His legacy lives on.

Hacker made a long-term significant contribution to religious education programs at Harding University. His legacy lives on.

William Joe Hacker Jr. ('55), 86, of Huntsville, Alabama, died March 23, 2017. He joined the Navy in 1948 at age 18 and trained in electronics to serve as radio control aboard the USS *Navasota* in the Korean War. He earned his doctorate in 1966 from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He chaired the Bible department at Harding from 1961-74. He served as president for Lubbock Christian University from 1974-76, worked in development for Freed-Hardeman University from 1976-78, and was administrator of Ouachita Christian School in Monroe, Louisiana, from 1978-81. He preached for churches in Texas and Alabama. He is survived by his wife, **Joan Benson** ('52); four children, **Tim** ('74), **Denise Hacker-Woody** ('77), **Carol Cameron** ('83) and **Cathy** ('91); eight grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

Edwin Hightower Sr. ('60), 78, of San Antonio, Texas, died Nov. 18, 2016. He earned a master's in political science from University of Texas at Austin and worked in their international office. He began his actuarial science career in Dallas in 1966 and joined Government Personnel Mutual Life Insurance Co. in San Antonio in 1969 where he worked until his retirement as senior vice president. He obtained designation as a fellow of the Society of Actuaries, served as president of the Actuaries Club of the Southwest, and was a member of the American Academy of Actuaries. He served as a deacon and elder at Sunset Ridge Church of Christ in San Antonio and was a Paul Harris Fellow in Rotary International. He is survived by his wife of 56 years, **Shirley Richardson** ('61); four children, Sean Carlin, Shelley McDonald, Susan and Edwin Jr.; and five grandchildren.

Jewel Goodman Warfield ('63), 76, of Lancaster, California, died Dec. 21, 2016. Two of her greatest joys were reading and teaching. The daughter of a sharecropper who struggled to read, she was inspired to learn to read and teach others as an elementary school teacher for more than 30 years. She is survived by her husband of 49 years, Edward Lee; three sons, James Lee, John Mark and Paul David; a brother, Jack Goodman; and six grandchildren.

Thomas Reppart ('65), 73, of York, Nebraska, died Dec. 4, 2016. He was director of theatre in Arkansas and Missouri and spent 10 years teaching in Cameroon, West Africa, and another 10 years at universities in Kenya, East Africa. He spent 12 years as spiritual life coordinator at Epworth Village in York. He also preached for the Nelson (Nebraska) Church of Christ. After retirement, he enjoyed volunteering as reader/listener/comforter and worship leader at two nursing homes in York. He is survived by his four siblings, Kenneth, Lynda Capps, James and Vivian Hameister.

Ken Tillman ('68), 70, of Searcy, died Oct. 27, 2016. He served in the U.S. Air Force from 1968-71 and retired from Arkansas Farm Bureau Federation after 35 years. He is survived by his wife, **Karen Wylie** ('70); two children, **Jared** ('03) and **Allison** ('06); and a sister, **Laura McNair** ('77).

Bonnie Lewers Lee ('69), 69, of Keller, Texas, died Dec. 15, 2016, from a heart attack. Her passion for teaching and children was evident throughout her years of teaching. She retired in Mississippi in 2005 and moved to Texas to be closer to her children and grandchildren where she continued her teaching career at Keller Central and Timber Creek High Schools. She is survived by her husband of 47 years, **Drake** ('70); two daughters, **Lana Moore** ('97) and Tammy Hunt; and four grandchildren.

Michael Robert Cox ('97), 41, of Vienna, West Virginia, died Jan. 28, 2017, from pancreatic cancer.

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING FILE PHOTO

A divine calling

By CHERI SMITH, assistant professor of education, chair of teacher preparation and director of elementary education

IN FEBRUARY, the University family said goodbye far too soon to one of its most dearly loved professors. Dr. Betty Ann Watson was one of a kind, a true Harding icon, and a legend in her own time. I first came to know Dr. Watson when I was a young education student at Harding in fall 1982. Her children's literature course was a favorite of mine and many others. Dr. Watson had a contagious passion for children and children's books. She could read a story aloud like no one else.



After I began teaching at Harding full time in 2004, I remember sitting by Dr. Watson in Benson Auditorium for chapel and hearing her sing. At the time, I didn't know she had perfect pitch — she wrote that in her obituary. I just remember the awe I felt sitting beside her, being fortunate enough to learn from her again as a colleague. I never got over that feeling. I often asked her if she would let me sit in her classes again just so I could learn the secrets of her masterful teaching. She would always say, "Oh no. I don't want people to watch me. Just be yourself, and they will love you."

She was a constant encourager. When she saw education majors in the hallway of the building, she would say in her sweetest, slowest voice, "Look at these beautiful teachers." She mentored thousands of students through the years, taking them under her wing as if they were her children. Retirement was a difficult decision for her. She loved her life, and she loved her work. It was her divine calling.

When Dr. Watson found out she had cancer in May 2016, she made sure the house she loved was completely decorated for fall. That was

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING FILE PHOTO

He attended the West Virginia University School of Dentistry and practiced the profession for 15 years in Parkersburg, West Virginia. He was a deacon for Grand Central Church of Christ in Vienna for several years. He is survived by his wife, Nellie; three children, Jacob, Madeline and Claire; and his parents, **Dennis** ('70) and **Era Jo Cronin** ('71).

Annamarie Doyle Lloyd ('16), 23, of Andalusia, Illinois, died March 20, 2017, after an 11-month battle with brain cancer. Graduating with degrees in both interior design and psychology, she used her interior design capstone project to reflect her intense desire to help mentally ill prisoners. She combined architectural and interior design with psychological elements to achieve rehabilitation in repurposed mental health facilities. She was a member of Iota Chi and Belle Canto and also was

a black belt in taekwondo. She is survived by her husband, Brandon; parents, Dr. Randy and Gabi Doyle; two brothers, Hardy and Nathanael; and grandmother, Connie Doyle.

Arnold Pylkas, 90, of Searcy, died Dec. 15, 2016. He was a veteran of the U.S. Navy, serving during



World War II. A professional educator, he served as teacher, school administrator and professor over the course of his career. At Harding, he was both a professor and swimming coach and had a passion for swimming and teaching the sport. He and his wife served as missionaries in Finland for several years. He was a member of College Church of Christ in Searcy. He is survived by his

her favorite season, and she wanted to be certain she could experience it one more time. When she died at home on Feb. 19, a few days after Valentine's Day, she was surrounded by cozy Christmas decorations, bright red valentines, red gingham pillows and roses, celebrating life until the very end.

At her memorial service, which she planned herself, her beloved husband, Zearl, and her grandchildren, Mackenzie and Josiah, welcomed guests as if it were the first day of school, including apple stickers and apple nametags. We signed our names on Big Chief writing tablets with fat, yellow school pencils instead of pens. We felt like first-graders again. Her magic touch was seen and felt even at her own memorial.

If you took Dr. Watson's Children's Literature class during the last few years of her career, you probably read *Tuck Everlasting*, a fantasy book about a family who drank from an enchanted spring and became immortal. This particular book was one of her favorites, and she loved discussing it with her classes. In one of our last exchanges, Dr. Watson shared with me the sad news that the chemo treatment was no longer working, and she felt she was ready to let go. I said, "Oh, Dr. Watson, but I wanted you to live forever!" Without hesitation, she quickly replied, "Oh, but Cheri, I will live forever!"

Yes, Dr. Watson, forever in heaven and in the hearts and lives of those whose lives you touched.

Betty Ann Work Watson ('64), 74, of Searcy, died Feb. 19, 2017. She received her Ed.D. from Memphis State University. She spent 47 years teaching at Harding in the College of Education where she was named a Distinguished Professor after winning the Outstanding Teacher Award three times. She served as director of the early childhood education program for 15 years as well as serving as a member of the Arkansas Diamond Reading Committee for more than 30 years. She is survived by her husband of 47 years, **Zearl** ('76); two sons, **David** ('98) and **Zac** ('00); four siblings, **Ed** ('67), **Dale** ('68), **Nancy** ('75) and **Rick** ('77); and two grandchildren.

wife of 63 years, Wanda Hutchison; three children, **Stephen** ('80), Matthew and **Lauri Bracken** ('83); six grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

Brady Veldon Hoggard, 82, of Searcy, died Feb. 13, 2017. He grew up in a migrant farming family in Northeast Arkansas where he gained his lifelong work ethic. He worked in the grocery business and bought his own grocery store in Lonoke, Arkansas, which he owned for 16 years. He worked at Harding from 1998-2001, serving as a custodian at the Academy and a painter at the University. He is preceded in death by his wife of 61 years, Marvene Hutchison, and a grandson, Jay Hoggard. He is survived by three children, **Phil** ('78), **Kim Himstedt** ('83) and Brad; four siblings, Wayne, Dale, Dora Mae Redding and Euna Fay Parsons; five grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

PASSAGES | BETTY WATSON | 1942-2017





The letter jacket and the 200 butterfly

By LEE THORNTON, former Water Buffalo in Arnie's Army

THE LAST WEEK OF AUGUST 1974, I enrolled as a freshman at Harding. As I stood in the registration line in American Heritage, I noticed a middle-aged man dressed very well in coat and tie making a beeline for me. He came right up to me, looked me in the eye, and asked, "Are you Lee Thornton from Nashville?" • "Yes sir," I replied. • "Can you swim?" he asked. • "Yes sir." • Without missing a beat, Coach Arnold Pylkas told me, "Swim team practice starts today at 3:30 at the pool behind the Administration Building. I want to see you there!" With that final statement, this bundle of energy marched off.

I was impressed. I had been a lifeguard in Nashville, Tennessee, the previous two summers but had never swum competitively. I decided to give college swimming a try.

So that afternoon I went to my first swim team practice. The pool was only 20-yards long and was the oldest indoor pool in Arkansas — it looked and smelled like it.

I realized pretty quickly after a few workouts I didn't have the buoyancy our best swimmers were blessed with. I could swim the breaststroke OK; however, I didn't earn enough points in swim meets during the winter season to secure a letter jacket.

Two days before the conference championships Feb. 22, 1975, Coach pulled me aside after practice. "Lee, I just found out that in the 200-yard butterfly there will only be the final on Saturday night, and there is an open lane. I entered you; all you have to do is finish the race so the team will get points."

I replied, "Coach, you know I can't finish the 200-yard fly. I can't even finish the 100-yard fly." Coach countered, "Lee, I need you to do this for the team. You can finish this race."

Talk about two sleepless nights. I tried the next day in practice to go 200 yards in the fly but only made it 100. However, I reassured myself that I was 19, strong and stubborn, so I would just muscle my way through the race, but deep in my heart, I knew that I was going into the lion's den.

Midway through the championships that Saturday night, the words I was dreading to hear came over the loud speaker: "200 butterfly participants, please come to the blocks."

I got through the first two laps OK; I started to struggle a little on lap three, and by the end of lap four, I was toast. Still four laps to go, and nothing to give.

I seriously considered quitting, but Coach was depending on me, so I decided to finish no matter what. The pain was awful, but the worst part was the embarrassment of looking like Shamu the killer whale who had just been harpooned and floundering around in the water.

When I finally finished, you could have heard a pin drop. No clapping, no atta-boys, nothing. Total embarrassment for yours truly.

I climbed out of the pool, and Coach came over to offer words of encouragement, but to be honest, I was upset with him for putting me in a race I told him I couldn't finish.

When I got back to Armstrong Hall, I slumped down in the hallway outside my door and sobbed. I decided that night my swimming days were over.

The next six months passed quickly. After lifeguarding in Nashville that summer, I knew after returning to campus I would have to tell Coach I had no intention of returning to the swim team.

He found me quickly that week and told me to come to the kickoff swim team meeting at Pizza Hut that Friday night. I replied there was no need for me to attend based on what had happened at the Arkansas Intercollegiate Conference meet that previous February. We got into a slight argument, but finally, just to get him off my back, I told him I would come.

Coach gave his kickoff pep talk about how we would win the AIC championships, which we did. Then Coach presented jackets to the guys who had lettered the previous season.



After the letter jacket presentation, he closed the gathering with these words: "Last February, I asked someone to swim a race that was definitely out of his comfort zone. I have never seen such determination to finish a race. He may think he doesn't deserve this letter jacket, but I do. The final letter jacket goes to Lee Thornton."

I was stunned. The place broke into applause, and I left my seat to receive my jacket from Coach who helped me put it on. I wore it back to the dorm even though it was more than 95 degrees outside. I wore that letter jacket a lot the next three years at school.

I still have that jacket; it hangs in the back of my closet next to my dad's World War II Army dress jacket decorated with his ribbons and patches for bravery under fire.

During the valleys of my life the past 40 years, I would put it on and remember that February night. Then I would put on my dad's Army dress jacket and think of what he and his buddies went through in combat and how my jacket could never compare to his.

More importantly, I realized a few years ago the letter jacket was a greater symbol of grace and favor from Coach that I didn't deserve or earn just like what the carpenter did on the cross for my sins. I know, despite my efforts that night, I really didn't deserve that jacket just like I don't deserve eternal life.

But I got the jacket from Coach, and I have been promised eternal life from my savior. It is the best lesson on grace I've ever experienced. For that, I am forever grateful.

Oh yes, I swam two more years for Coach — not the butterfly, just the breaststroke. 🏊

Story condensed from Lee Thornton's ('78) tribute at Coach Arnold Pylkas' funeral Jan. 14. For Coach Pylkas' obituary, see page 35.

ILLUSTRATION BY JENNIFER ALLEN



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OCTOBER 19-21

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Tickets will be available at www.hardingtickets.com.

More information on reunions and events will be posted at www.harding.edu/events/homecoming.

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Final Frame

PHOTO BY STERLING MCMICHAEL

The demand for the Jesse McCartney concert Feb. 18 was so great the venue had to be changed from the Administration Auditorium to the Benson to accommodate the crowd of approximately 2,200. McCartney opened and closed the show with classic tracks from 2004-08.

