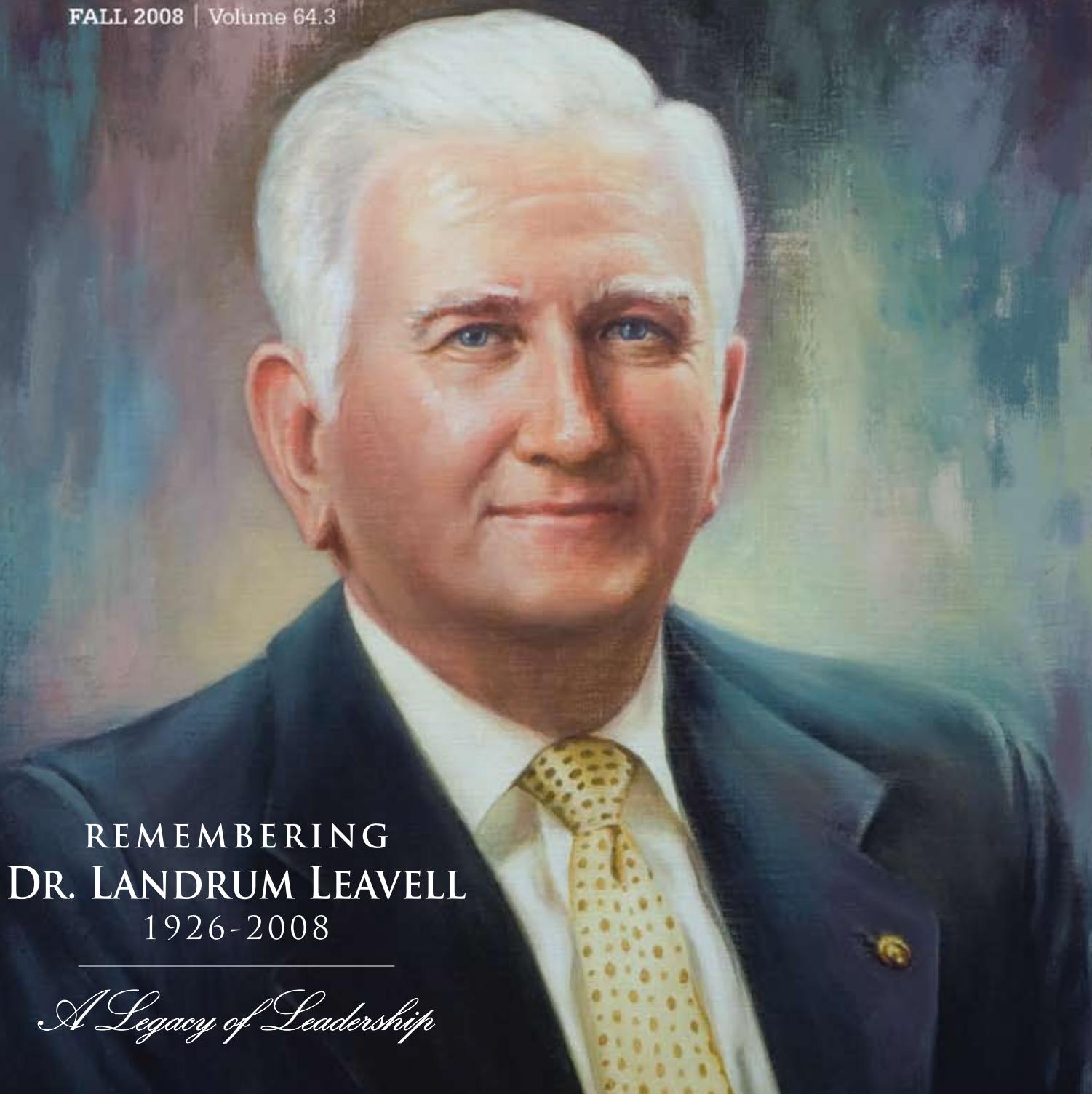


# vision |



NEW ORLEANS  
BAPTIST  
THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY

FALL 2008 | Volume 64.3



REMEMBERING  
DR. LANDRUM LEAVELL  
1926-2008

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*A Legacy of Leadership*



**Dr. Chuck Kelley, New Orleans Seminary President**

## A Celebration of Greatness

In the summer of 1975, my wife and I were finishing college and preparing for a move to seminary. Our decision was mostly made, or so we thought. After a day of fasting and prayer to finalize what would be one of the more important decisions of my life, I found myself certain that I should not go to that school with a great evangelism program, in the city where my wife had just gotten her dream job, in a state where I was already known and preaching revivals widely. Instead I knew quite clearly that God wanted me to go to a seminary without an evangelism program, in city where Baptists were few in number and neither my wife nor I had a job, and a state in which no one had any idea who I was or had ever called on me to lead in silent prayer. What did God use to redirect my thinking? He showed me that He intended to use living in the city of New Orleans as my primary classroom for evangelism, and He convinced me that a seminary led by its new President, an outstanding SBC pastor named Landrum P. Leavell II, was bound for great things. The reputation of Dr. Leavell was an important influence in my seminary decision. The reality of his greatness as a leader became an important influence in shaping my life.

When I arrived at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in the summer of 1975, Dr. Leavell and I had two things in common. We were both passionate about evangelism and we

**Greatness is the ability to fulfill your calling effectively and efficiently, whatever the circumstances, while nurturing and building up the people around you in the process. This is the essence of the life and ministry of Dr. Landrum P. Leavell II.**

both came to New Orleans from Texas. Texans on the seminary campus were few and far between at that time, as were students wanting to study evangelism. He was returning to New Orleans after a fabulous ministry as a pastor and well known preacher. I was coming for the first time. Those two commonalities, however, were enough to give us a connection, and that connection became one of the more important relationships of my life. That connection eventually included our wives, and as time went by they discovered they shared similar passions as well, passions for student wives and ministry to women, passions for hospitality and entertaining, passions that led a gifted, talented woman to immerse herself in her husband's ministry as his helpmate and partner. We never spent large amounts of time together, and we were different in personality and gifts. We did get to know one another. We did spend time in each other's home occasionally. We did work together more and more and learn one another's heart. In other words, I was able to have a front row seat to see what made Dr. Leavell a great man and a great leader, and in the process of observation and collaboration I became a better man and a better leader myself.

A precise definition of greatness will never be agreed upon by all, but here is the Kelley version. Greatness is the ability to fulfill your calling effectively and efficiently, whatever the circumstances, while nurturing and building up the people around you in the process. This is the essence of the life and ministry of Dr. Landrum P. Leavell II. If I may adapt one of his favorite expressions, as a leader Dr. Leavell was better than many, equal to any, and second to none. Here are some of the reasons that cause me to celebrate his life.

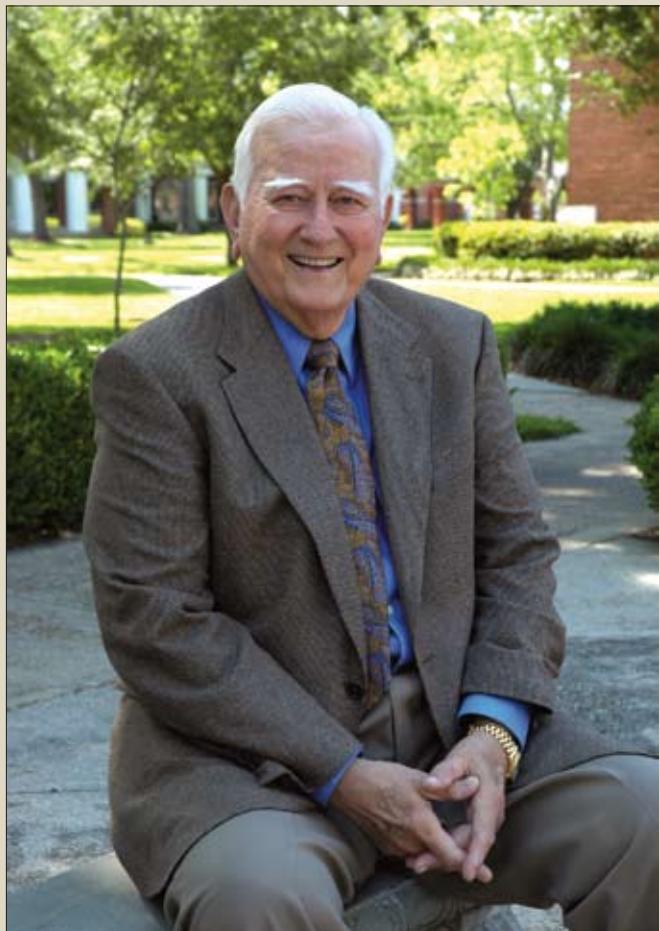
Dr. Leavell always got it done. "It" was whatever God gave him to do. As a pastor every church he served grew in conversions, attendance, budget, and ministries. Go back today to any church he served and you will find he is one of their legendary pastors. The same could be said for all of the churches he served as an interim. As president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, he led the school to record enrollments, record budgets, record fund-raising, the expansion of property and facilities, and pace-setting educational innovation. As long as this seminary exists he will be on the list of legendary presidents. If he served on a board, that board moved forward. If he accepted a civic responsibility, the progress was measurable. He did more than show up. He did more than stay out of trouble. He did more than work hard. He got done whatever had to be done for all the years of his life. Also, he got it done efficiently. There was never waste. Dr. Leavell was very big on quality, but not impressed with flash. He always treated God's money as if it was his own: not to be wasted, not to be

used purely to impress. If you look at any building he built, any program he established, any project he undertook, you will not call it cheap, nor will you call it over the top. He made our Seminary a national leader in budget efficiency and in the process he expanded our programs, enlarged our campus, and took bold steps in innovation. This is not easy to do, but he did it well, and that is why every successful businessman I know, including my father, loved him and respected him. He always got it done, efficiently and effectively.

**He made our Seminary a national leader in budget efficiency and in the process he expanded our programs, enlarged our campus, and took bold steps in innovation.**

Perhaps even more impressive is the fact that Dr. Leavell always got it done, whatever the circumstances. He was president during times of great controversy in the Convention. While other schools were imploding in conflict, he kept faculty, students, and Trustees focused on the job at hand. Most would agree NOBTS was the SBC entity least affected by the years of conflict. That was not an accident. The greatest controversy in the history of the Convention was not an excuse to be distracted from the work of preparing students for ministry. He never addressed the controversy in chapel or faculty meetings. He never used the seminary campus as a venue to express his feelings and opinions about leaders on either side. He made people on both sides mad at one time or another, but he never lost his focus on the work of NOBTS. To give another example, most schools this large serving a particular denomination are located in a strong base of that denomination's churches. No one has ever called the city of New Orleans a Baptist bastion. That could have been an excuse for difficulties in fund-raising. Dr. Leavell went out and secured an active Catholic businessman to be the local chairman of his largest financial campaign and exceeded the campaign goals. He got it done, whatever "it" was, regardless of the circumstances. There are always reasons to fail. Dr. Leavell found ways to succeed. This is one of the more important marks of greatness. Ideal circumstances are not required. Skill, patience, and strength of will are.

One of the most important aspects of great leadership emphasized and illustrated by Jesus is the effect of a leader on the people around him. Jesus accomplished the mission given to Him by the Father. He atoned for our sin. He did it, however, in a way that nurtured the people around him, producing disciples ready to take up the gospel as He returned to the Father. It is not enough for a leader to be productive. To be truly great he must do it in a way that nurtures and develops people. Dr. Leavell was a strong leader whom people always knew was in charge. He never let that overshadow the work of leadership development. I suppose this is where I come into his story. Early on in our relationship Dr. Leavell trusted me and gave me opportunities to grow and develop. He gave me opportunities to preach in settings where a person of my age rarely preached. He hired me as a faculty member though I did not have a great deal of the experience which was his



usual standard. He gave me things to do without telling me how to do them. Because he was such a strong leader with such great effectiveness, many thought you could never disagree with him. It was his way or the highway. I found we could discuss, disagree, even argue a point and maintain our relationship. I knew he made the final decisions and always respected them. He allowed me to be honest and open. We rarely spent much one on one time together, but he maintained a nurturing climate around him. He never ceased to be an encourager. He also did exceedingly well that which is hardest for a great leader to do. He allowed me to take up the mantle he laid down and serve the Seminary in my own way with his unceasing blessing. Such a precious gift few men who follow a great leader ever receive. I will ever be in his debt. You need to know that my story is not unique. I am only one of many who would tell a similar story about this man of importance and significance who took the time to know them, nurture them, and encourage them to excellence. We are legion, and we are profoundly grateful for the privilege of being under his influence.

For these and many other reasons, the occasion of Dr. Landrum P. Leavell's homegoing is the celebration of a life well-lived. It is the celebration of a man who was a great leader in his generation. Allow me to say it one last time. As a leader he was equal to any, better than many, and second to none. We are saddened for his family and for ourselves. We rejoice for him. His journey is now in its sweetest chapter. Well done faithful servant. Enjoy the table of the Lord!

*Charles A. Kelley, Jr.*

# Fall 2008 Alumni Reunions

*"Join us for great food, fellowship, giveaways,  
and updates from your alma mater."*

**Alabama:** Nov. 18, 5:00 p.m. Catfish Restaurant, Milbrook, AL. Cost is \$15. Contact Donnell Brown, dbmba@hiwaay.net; 256-773-5243.

**Arkansas:** Contact Kevin White at kwwhite@cox.net or 479-471-7746 for information.

**California:** Contact Steve Belden at StBel@aol.com or 916-670-7220 for information.

**Colorado:** Oct. 21, 8:00 a.m. Westview Grill, Denver, CO. Contact Doug Allen, Chapter President at doug.marsha@centurytel.net or 719-783-2082.

**Florida:** Nov. 11, noon. FBC Lakeland ("Church at the Mall") Lakeland, FL; Cost is \$10. Contact John Boone, Chapter President at jboone@flbaptist.org or 904-596-3078.

**Georgia:** First Baptist Church, St Jonesboro, GA. Contact Stuart Lang, Chapter President at Slang@GABaptist.org or 706-423-9885.

**Illinois:** Nov. 12, 12:30-2:00 p.m. Maverick Steak House, Springfield, IL. Contact Daryl Stagg, Chapter President at lcbaodom@sbcglobal.net or 847-336-3690.

**Indiana:** Oct. 3, noon; "The Den" located in the Indianapolis Marriott East, Indianapolis, IN. Contact Chuck Grant, Chapter President at cgrant@dalvarybc.net or 765-463-2622.

**Kansas/Nebraska:** Oct. 14, 7:00 a.m. at Perkins Restaurant, Lenexa, KS. Contact Terrell Giddens, Chapter President at Terrell\_g@yahoo.com or 620-697-2289.

**Kentucky:** Contact Ron Wilson at RonGoFett@yahoo.com or 270-842-7867 for information.

**Louisiana:** Nov. 11, 12:15 p.m. First Baptist Church, Youth Room, New Orleans 5290 Canal Blvd. New Orleans, LA. Contact Waylon Bailey, Chapter President at wbailey@fbccov.org.

**Maryland/Delaware:** Nov. 11, 12:30 p.m.; Sheraton Dover Hotel, Dover, DE. Cost is \$18 per person. RSVP by Oct. 28 to Dale Puckett, Chapter President; dale@faithbc.net or 410-761-5346.

**Michigan:** Contact Diane Winton, Chapter President, for information. diane@bscm.org or 810-714-1907.

**Mississippi:** Oct. 28, noon; First Baptist Church Fellowship Hall, Jackson, MS. Cost is \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door. Contact Eric Gervais at ericpgervais@hotmail.com or purchase advance tickets from Jimmy Stewart at 9235 Pigeon Roost Rd Olive Branch, MS 38654.

**Missouri:** Oct. 28, noon; Fourth Street Grill, located in the Millennium Hotel, St. Louis, MO. Contact Don Currence, Chapter President, at dcurrence@fbcozark.org or 417-581-2484.

**New York:** September 22, 4:30 p.m. at Word of Life Conference Center, Schroon Lake, NY. Contact Wes Frank, Chapter President at fwesley62@msn.com or 716-803-5284.

**North Carolina:** Nov. 11, 12:00 at Lone Star Steakhouse, Greensboro, NC. Contact Vern Gilmer, Chapter President at revolvo@inteliport.com or 252-297-2985.

**Oklahoma:** Nov. 11, 4:45 p.m. at The Church at Battle Creek, Broken Arrow, OK. Contact Shane Hall, Chapter President for more information at HallShane@hotmail.com or 580-309-3008.

**Washington, Oregon:** Contact Jon Beard at sartoris@juno.com or 360-710-1967.

**South Carolina:** Nov. 10, 5:30 p.m. at Trinity Baptist Church, Cayce, SC. Contact D. J. Horton, Chapter President at dj@amrbc.org or 864-576-7548.

**Tennessee:** Nov. 11; Contact Jay Johnston, Chapter President, for information. 615-822-3075.

**Texas:** Contact Dan Fowler, Chapter President for information at dan.fowler@att.net or 817-453-7487.

**Utah/Idaho:** Contact Joe Boney, Chapter President at Joe\_CindyBoney@yahoo.com or 208-935-0452.

FOR UPDATES ON ALL ALUMNI CHAPTER REUNIONS, VISIT  
**WWW.NOBTS.EDU/ALUMNI**

**NEW ORLEANS**  
BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

# vision

MAGAZINE

FALL 2008  
Volume 64.3

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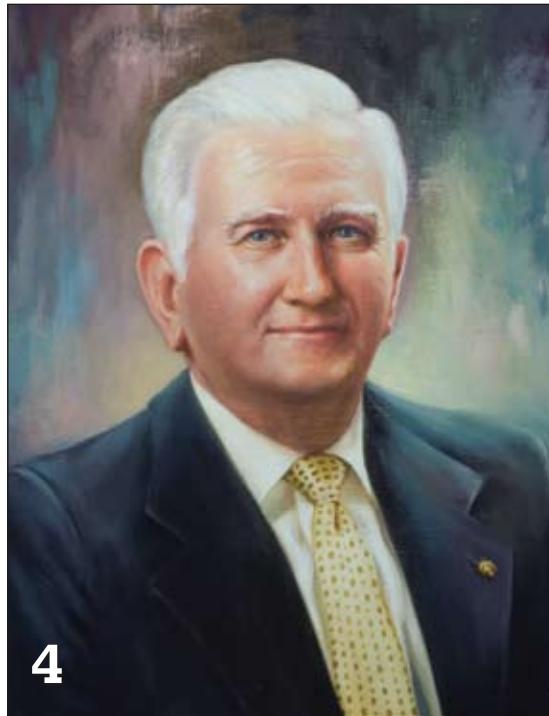


VISION is published quarterly by  
New Orleans Baptist  
Theological Seminary  
3939 Gentilly Blvd.  
New Orleans, LA 70126  
(800) 662-8701;  
(504) 282-4455  
[www.nobts.edu](http://www.nobts.edu)  
[nobtsfoundation.com](http://nobtsfoundation.com)

Please send address changes  
and Alumni Updates to the office  
of Alumni Relations at the above  
address. NOTE: Alumni Updates  
will be used for publication in both  
the Vision magazine and on the  
Alumni website.



New Orleans Baptist Theological  
Seminary is a Cooperative Program  
ministry, supported by the gifts of  
Southern Baptists.



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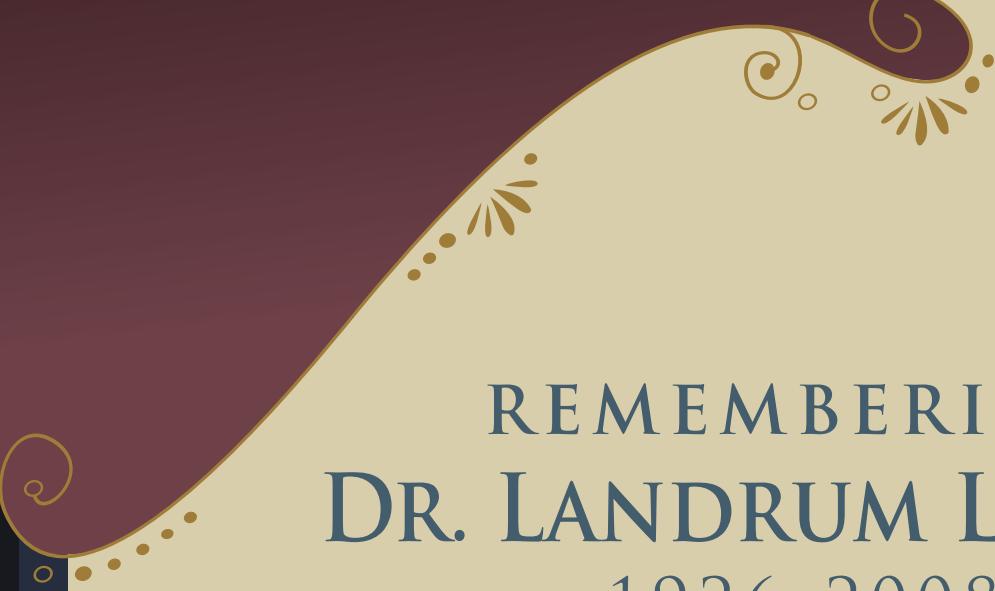
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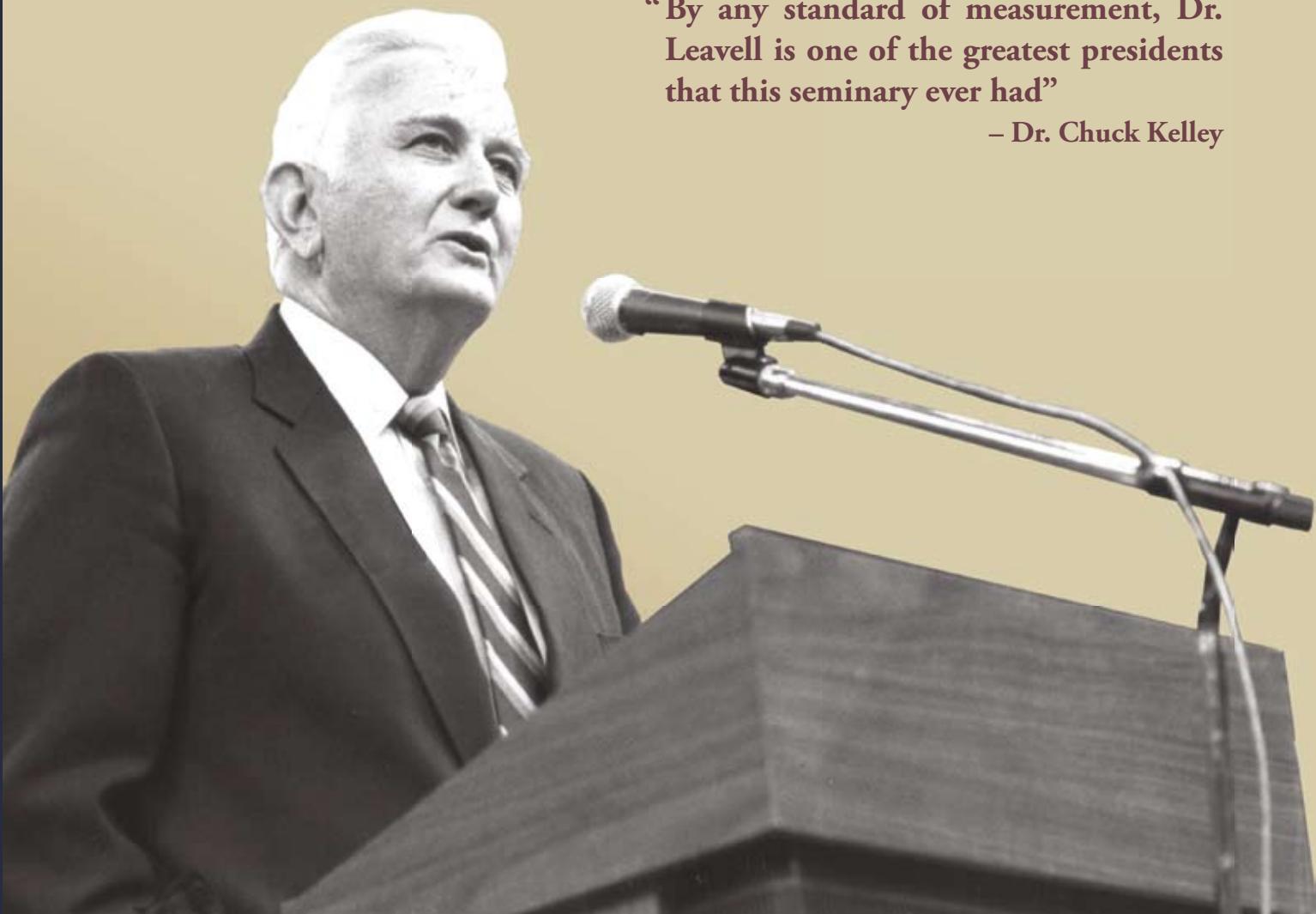
# REMEMBERING DR. LANDRUM LEAVELL 1926-2008

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*A Legacy of Leadership*

“By any standard of measurement, Dr. Leavell is one of the greatest presidents that this seminary ever had”

– Dr. Chuck Kelley



# SEMINARY MOURNS PASSING OF LANDRUM P. LEAVELL II

**Dr. Leavell led New Orleans Seminary from 1975-1995**

BY GARY D. MYERS

WICHITA FALLS, Texas -- Dr. Landrum P. Leavell II, president emeritus of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, died Sept. 26 in Wichita Falls, Texas. He was 81.

Born in Ripley, Tenn., Nov. 26, 1926, Leavell was raised in Newnan, Ga., where his father, Leonard O. Leavell, was pastor of the First Baptist Church. On July 28, 1953 he married JoAnn Paris of New Orleans, a graduate of Sophie Newcomb College. He went on to become the president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, his alma mater, and one of the most influential Southern Baptist leaders of his generation.

Leavell was ordained to the gospel ministry in 1948 and began pastoring a church in Mississippi during his time as a student at New Orleans Seminary.

Leavell earned a B.A. in English from Mercer University and a B.D. degree and a Th.D. in New Testament and Greek from NOBTS.

During his 27 years as a pastor, Leavell served at Union Baptist Church in Magnolia, Miss. (1948-51); Crosby Baptist Church in Crosby, Miss. (1951-53); First Baptist Church in Charleston, Miss. (1953-56); First Baptist Church in Gulfport, Miss. (1956-63); and First Baptist Church in Wichita Falls, Texas, (1963-75).

Leavell served in many capacities in the Southern Baptist Convention, the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. He was first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1968 and president of the SBC Pastor's Conference in 1971. Leavell served as president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas from 1971-73. Since his retirement Leavell served on the board of trustees at Mississippi College.

Leavell shared a lifelong love of for quail hunting. He was a dedicated father who traveled untold miles following his sons' football and basketball careers. His oldest son said, "He was a tough fighter to the end; he just didn't have much left to fight with. There are a lot of tracks in the sand behind him. I would hope my rearview mirror was so crowded."

In addition to his denominational roles, Leavell was an active community leader serving with a number of civic groups including the Mayor's Bi-Racial Committee in Gulfport; the boards of the United Fund and of Child Welfare of Wichita Falls; and the Rotary Club of New Orleans. He also was longtime trustee of Baptist Hospital in New Orleans. Upon the sale of Baptist Hospital, he became a founding trustee of Baptist Community Ministries, a foundation developed to administer the assets generated from the sale. Reflecting its Baptist heritage, the foundation from its inception has invested its resources in meeting the health and educational needs of the citizens of the New Orleans area.

Upon the occasion of his retirement from the seminary, Baptist Community Ministries created an endowed faculty chair in psychology and counseling in Leavell's honor. Friends also created an endowed faculty chair in New Testament and Greek that bears his name. The city of New Orleans designated a portion of the campus as Leavell Lane in honor of the many contributions made by him and his uncle, Roland Q. Leavell, who served as NOBTS president from 1946-58. Seminary trustees named the Center for Evangelism and Church Growth in Landrum Leavell's honor as well.

## *A Legacy of Leadership*

**NOV. 26, 1926:** LANDRUM P. LEAVELL II IS BORN IN RIPLEY, TENNEESEE.

**1948:** GRADUATES FROM MERCER UNIVERSITY. ORDAINED TO THE MINISTRY.

**1948-1975:**  
PASTORS  
CHURCHES IN  
MISSISSIPPI  
AND TEXAS  
INCLUDING  
FBC WICHITA  
FALLS



**1951:** EARNS THE BACHELOR OF DIVINITY DEGREE AT NOBTS.

**JULY 28, 1953:** MARRIES JOANN PARIS.

**1954:** EARNS THE DOCTOR OF THEOLOGY DEGREE IN NEW TESTAMENT AND GREEK AT NOBTS.

**1975:**  
ELECTED AS  
7TH NOBTS  
PRESIDENT.  
STEEPLE  
ADDED TO  
ROLAND  
Q. LEAVELL  
CHAPEL.



**1976:** SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN TRAINING (NOW LEAVELL COLLEGE) RESTARTS WITH 30 STUDENTS.

# *A Legacy of Leadership*

**1980:** J.D. GREY MISSIONARY APARTMENTS COMPLETED. SEMINARY SWIMMING POOL COMPLETED.

**1982:** NOBTS BEGINS EXTENSION CENTER TRAINING.



**1987:** HARDIN STUDENT CENTER OPENS. PROVIDENCE GUEST HOUSE OPENS.

**1992:** SEMINARY CELEBRATES 75TH ANNIVERSARY. LAUNCHES THE FIRST CENTER FOR EVANGELISM AND CHURCH GROWTH IN SBC.

**1994:** LEAVELL RETIRES AS NOBTS PRESIDENT.

**1995:** LEAVELL ENTERS RETIREMENT DEC. 31, 1995 AFTER SERVING A YEAR AS INTERIM PRESIDENT.



**2003:** UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM RENAMED LEAVELL COLLEGE.

**SEPT. 26, 2008:** LANDRUM LEAVELL II PASSES AWAY. HE WAS 81.

Among Leavell's key honors include the George Washington Honor Medal Award from the Freedoms Foundation of Valley Forge, Pa.; the Paul Harris Fellow by the Rotary Foundation; and the J.D. Grey Preaching Award from the Louisiana Moral and Civic Foundation.

Leavell was elected as president of New Orleans Seminary in January 1975, serving in that role until his retirement Dec. 31, 1994. Leavell served as interim president until Dec. 31, 1995.

"By any standard of measurement, Dr. Leavell is one of the greatest presidents that this seminary ever had," current NOBTS President Chuck Kelley said. On the seminary's [www.nobts.edu](http://www.nobts.edu) website, Kelley noted: "Greatness is the ability to fulfill your calling effectively and efficiently, whatever the circumstances, while nurturing and building up the people around you in the process. This is the essence of the life and ministry of Dr. Landrum P. Leavell II. If I may adapt one of his favorite expressions, as a leader Dr. Leavell was better than many, equal to any, and second to none."

Morris H. Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee, said Leavell "finished his extraordinary ministry as a seminary president, but at heart he was a devoted pastor. He was one of my predecessors as pastor of First Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, and was greatly loved by so many of her members. There is no doubt that he left a lasting footprint upon the church's far-reaching ministries. Dr. Leavell preached Jesus and always issued a heartfelt appeal for the unsaved to come to Jesus. He has left a wonderful legacy of life and ministry as an example for family, friends and fellow Southern Baptists. My wife, Jodi, and I are praying for JoAnn and the entire family the all-encompassing sufficiency of God's grace in these days."

During Leavell's NOBTS presidency, the seminary experienced record growth, outstanding success in fundraising and a significant expansion of its campus. The campus became known by all who visited as one of the most beautiful spots in New Orleans.

Leavell believed that the care and preparation of a minister's family was as important as the preparation of the minister. He enhanced the campus recreation facilities and, with his wife, gave great attention to the needs of student wives.

The Leavells launched many initiatives to assist student wives, including free educational programs, an endowment to buy clothes for student wives and the Leavell Lecture Series. The lecture series was established by the Leavell family to honor Mrs. Leonard O. Leavell, Leavell's mother. The series honors Mrs. Leavell's work as a minister's wife and is designed to encourage student wives who will one day serve in that role. Leavell often arranged for free child care for campus events to enable wives to participate in seminary life.

During his 20-year tenure, the seminary became an innovator in theological education while continuing to emphasize evangelism, missions and local church ministry.

Under Leavell's leadership, New Orleans Seminary established a network of extension centers throughout the Southeast. Leavell also invested in educational technology. He introduced compressed interactive video (CIV), which connects classrooms in different cities for real-time audio and video interaction. His innovations helped the seminary offer world-class theological education to even more God-called men and women.

NOBTS also established the first center for evangelism and church growth in the Southern Baptist Convention, connecting the resources and expertise of the seminary with needs of local churches throughout the SBC.

Leavell was the driving force behind the re-establishment of the seminary's undergraduate program. During the presidency of his uncle



Dr. Landrum Leavell II and his wife, JoAnn, during a campus visit in 2005.

Roland Leavell, the School of Christian Training was begun in 1954. However, it closed a few years later. Landrum Leavell envisioned an accredited college that would offer ministry training to adult students without college degrees. He restarted the school in 1976 with only 30 students. Now more than 1,000 men and women study at the undergraduate college. Four of the other five SBC seminaries now have similar programs. In 2003, the school was renamed Leavell College in honor of the seminary's two Leavell presidents.

A gifted writer, Leavell authored or contributed to 14 books, including "Angels, Angels, Angels" and "Twelve Who Followed Jesus."

In addition to his wife of 55 years, survivors include Landrum P. Leavell III and Susanne of Denton, Texas, Ann Leavell Beauchamp of Greensboro, Ga., Roland Q. Leavell II and Lisa of Jackson, Miss., and David E. Leavell and Vicki of Springfield, Tenn., and grandchildren.

The funeral was held at First Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Texas Sept. 30. Interment was Oct. 3 at Oak Hill Cemetery in Newnan, Ga. A memorial service was also held in New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary's Roland Q. Leavell Chapel Oct. 7.

**Memorial gifts are requested to be given to New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and First Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Texas.**

## ONE MAN LANDRUM P. LEAVELL II

We celebrate a joyous life  
Mourning our loss  
One man has made an impact  
Our loss is his gain

A long life of value and worth  
He cared for us – loved us  
With courage when courage wasn't cool  
Hearing our hurts and pains  
Living with a discipline that encouraged us  
He knew each of us by name  
Landrum walked to God's song – Jesus

Family always counted  
Wife, children, grandchildren, kin and friends  
When you were with him  
You were somebody and you knew you could win

A man with no guile  
His vision was far – reaching and transparent  
Tough with a heart of gold  
Beulah land his goal – now he is there

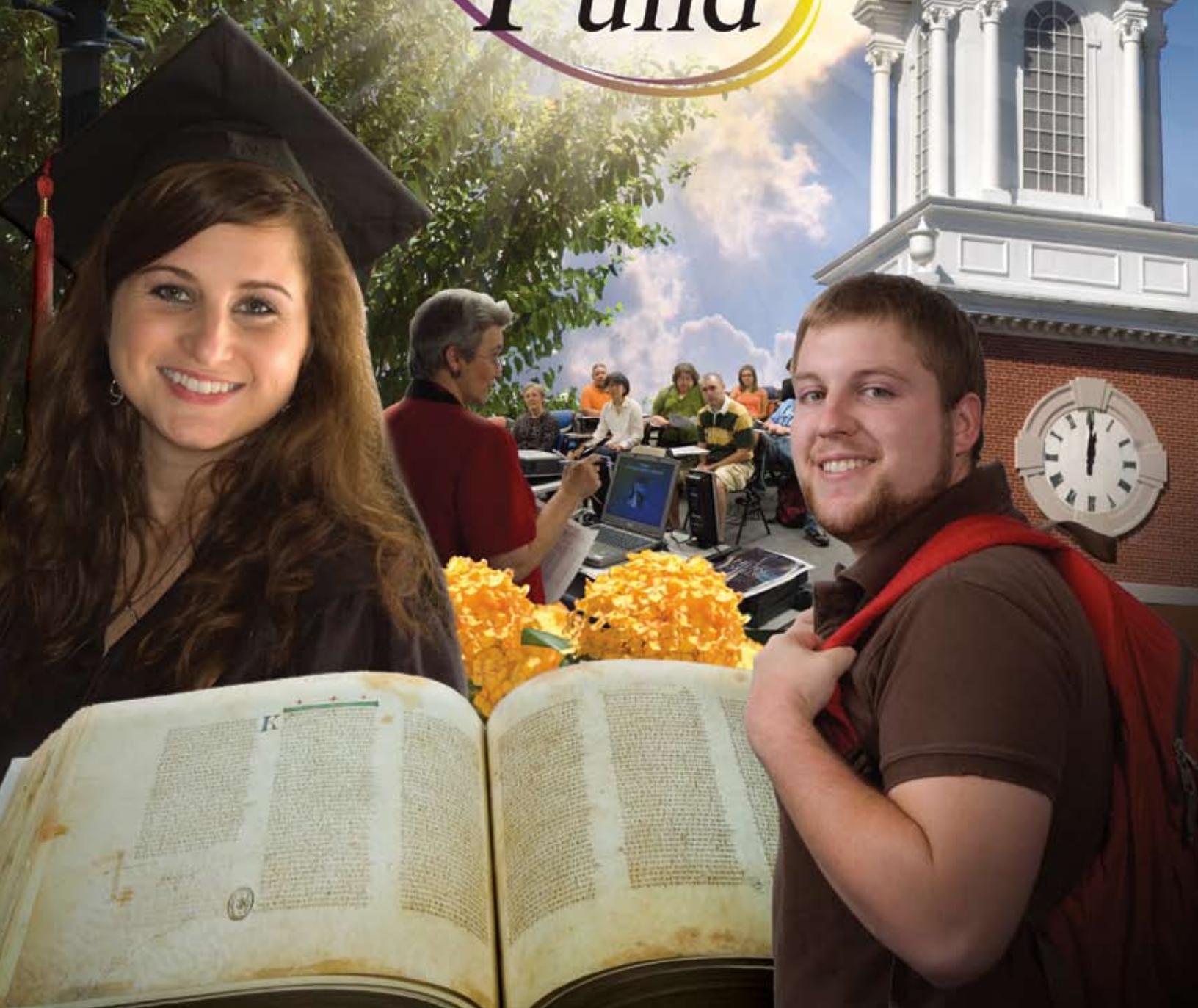
He was our preacher, teacher, leader and friend  
Strong guts, no quit  
He hated dirt, debt and the devil  
One man – Landrum Leavell II  
We love him

*By Clay Corvin  
Sept. 28, 2008, Wichita Falls, Texas*

Mr. Clay Corvin, CPA, is Vice President for Business Affairs and Professor of Administration at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

**Post your tributes  
to Dr. Leavell  
at [www.nobts.edu](http://www.nobts.edu)**

# NOBTS Annual Fund



# OPENING THE DOOR TO SEMINARY EDUCATION

## Annual Fund keeps costs affordable for students

Our philosophy as Southern Baptists has always been ‘come one, come all.’ We’ve always had a big door open wide. The Annual Fund is helping us keep the big door open, and not a smaller door. That’s why it’s important.

-Dr. Chuck Kelley

BY PAUL F. SOUTH

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary President Chuck Kelley removed his glasses and choked back tears as he recalled a letter from an alumna, a “90-something” year-old widow. The correspondence was crafted in a shaky script.

“I just read with interest the last copy of the Vision and it’s so exciting to see what God is doing. I’m on Social Security and I don’t have hardly anything, but here’s a check for \$5. I know how tight a budget is for a student. I know how much people helped me when I was in seminary. I just want to help somebody else.”

The seminary’s Office of Institutional Advancement, which is responsible for raising money for the school, receives letters like this almost daily.

“This is the thing I’ve learned to love about Southern Baptists,” Kelley said. The story of Southern Baptists is not the story of big things. It’s the story of doing little things consistently. It’s the story of doing the best you can with what you’ve got in the context of cooperation.”

That philosophy of teamwork has been part of Southern Baptist life since the denomination was founded in 1845.

“We made a decision in the early days that we could do things together that no one of us could do individually. That’s what’s happening with the Annual Fund.”

The Annual Fund initiative is one of the seminary’s key funding sources. For the student working late at night on a research project in the library, the Annual Fund keeps the lights burning bright. Air conditioners hum efficiently in classrooms during the sweltering Louisiana summers, all because of the Annual Fund. Anything related to the mundane, day-to-day operation of the seminary is fueled by the Annual Fund.

Every penny of Annual Fund giving is a penny students do not have to pay. For every dollar that the Annual Fund falls short, the difference must be passed on to students through higher tuition and student fees.

And since its creation by Kelley’s predecessor, Dr. Landrum Leavell, the Annual Fund’s significance in keeping world-class

theological education affordable has increased. The six Southern Baptist seminaries, among the world’s largest centers for theological education, receive a large share of their funding from the Cooperative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention.

“Dr. Leavell realized the Cooperative Program was an extremely helpful thing, but that we needed to go about the work of raising money to supplement the Cooperative Program.”

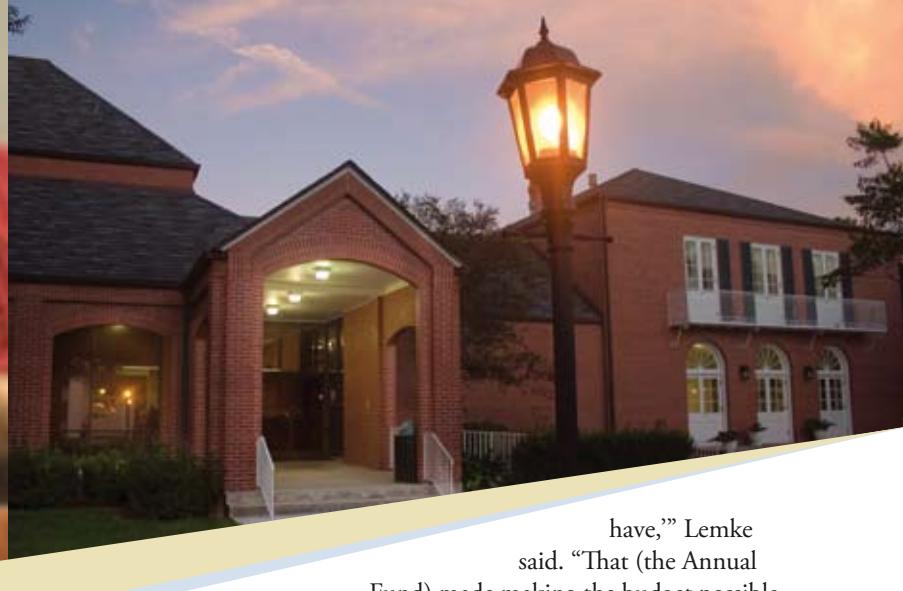
Leavell was president when Kelley arrived as a student at NOBTS in August 1975. At the time, more than 70 percent of the seminary’s operating budget came from the Cooperative Program, the initiative launched in 1925 to fund SBC ministries. It packed a powerful punch, helping the Kelley family pocketbook. The most Kelley paid was \$125 for his last semester of doctoral work.

“I paid a registration fee, and that was all I paid,” Kelley recalled. “It didn’t matter how many classes you took, whether it was one or six. You basically paid, in postal terms, the shipping and handling charge.”

Times have changed. While Southern Baptists’ generosity has kept the Cooperative Program growing consistently over the last two decades, the increase has not kept pace with the rate of inflation. Now less than 50 percent of the seminary’s operating budget comes from the Cooperative Program. The Annual Fund must make up for a gap of more than 20 percent. And while the Annual Fund money does not go directly to students, it affects their lives nonetheless.

It’s a matter of simple mathematics, Kelley said. Like everyone, the seminary wrestles with higher prices – from food for the cafeteria to gasoline for





maintenance vehicles to electricity for dormitory rooms.

"That additional money, the more than 20 percent, has to come from somewhere. There are two places we can receive donations other than the Cooperative Program – from people who want to support the training of ministers, and student tuition and fees. It's really that simple."

Leavell's foresight, combined with the generosity of Southern Baptists, has made NOBTS a higher education bargain.

Kelley pointed to Association of Theological Schools, the major accrediting agency for schools of theology in North America. According to the ATS, a school's average cost per year for an American seminary student is \$30,000. At NOBTS, that cost is \$9,000 per student, per year.

"You compare more than \$30,000 in expenses to \$9,000 in expenses, and you can see that the seminary is working very hard to control the costs that it can control."

Kelley was quick to point out that the Annual Fund goes to operating expenses only. No new buildings. No new endowed professorships, but for the operations of the seminary.

"The more money we raise in the Annual Fund, the less we have to recover from tuition and fees. That's why it's so crucial."

But make no mistake, the effectiveness of the Annual Fund – raising \$1.025 million this year, has a huge impact on academics, NOBTS Provost Steve Lemke said.

Because of the success of the Annual Fund initiative, the seminary was able to grant some faculty raises and provide long-term care insurance. All of this in a year that saw cost increases across the board. For example, property insurance premiums spiked \$800,000, while utility bills jumped over \$250,000. Tuition and fees were still below pre-Katrina levels by \$700,000, and the seminary is still trying to fill the \$400,000 revenue gap left when Katrina demolished the 92 States Apartments.

Those two hits in revenue combined with soaring costs on just utilities and insurance alone cost the seminary more than \$2 million. The seminary's total budget is \$19 million. The \$2 million hit means that roughly 10 percent of the budget is gone. That in turn impacts academic programs, student scholarships, staff positions, student staff, the library and on and on. The Annual Fund helped bridge the gap.

"Our Institutional Advancement team stepped up to the plate and said, 'We're going to get more in the Annual Fund than we ever

have,'" Lemke said. "That (the Annual Fund) made making the budget possible. We were able to fund what we had because we had \$1.025 million coming in from the Annual Fund."

Lemke added, "The budget simply would not have worked. It wouldn't have made sense. It wouldn't have added up if it had not been for the Annual Fund and the contribution it makes."

The seminary is committed to raising the same amount through the Annual Fund again this year. Success in the Annual Fund means more opportunities to expand academically.

"We can do more things. We can hire more faculty. We can deal with some new programs," Lemke said. "Ultimately, the more that we can address our financial needs that way, the less we have to go to tuition increases. So it certainly impacts students. The Annual Fund helps keep tuition at a manageable level, and less than many other conservative evangelical seminaries."

### Unique Partnership

When a student, whether a single with all of his or her belongings in a few suitcases, or a family, with energetic kids and a moving van, passes through the gates, they are not alone, Kelley said.

"We feel like that in this process of theological education, it is a multi-party partnership. One part of the partnership is the seminary and its commitment to do theological education as efficiently as possible. That's our responsibility. We ask ourselves all the time, 'Is there a more efficient way of doing this?' We want to have a quality education delivered in an efficient manner."

Then come donors – from the longstanding faithful giving to the Cooperative Program, to the heartfelt \$5 check from an alumna, or the church on the North Shore that endowed a scholarship, all are important in the partnership.

"Literally every church in the SBC is participating in the Cooperative Program. For every one of our students, you can honestly say that Mount Pisgah Baptist Church in Hot Coffee, Miss., is helping put you through seminary. That's the beautiful thing about the Cooperative Program; there is not another thing like it in the world. There is not another Christian organization or group making this size investment in Christian education."

"Donors give us a starting point with our budget. The donors are helping us as they are led to help. Every gift is important and every gift is appreciated."

And then there are students.

"The Southern Baptist Convention says it wants to train ministers," Kelley said. "Donors say we want to help

in that training. Then to the mix add students, who say, 'OK, I am receiving something. It has a cost.' It's that combination of things that make up the budget of the seminary."

Kelley hammered home the importance of the Annual Fund for students.

"The better job we do of raising money through the Cooperative Program and the Annual Fund, the less pressure there is on student tuition and fees. The Annual Fund keeps money in students' pockets," Kelley said. "If you give \$50 to the Annual Fund, that's \$50 you've put in students' pockets."

### **Small Gifts are Important**

Kelley makes an important point concerning donors to the seminary and to the Cooperative Program. While large donations come and are welcomed with open arms, most donations are small to medium, and come from small to medium-sized churches, engaged in a consistent effort.

"That's the story of the Southern Baptist Convention," Kelley said. "When you back up and look at the big picture . . . Southern Baptists are the largest Protestant denomination in the United States. People think of Southern Baptists, and they think of Charles Stanley (senior pastor of First Baptist Church Atlanta) who's on television and one of our prominent Bible teachers, or they think of big churches like First Baptist Dallas or First Baptist Orlando or First Baptist Jacksonville. They think of the SBC as a body of big churches. Nothing could be further from the truth."

In fact, Kelley said, 50 percent of Southern Baptist churches are like the North Shore church – with 200 or less in the pews each Sunday.

"Look at this number of small churches. There are large churches who give the big bucks. But when you realize that this convention of mostly small churches has fielded a missionary force of 5,000 scattered across the globe – the largest missionary force in Christendom, and that we have more than 15,000 students enrolled in our six seminaries. All of this comes from a denomination of small churches, because those churches give sacrificially."

Small gifts are critical as well, Kelley said. He pointed to scripture as an example.

"The only gifts that Jesus talked about were small gifts. The only exception I can think of is the woman who took her very, very expensive jar of perfume and broke it in order to wash Jesus' feet as He was approaching his death. It was a very, very expensive gift, but it was everything she had."

Kelley added, "He didn't talk about gifts that were easy for people. What He talked about were people who were willing to invest in God's kingdom, because they just wanted to do something with what they had. So it matters not to me how large the gift is. That may be \$10 or \$100; whatever they can do. It's all important and it's all appreciated."

### **Keeping the Big Door Open**

When it comes to its six seminaries, Southern Baptists have always had a door open for students who are first and foremost saved and called to ministry, with a church willing to affirm evidence of those things, Kelley said.

"The Annual Fund is going to be the key for keeping seminary education affordable," Kelley said. "It is certainly possible to envision a day when seminary will be more for the elite – those with the financial resources to be able to afford it. Our philosophy as Southern Baptists has always been 'come one, come all.' We've always had a big door open wide. The Annual Fund is helping us keep the big door open, and not a smaller door. That's why it's important."

## **Annual Fund exceeds 2007-2008 goal**

**GOOD NEWS!** Gifts to the New Orleans Seminary Annual Fund exceeded the \$1,025,000 goal - \$1,025,496 was given by 815 people (\$496 over the goal). This is the largest amount ever given to this fund.

Thanks to everyone for believing in what God is doing through the ministry of NOBTS. Together we are accomplishing what could never be done alone. Last year, 542 alumni made contributions to this effort. That's up from 98 the year before. Thank you for your support. You are assisting us in changing the world for Jesus.



# Magee Fellowship announces first recipients

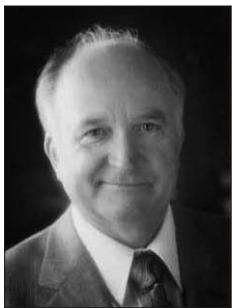
*Additional contributions needed to expand the amount and number of fellowships awarded*

**N**ew Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary established the Robert S. Magee Doctoral Fellowship in 2007 to provide scholarships for Doctor of Philosophy students. Now the fund has grown and the first fellowship recipients have been named.

Jeff Audirsch from Winnfield, La., and James Roberts, from Oklahoma, received the first awards. Both men completed their Master's studies at NOBTS and are now studying in the Doctor of Philosophy program. Audirsch is studying Old Testament and Hebrew. Roberts is a Church History major.

"Being the recipient of the Robert S. Magee Fellowship is a great honor due in large part to Dr. Magee's successful blending of academics and local church ministry. His rich legacy extends beyond his ministry at Temple Baptist Church to the classroom at NOBTS," Audirsch said. "I am truly honored to be awarded this Fellowship because of the legacy and encouragement Dr. Magee has given all God-called men and women."

Candidates for the fellowships are nominated and selected through a process involving the provost, the academic deans and division chairs of New Orleans Seminary. Fellowships are awarded based on academic achievement and scholarly potential of candidates.



**"[Magee] was a model for ministry for me and dozens of other men who felt called into ministry through his decades as pastor of Temple Baptist Church."**

**Magee**

- Dr. Steve Lemke

The fellowship was established to honor of the late Robert S. Magee for his fifty years of pastoral ministry to Southern Baptists, including thirty-four years as pastor of Temple Baptist Church in Ruston, La.

As a man who distinguished himself in preaching, his major field of study during his doctoral work, Magee served as a mentor to many in vocational ministry.

"He was a model for ministry for me and for dozens of other men who felt called into ministry through his decades as pastor of Temple Baptist Church," NOBTS Provost Steve Lemke said of his home church pastor.

A native of Collins, Miss., Magee earned the bachelor of arts degree from Mississippi College in 1954 and the Bachelor of Divinity and the Doctor of Theology degrees from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in 1957 and 1962, respectively. Magee was ordained to preach by Collins Baptist Church in Collins, Miss., and served four churches in Mississippi as pastor prior to coming to Temple Baptist Church.



Photo by Michael McCormack

Doctor of Philosophy student Jeff Audirsch teaches about archaeology during an Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics class at NOBTS.

As an alumnus of NOBTS, Magee served as chairman of the board of trustees and was an avid supporter of the institution, receiving the seminary's Outstanding Alumnus Award in 1981.

Under Magee's pastoral leadership, Temple Baptist Church experienced unprecedented growth, tripling its membership and becoming one of the largest Southern Baptist churches in the state. During his tenure, the church relocated to its present location alongside Interstate 20. Following his retirement, Magee served as pastor emeritus for Temple Baptist until his death in 2002.

Five times Magee received the George Washington Honor Medal Award from the Freedoms Foundation of Valley Forge, Pa. for his patriotic sermons. Magee was awarded the J. D. Grey Preaching Award from the Louisiana Moral and Civic Association in 1987 and was selected as the keynote speaker for the City of Ruston Bicentennial Worship Service in July 1976.

Vivian Eve Spell Magee, Magee's wife, holds a Bachelor of Religious Education degree from NOBTS. Together they raised two children and were blessed with seven grandchildren. Studying in the Doctor of Philosophy program can be a costly endeavor. NOBTS administrators believe the fund will help in recruiting top quality students, especially if the number and amount of awards is expanded. For this to happen, additional contributions are needed. 

- With reporting by Marilyn Stewart and Gary D. Myers

 For information on how to make a contribution to this or other New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary funds, contact the Office for Institutional Advancement at (504) 282-4455, ext. 3252.

## Paul Jones leaves \$300,000 to New Orleans Seminary

**P**aul Edward Jones, a 1963 graduate of NOBTS with a Master of Religious Education degree, died in Pensacola, Fla., Aug. 1, 2007. He served as minister of education and music at Myrtle Grove Baptist Church for 19 years and then 25 years at First Baptist Church Gulf Breeze. Jones' greatest pleasure in life was serving the Lord he loved, working in the churches, leading Bible studies and singing in quartets and the senior choir.



Jones

Rev. Jones loved New Orleans Seminary and would often show pictures of where he took classes. His love for the seminary was further demonstrated by his inclusion of NOBTS in his estate. In May, the seminary received an unrestricted gift in the amount of \$300,605.11 from his estate. The

seminary family is thankful for his foresight in including NOBTS in his estate and the way his gift will benefit the Kingdom of God. Please give thanks to God for the way He continues to meet all our needs according to his riches in glory. **V**

## Top 5 Giving Needs

### 1 Student Housing



Three two-bedroom apartment buildings are needed.

### 2 Reaching the Annual Fund Goal of \$1,025,000

### 3 Completion of Katrina Restoration Work

### 4 Increased Scholarships for New Students

### 5 Launch of a Comprehensive Internet Curriculum

## Wilkins Bike Ride raises \$20,000 for scholarships



Gail Wilkins presents a check for \$20,000 at New Orleans Seminary's North Georgia Hub. Left to Right: Dr. Steve Echols, Gail Wilkins, Tamara Wilkins and Dr. Jerry Garrard.

**M**otorcycle and car enthusiasts gathered at First Baptist Church in Cartersville, Ga., for a good time and a great cause – the 2nd Annual Stan and Gail Wilkins Memorial Ride and Car Show. The event raised \$20,000 in scholarship money to assist students at the seminary's North Georgia Hub.

Gail Wilkins and her daughter, Tamara, presented a check to Dr. Steve Echols, Director of the North Georgia Hub and Associate Dean for Alabama and Georgia, and Dr. Jerry Garrard, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, during chapel services at the North Georgia Hub Aug. 25.

With more than \$77,000 now in the fund, the North Georgia Hub has started awarding scholarships. Keith Louthan, a Master of Divinity student, received one of the scholarships.

"The scholarship represents more to me than just money to take classes," Louthan said. "I entered [seminary] in the fall of 2003 broken and unsure after running from God for nearly two years. Dr. Wilkins was my first professor and made knowing names a priority."

"He made a very strong personal investment of interest in my life. Over the next three years he taught me in another course and we had many a sit-down at McDonald's where he provided guidance and encouragement. I see the scholarship as a continuation of his ministry to me."

Wilkins died Nov. 29, 2006. Prior to his death he served as director of missions for the Bartow Baptist Association and interim pastor at First Baptist Church Cartersville. A graduate of New Orleans Seminary, he was a long-time adjunct professor at the North Georgia Hub and served as acting director for the center from 1992 to 1999. **V**

- With reporting by Scott Barkley, The Christian Index

# NOBTS receives only minor damage from Gustav

BY GARY D. MYERS and MICHAEL McCORMACK

**N**ew Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary suffered only minimal damage as Hurricane Gustav pushed through about 70 miles southwest of the city Monday, Sept. 1. Late Monday night when Hurricane Gustav finally moved away from New Orleans, members of the seminary family received a text message with the good news: "Campus secure. Damage minimal. Reopening Monday. Return possible Thursday. Praise the Lord!"

After the storm passed, NOBTS President Chuck Kelley received an encouraging report from the facilities and security team that stayed on campus.

"Our campus report was very good," Kelley said. "We have minor roof damage on a few buildings and some trees are down. Power is already restored on the front block of campus."



NASA image

Hurricane Gustav filled the eastern Gulf of Mexico as the storm approached the Louisiana coast.

"What we saw with Hurricane Katrina was God's mercy and grace in the midst of a disaster. With Hurricane Gustav we saw God's mercy and grace in sparing us from disaster," Kelley said. "Although God's disaster mercy became more dear and precious to us than words can ever express, this side of God's mercy is much easier to accept and to bear. We really have been blessed of God."

According to the National Hurricane Center, Hurricane Gustav made landfall as a Category 2 hurricane around 10 a.m. Sept. 1 near Cocodrie, La., about 70 miles southwest of New Orleans. The storm, packing 110 mph winds, continued its northwestern track into central Louisiana at about 15 miles per hour.

News reports indicated that both wind damage and storm surge were less than originally feared. In the days before landfall, weather forecasters predicted that Gustav would come ashore as a Category 4 hurricane and bring a storm surge 13 to 18 feet above normal. Instead, Gustav weakened Sunday to a Category 3 storm with maximum sustained winds at about 115 mph and dropped to a Category 2 storm just before landfall.

In New Orleans, all attention turned to the west side of the Industrial Canal, which extends from Lake Pontchartrain south to

**"What we saw with Hurricane Katrina was God's mercy and grace in the midst of a disaster. With Hurricane Gustav we saw God's mercy and grace in sparing us from disaster."**

- Dr. Chuck Kelley

the Mississippi River. New Orleans Seminary is located near the north end of the Industrial Canal's west side. In Hurricane Katrina, the east wall of the Industrial Canal gave way, flooding the city's Lower Ninth Ward.

Three years later, storm surge from Gustav threatened the western levee wall. Despite some overtopping, the levee wall, reinforced since Katrina, held its ground. Further improvements to this levee have been scheduled and funded but the work had not been completed before the storm. By late Monday evening, the water in the canal had receded enough to stop the overtopping.

Kelley noted "some good news coming out of this storm is that the new levee designs and improvements were tested with positive results. The protection of the city is definitely improving."

Many of the estimated 2 million southeastern Louisiana evacuees spent Sunday in bumper-to-bumper traffic hunting for a place to stay. As shelters throughout Mississippi quickly began filling, the Red Cross opened additional shelters. Some evacuees spent their first night away from New Orleans in their cars – pulling into parking lots to sleep.

Kelley thanked the many Southern Baptists who took in members of the seminary family. He said he had received numerous offers of assistance.

"We want to thank Southern Baptists for their prayers and warm hospitality," Kelley said. "We've are very, very grateful."

## Campus Return Delayed

Despite the minimal storm damage, members of the seminary family had to wait longer than expected to return. Hurricane Gustav caused major damage to electric supply lines bringing power into the city.

Entergy, the electricity provider for New Orleans and much of Southeast Louisiana, confirmed major damage to supply lines near Baton Rouge during a news conference on WWL radio Sept. 2.

Kelley said Entergy informed the seminary of the electrical delay and a possible time table for repair. Many neighborhoods and the universities near the seminary are faced similar issues with electricity.

However, Entergy completed the job by Saturday, Sept. 6, prompting Kelley to reopen the entire campus.

As residents returned Saturday and Sunday, impromptu meetings began throughout campus. Neighbors greeted returning neighbors and shared their evacuation experiences. They encountered a campus with little evidence of a storm. The operations staff had cleared much of the debris and repaired the slight roof damage on campus buildings.

Offices reopened and classes restarted Tuesday, Sept. 9. □

 Visit [www.nobts.edu/Publications/newsindex.html](http://www.nobts.edu/Publications/newsindex.html) for more on Hurricane Gustav.

# Text messaging keeps NOBTS alert after Hurricane Gustav

BY GARY D. MYERS

**F**ollowing Hurricane Gustav, good news began arriving to cell phones of NOBTS families through the seminary's new priority text messaging system.

The system was an information lifeline for the seminary community during the evacuation. When the storm moved out of the New Orleans area, a brief text message offered the following report:

"Campus secure. Damage minimal. Reopening Monday. Return possible Thursday. Praise the Lord!"

Many seminary students, professors and staff members first heard about the evacuation through the text messaging list and also received daily updates on campus' status.

Among the many lessons learned following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, seminary officials worked to develop more reliable communication options. The priority text message system was implemented to provide urgent, concise messages to the seminary family in emergency situations.

Since the system was implemented in 2007, the seminary has urged students, professors and staff members to opt into the system via a secure online registration.

The seminary also developed a plan to address the computing needs during an evacuation. At the start of hurricane season, the seminary rented a moving truck to take essential computers and servers to the seminary's North Georgia Hub in Atlanta.

By Sunday, Aug. 31, the seminary's servers and website management had been transferred to Atlanta. The move ensured that the seminary website would be available to provide information throughout the evacuation. Longer, more detailed updates and messages were posted on the website.

Kelley wrote on the seminary website immediately after the storm had passed, "The news continues to be good. Our operations crew and others are already at work cleaning up the campus, and similar work is beginning all over the city. We had no flood damage at all, and no evidence yet of any internal damage to buildings, homes, or apartments."

With the website working properly, the seminary community had more access to information, including a "frequently asked questions" section and initial damage assessments.

Kelley even used the web updates as an opportunity to provide pastoral encouragement to the seminary family.

"I conclude this update with a personal word from the journey of my soul with God. These last three years have been for me a Ph.D. seminar on the mercy of God," Kelley wrote. "There is a mystery I cannot penetrate on how and why God chooses the mercy He provides to His people. What is crystal clear, however, is that in ALL circumstances God gives mercy and grace sufficient for the needs of his children (Romans 8:28-39)." **V**



# news briefs

## Seminary trustees approve two professional graduate certificates

Trustees at New Orleans Seminary approved a professional graduate certificate in ministry and a professional graduate certificate in educational ministry. Each certificate is composed of introductory courses for the seminary's Doctor of Ministry or Doctor of Educational Ministry programs and three to five doctoral seminars.

"These certificates are designed for people who have an interest in exploring professional doctoral work but lack confidence that they can perform at this academic level or are not yet academically qualified," said NOBTS Provost Steve Lemke. "It is a way of demonstrating to themselves and to the professional doctoral program that they are capable of handling that type of work."

The certificate will also be awarded to students who have already successfully completed a number of seminars in a professional doctoral program but have encountered obstacles that keep them from completing the lengthy ministry project required for the doctoral degree. Lemke noted that illnesses, ministry challenges and other issues can prevent students from completing their doctorate. The certificate allows students to receive academic recognition for their post-master's-level work even if they are unable to complete the doctorate.



## NOBTS class explores relationship between faith and politics

This fall, with issues of faith at the forefront in this election cycle, students at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary are exploring the relationship between Christians and the political arena in a course called

"The Church and Political Involvement." It is the first time the seminar-style course has been offered which coincides with the 2008 presidential election.

Dr. Jeff Riley and Dr. Lloyd Harsch are teaching the course, which examines the relationship between the Church and politics. Topics include Christians as politicians, the role of pastors in politics and the role of the Church in society. The history of the Church-State relationship and its modern impact will also be examined.



# Rev. French celebrates 50 years at Jefferson

Seminary Trustee and Foundation Board secretary leads one congregation for half a century

BY GARY D. MYERS

**W**hen Rev. Tommy French accepted to call to serve as pastor for the Jefferson Highway Mission in Baton Rouge, he planned to stay as long as God wanted him to stay. That was 1958. Fifty years later, French is still pastoring the congregation which is now known as Jefferson Baptist Church.

"I know this is where the Lord wanted me," French said of his time at the church. "Now I could have gone other places ... God always told me 'Don't go anywhere else. Stay where you are.'"

French, the church's first and only lead pastor, was recently honored by the church for his 50 years of service. During the ceremony, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary President Chuck Kelley named French an Honorary Alumnus of NOBTS.

"Tommy French has been the kind of pastor you want all of your students to become," Kelley said.

French, who earned his Master of Religious Education from Southwestern Seminary in 1957, has been a long-time friend and supporter of New Orleans Seminary. He is a current officer for the seminary's Foundation Board and a current Trustee. From 2003 to 2005, French represented the seminary as Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

"The pastoral ministry of Tommy French is one of the great stories in this generation of the SBC. For a man to plant his life in one church for that long is unusual. For a man to go to a new church right after seminary and stay with that church throughout his ministry is unusual," Kelley said. "For a man to be able to adjust his leadership style as a church goes from a small new start to one of the leading churches in a state convention is unusual."

"For a man to have the challenges of leading his church through multiple transitions as a result of its growth and development while also staying very active



in the association, state, and national Baptist life is unusual. For a pastor to be able to do all these different things during an era of conflict and controversy such as we experienced during the Conservative Resurgence and to emerge with the respect of all sides is unusual. Put all those things together in the life and ministry of one man, and it is extraordinary," Kelley said.

French announced in his intention to retire April 29, 2007. The church began the ongoing pastor search in July 2007.

## Receiving the call

Just four months before French was set to graduate from seminary, the church he was serving asked him to quit school and serve fulltime. French declined that suggestion and as a result, resigned as the church's pastor. Little did he know that it would be a year before he had another opportunity to pastor a church.

Upon completing his seminary degree, French and his wife, Mary, moved in with his parents in Baton Rouge and waited for an opportunity to pastor again. French began work with a freight company. They joined First Baptist Church in Baton Rouge.

The wait seemed long for French. He wanted to pastor again. About that time

First Baptist Baton Rouge, in cooperation with the Judson Baptist Association, laid the groundwork for a mission just outside of Baton Rouge. Before long, he was asked to serve as mission pastor at the new Jefferson Highway Mission.

Launched as a mission on Nov. 16, 1958 with only 17 people, the mission grew into a vibrant, influential church. The congregation that started with small, wooden house that served as an 85-seat auditorium now worships in a 925-seat auditorium. The church reaches thousands each Sunday morning during an hour-long television broadcast.

French's advice to young pastors: find out where God wants them to serve and stay there until He leads elsewhere.

"You've got to know you are where the Lord wants you."

## His wife and helper

"Mary was a partner with me in everything I ever did," French said of his wife of 56 years. "She worked so I could finish at Baylor. She worked so I could finish at the seminary. She was a faithful helper, committed to the Lord across the years."

Mary died Jan. 14 of this year after a courageous battle with cancer.

French said Mary was fully involved in the ministry of Jefferson Baptist Church. She taught Sunday School, sang in the choir and went visiting with French. And in 1967, she started a preschool at the church that still serves the community.

"God just gave me the companion I needed," French said. "I never could have done this without her."

To honor Mary's legacy as a pastor's wife, French recently began a scholarship fund at NOBTS to help pastor's wives receive training through the Ministry Wife Certificate program. The certificate program is open to NOBTS student wives and women whose husbands are in ministry. Main campus and online course are available in the unique program. □

### Key Events at Jefferson Baptist

#### 1958

11/16: Launched as a mission of FBC Baton Rouge

#### 1963

3/31: Organized as Jefferson Baptist Church

#### 1966

Church launches long-range plan for building

#### 1974

Jefferson begins broadcasting live worship services

#### 1991

4/21: First service at new 925-seat worship center

#### 2001

2/9: Jefferson Baptist becomes debt-free

# 'Defend the Faith' apologetics school set for Jan. 11-16

BY MICHAEL McCORMACK

**W**hether casual or intentional, the challenges to contemporary Christianity are many. Christian apologetics seeks to set the record straight by presenting a compelling case for Christianity in today's world.

With the conviction that all Christians are responsible for making a case for their faith, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has recently launched the Institute for Christian Apologetics. Along with the Institute comes the School for Christian Apologetics.

Seminary Trustees officially approved the NOBTS Institute for Christian Apologetics during their spring 2008 meeting. The new Institute and School, directed by NOBTS professors Dr. Bob Stewart and Dr. Mike Edens, will be resources for Christians to develop their apologetic skills.

"The fundamental purpose why we do this is not to build an institute," Stewart said, "but to train people to be more effective in carrying out the Great Commission."

Stewart said the Institute will offer apologetics training through conferences and events, develop resources for churches and ministers, produce an online apologetics journal and coordinate evangelism trips involving apologetics.

The Institute's first event, *Defend the Faith: A School of Christian Apologetics*, is set for Jan. 11-16, 2009.

"We're going to bring in very good scholars, including Paul Copan, Gary Habermas, Michael Licona and James Walker," Stewart said.

Biographical information about all 13 conference speakers is available on the event's website. Topics covered at the School will include cults and the Occult, Postmodernism and Christianity, science and Christianity, the Historical Jesus and world religions.

Stewart said seminary credit will be available through the School. Students will be able to earn up to six hours of credit and will have five courses from which to choose. Registration for the full program, plus six nights of lodging and meals for five days, is \$310. The full program only costs \$150, and program plus meals is \$240. Per day registration is \$30, and NOBTS students may attend all evening events for just \$30. General admission to each evening session is just \$10.

Edens pointed out how the School for Christian Apologetics and the seminary's annual Greer-Heard Point-Counterpoint

Forum in Faith and Culture will build on each other. The Greer-Heard Forum features an evangelical scholar and a non-evangelical scholar in dialogue over critical issues in philosophy, science, religion and culture from differing perspectives. The 2008 topic for Greer-Heard is pluralism.

"When students do this in January and then there's pluralism for Greer-Heard – wow!" Edens said. "We're getting a running start at this thing." □

Information about course and event registration is available at [www.defendthefait.net](http://www.defendthefait.net) or [www.nobtsapologetics.com](http://www.nobtsapologetics.com).

## INSTITUTE FOR CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS

January 11-16, 2009

INSTITUTE FOR  
CHRISTIAN  
APOLOGETICS



# Defend the Faith

A School of Christian Apologetics  
January 11-16 • 2009  
New Orleans • LA

#### Featuring:

- David Platt
- Tony Merida
- Paul Copan
- Gary Habermas
- Bob Stewart
- James Walker
- Michael Edens

#### Topics:

- Cults and the Occult
- Postmodernism and Christianity
- Science and Christianity
- The Historical Jesus
- World Religions

#### Music:

- Andrew Ogea Band

# Forgiveness from the ashes

By Paul F. South

**J**im Parker was fast asleep one cold February night in 2006. But at 3:20 a.m., the phone jerked him awake. For a pastor such calls sound usual alarms: Someone is sick. Someone is hurt on the highway. Someone has passed away.

But this call was different and will forever be seared in memory. It was from a deacon from Parker's church, Ashby Baptist Church in Bibb County, Ala. A man driving home from the night shift saw flames shooting into the black, barren night.

Ashby Baptist Church was being swallowed in flames.

His weary mind clouded in a haze of sleep, Parker headed for the church, driving almost blind on a fog-shrouded rural road.

"It should have been a 30-minute drive, but that fog was as thick as I'd ever seen. It took us about an hour," he said. "We couldn't see the road ... We got within three or four miles of the church and I could smell the smoke ... I knew that was a bad sign."

The church was being swallowed up by blazes. Hours before, Ashby Baptist Church had been the vision of the church house hymn writers saw in their inspirations. This was the "Church in the Wildwood," at the crest of a tree-lined shaded lane. Couples had married, children baptized, loved ones laid to rest and lives transformed. The building was gone.

The scene would be repeated over five days in February at nine churches across Alabama. Fires intentionally set destroyed houses of God. From a national perspective, especially for the media, the phrase "church fires in Alabama" reopened a dark chapter of past racial hatred and strife. But these fires were different. The arsonists saw no race or color. Black churches burned alongside white houses of worship in the winter of 2006.

But like the victims of church fires in the 1960s, Jim Parker and his brothers and sisters at nine Alabama churches learned powerful truths. The church is not a building. And even justice, repentance and forgiveness can be raised from the ashes.

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By 8 a.m. Ashby Baptist Church's building was no more. Soaked with water from fighting the flames, Jim Parker was cold. He and his wife Donna went down the road to a nearby café for coffee. When they returned to the church a half hour later, a federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agent was in one ditch. On the other side was an FBI agent, part of 120 law officers on the case. At the top of the hill, an NBC News satellite truck was parked. Reporters were on the story, and the reach would be worldwide.

The national media and federal authorities believed the fires were racially motivated, and that the burned churches were African-American congregations, Parker said. It was a natural assumption, given Alabama's history. In fact, Ashby had been reaching out to another of the burned churches, Pleasant Sabine Baptist Church. There had been threats.

When news crews asked for the pastor at Ashby, their surprise shone plainly on their faces. They had expected a black pastor.

Other outlets speculated that Satanists started the blazes. Time would prove the early speculation groundless.

In Bibb County, black and white churches had forged a bond long before the flames. And the onslaught of media attention would provide a platform for that bond, and for the needs of the devastated congregations.

Years before as a teenager, Robert Murphy, the pastor of Pleasant Sabine had shared the exuberance of high school basketball with Parker. Now, their long friendship was forged in fire.

Parker knew that Pleasant Sabine had a large debt on their church building and no insurance. Parker wanted to help.

"We were going to have to figure out a way to get [Murphy] out of the ditch, and a couple of the other churches didn't have insurance," he said. "We had good coverage. A week later when the other four burned down in West Alabama, they didn't have any resources. So now it became very important to use every avenue we had to raise money for this. The media became very important for us. It gave us an outlet."

Surprised would not begin to describe his reaction to the media attention, which would continue for months. The four major networks, National Public Radio, the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and People magazine were there to cover the Alabama church fires.

In the weeks that followed, some 600 leads poured into investigators, and to the church. Parker took 60 leads from tipsters afraid to call law enforcement.

As it turned out, the suspects knew the area, and law enforcement knew them. A local game warden had been on the hunt for a black SUV. In it, suspects had been "spotlighting," illegally poaching deer at night. A black SUV had also been spotted leaving one of the burning churches.

Within 30 days, three college students were charged with the fires: Matthew Cloyd, Russell DeBusk and Nathan Moseley.

"When I found out it was a pre-med student from UAB and a couple of students from Birmingham-Southern, it just saddened me to think of the loss of these brilliant young men," Parker said. "I have to tell you, it was the saddest day of my life."

But even before Parker knew the names of the suspects, the road to forgiveness and redemption had been built.

\*\*\*

On the first Sunday after the fire, Parker preached from II Corinthians 4, the Apostle Paul's discussion of Christian suffering in ministry: "We are troubled on every side, but not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair."

The process of forgiveness began instantly, perhaps while the ashes were still warm, drowning out the calls of some for vengeance for the perpetrators.

# We were in a position to forgive the young men, even before we knew who they were. We released them into God's hands." - Dr. Jim Parker

"As we worked through early on, we were in a position to forgive the young men, even before we knew who they were," he said. "We released them into God's hands."

In that journey, the families of the three students would forge a relationship with their victims. In the wake of Parker's continuing message of forgiveness, the dean of the chapel at Birmingham-Southern, a Methodist liberal arts college, asked Parker to speak at a healing service days after the suspects were in custody.

As he entered the chapel, a reporter told him the parents of the suspects were there. That night, Parker reminded the audience of the words of C.S. Lewis: "Forgiveness is a lovely thing, until you have someone to forgive."

"We all talk about forgiveness," Parker said. "We all say it is a Christian virtue and everything, but very few people ever practice it. I told the people that day we have to forgive for ourselves, because if we don't a root of bitterness springs up in us. Unforgiveness is a terrible way to live. And they need our forgiveness. And God needs to see us forgive."

At the end of the service, all three families lined up to meet Parker. All three fathers wept as they spoke with Parker. And they wanted him to meet with their boys.

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Parker met with each boy for 15 minutes. He could touch their hands through the wire. Meetings between victims and defendants are unprecedented before trial, especially in the federal system.

"I don't know why you think I'm here today, but I have come for no other purpose than

to tell you that you are forgiven, and to let you know that we're concerned for your well-being now," Parker told them.

In the conversations, however, Parker wanted to be sure that there were no surprises, that there was no sinister motivation behind the blazes.

"They were contrite, broken. They all cried a little," Parker said about the meeting. "A couple of them were getting a sense of the seriousness of what they'd done. Russ DeBusk was so broken, I was worried for his well-being."

Parker learned that DeBusk had not accompanied the other boys on the second round of burnings. At one point, DeBusk said to the others, "How are we going to live with this if we get away with it?"

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The three young men pleaded guilty, and were sentenced to federal prison. DeBusk received seven years, his compatriots eight years and one month. In the years since, Parker has continued his relationship with the three and their families, through letters and e-mails. Two have come to saving faith in Christ. Two of the families came to Ashby to ask forgiveness.

Three years on, Parker is quick to say that neither he, nor the congregation at Ashby, were victims. Parker has moved on, now serving as Associate Vice President for Facilities at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

"The parents are really more victims than the churches were," he said. They lost their sons. We lost the building and the memories. But the church is God's people."

**Fires damage or destroy five rural Alabama churches**

**Brierfield volunteer firefighters inspect the remains of Church near Brierfield**

**optimistic of survival**

# faculty updates

## Faculty Election

### Dr. Page Brooks

Assistant Professor of Theology and Islamic Studies

Page Brooks, who has served the seminary as an instructor since July 2006, has been elected to the faculty as Assistant Professor of Theology and Islamic Studies. He will also serve as the seminary's director of student enlistment.

Brooks earned his Master of Divinity, Master of Theology and Doctor of Philosophy degree at NOBTS. The Alabama native completed his undergraduate work at Auburn University.

In addition to his academic work, Brooks is an experienced minister. He currently serves as Pastor of Teaching and Strategy at Vintage Church New Orleans, an SBC church start. He served as staff member at First Baptist Church in Spartanburg, S.C., from 2005 to 2006 and he was senior pastor of Rio Vista Baptist Church in metro New Orleans from 2001 to 2005. Brooks is also a chaplain in the Army National Guard and Reserve.



## Faculty Appointments

Seminary President Chuck Kelley has announced the following faculty appointments:

### Ms. Angie Bauman

Instructor in Christian Education

Angie Bauman, a current Doctor of Philosophy student at NOBTS, will serve as an Instructor in Christian Education and as the Director of Student Services for the seminary's North Georgia Hub.

As a Christian Education practitioner Bauman has experience in local church and missions settings. She recently served one year as Minister of Education at Gentilly Baptist Church in New Orleans. Bauman also has 10 years of experience in youth ministry serving churches in Georgia and Louisiana.

Bauman's international mission involvement includes trips to Argentina, Tanzania, Cayman Islands and Mexico. She has also been involved in mission work in Georgia, Florida, South Carolina and Virginia.

### Dr. Clyde Hall

Professor of Youth Ministry – Ministry-based Faculty

Clyde Hall is a retired senior manager of the youth section, Youth, Children and Preschool Department, Discipleship and Family Group of LifeWay Church Resources. Hall brings more than 50 years of experience in youth ministry, Christian education and discipleship to his role at NOBTS. In addition to his denominational work, Hall has served in numerous local churches in Christian education roles.

Hall has taught or lectured at each of the six SBC seminaries and Canadian Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has served as an adjunct professor at NOBTS since 2000. He will primarily serve with the seminary's Youth Ministry Institute.

### Dr. Rick Morton

Professor of Youth Ministry – Ministry-based Faculty

Rick Morton, who has served on the NOBTS since 2004, will transition from full-time teaching to the ministry-based faculty designation. He was recently named discipleship pastor at Temple Baptist Church in Hattiesburg, Miss. During his time on the NOBTS faculty, Morton served as Director of the Collegiate Ministry Institute, Associate Director of the Youth Ministry Institute and Director of Student Enlistment.

Before joining the NOBTS faculty in 2004, Morton served as Assistant Professor of Leadership and Church Ministry at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for two years.

## Faculty Anniversaries

The following professors are celebrating significant anniversaries at New Orleans Seminary this fall:

### 20 years

#### Dr. Gerald Stevens

Professor of New Testament and Greek

(Watch for a feature article about Dr. Gerald Stevens in the Holiday Vision)

### 15 years

#### Dr. Harold Mosley

Professor of Old Testament and Hebrew

#### Dr. Thomas Strong III

Dean, Leavell College; Professor of New Testament and Greek

#### Dr. Ken Taylor

Professor of Urban Missions

### 10 years

#### Dr. Eddie Campbell

Associate Professor of English, Leavell College

#### Dr. John Gibson

Assistant Professor of Communication, Leavell College

#### Dr. Loretta Rivers

Assistant Professor of Social Work

#### Dr. Tim Searcy

Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness; Professor of Christian Education

## Rivers earns doctorate from Tulane

Lorreta Rivers earned the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Social Work from Tulane University this summer. Rivers holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Mississippi, a Master of Arts in Christian Education degree from NOBTS, and a Master of Social Work degree from Louisiana State University.



# faculty books

Recent publications by New Orleans Seminary professors

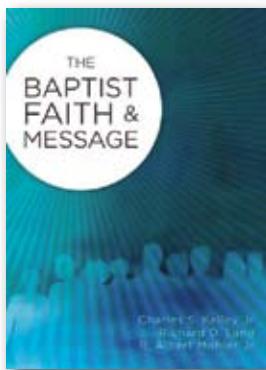
## ■ The Baptist Faith & Message

Charles S. Kelley Jr., Richard Land and R. Albert Mohler  
Nashville, Tenn.: LifeWay, 2008

This study examines in detail the 18 doctrines outlined in the Baptist Faith and Message statement. Combining biblical insight with historical and contemporary illustrations, the authors help the reader understand essential Baptist beliefs, identify the biblical foundation for these beliefs, and apply the beliefs to his or her Christian walk.

In this book, Baptist doctrine is brought to life through engaging historical and contemporary illustrations and applications. Participants will learn to better articulate the basic Baptist beliefs, give the biblical foundation for these beliefs and apply the beliefs to their individual Christian walks.

**Charles S. "Chuck" Kelley Jr.** is President and Professor of Evangelism at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

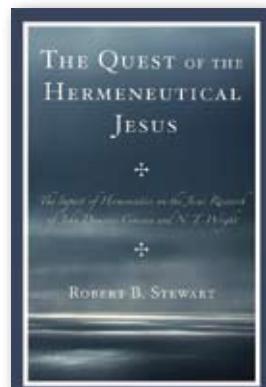


## ■ The Quest of the Hermeneutical Jesus: The Impact of Hermeneutics on the Jesus Research of John Dominic Crossan and N. T. Wright

Robert B. Stewart  
Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2008

*The Quest of the Hermeneutical Jesus* is a study in how the way in which one reads documents referring to Jesus influences one's conclusions as to who Jesus was as a historical figure. In this book the author leads readers through the projects of two of the most important and influential scholars in the field of historical Jesus research, John Dominic Crossan and N. T. Wright, in order to show his readers how their philosophical presuppositions and hermeneutical methods impact their respective historical conclusions concerning Jesus. In addition to highlighting the work of two great scholars, this book also provides one with a useful introduction and guide through much of the maze of contemporary literary criticism. This is a unique and groundbreaking work.

**Robert B. Stewart** is Associate Professor of Philosophy and Theology at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary where holds the Greer-Heard Chair of Faith and Culture.



## ■ New Testament Greek Primer, 2d ed.

Gerald L. Stevens  
Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books, 2007

Using graphic layouts, copious tables and clear discussion, Stevens presents the beginning student of New Testament

Greek with a user-friendly introduction to the morphology and grammar of the Greek language. The transition from English to Greek is assisted by an appendix of four chapters reviewing English grammar. Vocabulary acquisition is down to words occurring 50 or more times in the New Testament. The second edition to this popular textbook makes corrections, tweaks discussion and adds helpful explanations.

## New Testament GREEK PRIMER

Second Edition

GERALD L. STEVENS

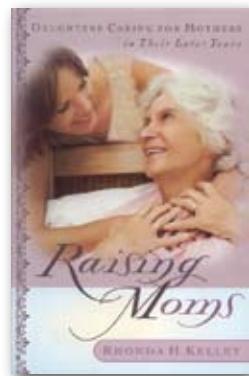


**Gerald L. Stevens** is Professor of New Testament and Greek at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Stevens has served on the NOBTS faculty since 1988.

## ■ Raising Moms: Daughters Caring For Mothers in Their Later Years

Rhonda H. Kelley  
Birmingham, Ala.: New Hope Publishers, 2006

*Raising Moms* is designed to offer help to the growing number daughters who are caring for their aging mothers.. Filled with biblical principles and discussions about the unique mother-daughter relationship, Kelley devotes special attention to communication, family dynamics, and the role of the church in assisting families.



**Rhonda H. Kelley** is Professor of Women's Ministry at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and the wife of NOBTS President Chuck Kelley.

## ■ Eternal Praise: Artistic Hymn Settings

Michael Sharp  
Kansas City, Mo.: Lillenas Music, 2006

*Eternal Praise* offers superbly crafted and challenging arrangements that sparkle with an energy that will embrace listeners and performers alike. The hymns in this collection are a tribute to God's love and grace freely lavished upon us through Jesus Christ.



This is also a resource with arrangements suitable for the entire church year, including selections appropriate for Christmas, Lent, Reformation, and general purposes. Hymn favorites like Come Thou Fount, How Firm a Foundation and Be Thou My Vision are but a few of the outstanding inclusions in this collection.

**Michael Sharp** is Professor of Worship Studies at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

For additional New Orleans Seminary faculty book listings visit:  
[www.nobts.edu/Publications/FacultyBooks.html](http://www.nobts.edu/Publications/FacultyBooks.html)

# The 2008 Distinguished Alumni Award Recipients

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary honored professor emeritus Joe Cothen, pastor Kim Hall and Maryland/Delaware State Convention Executive David Lee with distinguished alumni awards during the seminary's Alumni and Friends Reunion at the Southern Baptist Convention Meeting in Indianapolis.



## Dr. Joe Cothen

**Professor Emeritus of Pastoral Work, NOBTS  
B.Div. 1952, Th.D. 1955**

Dr. Joe Cothen pastored churches in Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi before joining the faculty of his alma mater. He served at NOBTS 18 years, first as a professor and later as the vice president for academic affairs, before retiring in 1992.

"I want to say thank you from the depths of my heart to Dr. Kelley, the faculty and the alumni association," Cothen said in receiving the award.



## Dr. Kim Hall

**Pastor, Hunter's Glen Baptist Church, Plano, Texas  
M.Div. 1985, D.Min. 1989**

Dr. Kim Hall is known for his work as a pastor and missions innovator. He has worked to foster evangelism among unreached people throughout the world and provide theological training to national believers. His organization, Advance International, launched in cooperation with the IMB and NOBTS' Leavell College, provides theological training opportunities for pastors and church leaders in Russia and Indonesia.



## Dr. David Lee

**Executive Director, Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware  
M.Div. 1980, D.Min. 1983**

Dr. David Lee served as a pastor and a director of missions before he was tapped to lead Maryland and Delaware Baptists.

"God has given me more opportunities than I deserve," Lee said. "I have lived a blessed life. You have honored me today and I appreciate that, but I certainly share the award with those who have shaped and molded me. I just say thank you to Jesus Christ – because of Him our lives have been changed forever."

## Church-Minister Relations

The Church-Minister Relations office at New Orleans Baptist Seminary maintains a database of alumni and student resumés. These resumés are available to churches seeking to fill ministerial positions. To use this free service, call 800-662-8701 ext. 3291, or visit [www.nobts.edu/cmr](http://www.nobts.edu/cmr) to complete the Church Resumé Request questionnaire.

**Connecting Churches with Ministers [nobts.edu/cmr]**

# alumni updates

## 1950s

**Gebhart, James L.** (BDiv '55, MRE '56) and his wife, Dot, were recently honored by the Association of Scouting. They have been presented the Silver Good Shepherd Emblem for their 50 years of "leading youth toward spiritual, physical, mental and emotional development." He is the minister at a Texas RV park and serves as chaplain for Boy Scout Troop 83 in Mission, Texas.

**Hamilton, Carroll** (MDiv. '58) was presented an Honorary Doctor of Divinity degree by Fredericksburg Bible Institute. He will begin teaching a class based on his book *All Spiritual Blessings, The Believer's Spiritual Health in Christ*, at the Institute in the Fall 2009 semester.

**Fortinberry, James** (MDiv. '58) has returned as Pastor of Dover Shores Baptist Church in Orlando, Fla. James previously served as pastor of the church from 1972 to 1980.

**Sumrall, Tom** (MDiv. '57) was elected Pastor Emeritus of FBC New Albany, Miss.

## 1960s

**Berger, George** (ThM. '69) was elected Recording Secretary of Southern Baptist Convention Association of Directors of Missions.

**Espy, William Tom** (ThM '67) retired from the International Mission Board after more than 11 years of service in South Wales of the United Kingdom.

**Herrod, Ron** (ThM '68) was elected as President of the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists in Indianapolis on June 9, 2008.

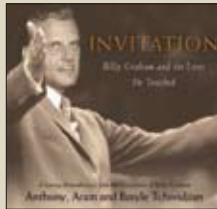
## 1970s

**Sanders, Guy** (Th.M. '73), Pastor of FBC New Port Richey, Fla., announced the relocation of his church to new facilities on June 22, 2008.

## 1980s

**Aycock, Don** (ThD '86) collaborated with Billy Graham's grandsons Aram and Boz Tchividjian to produce *Invitation: Billy Graham and the Lives God Touched*. The book, to be published by Multnomah Press in September, celebrates Graham's

ministry by telling the stories of those touched by his crusades. Aycock, the Pastor of Liberty Baptist Church in Palatka, Fla., served as an editor for the project.



**Connell, John** (MDiv '82; ThD. '87), Senior Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Savannah, Ga., announced that his church has purchased 200 acres on the west side of Savannah for relocation of the church and associated school. The acreage will also be developed with a continued care retirement community.

**Galindo, Israel** (MRE '79, MDiv '83, EdD '87) was elected as Dean of the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, Va. on June 17, 2008.

**Huckabee, Raymond (Randy)** (MDiv. '80) is currently serving as the Recording Secretary of the Florida Baptist Convention and on the State Board of Missions for the Florida Baptist Convention.

**McQuery, James** (MDiv '82) earned his ThD from Columbia Evangelical Seminary in April 2008. He currently teaches a course in Business Ethics in the CAPS Program at Friends University. He also serves as pastor of Randall Road Baptist Church in Park City, Kan.

**Mooneyham, James (Steve)** (MDiv. '84; DMin. '92) began serving as Executive Director of the Gulf Coast Baptist Association in Gulfport, Miss. in January 2005.

**Eavenson, Lester** (MDiv. '82) has accepted the call as Senior Pastor of Bethel Baptist Church in Bourbonnais, Ill. He and his wife, Ruth, welcomed their first grandchild, Leo Ryan Eavenson in January 2008.

## 2000s

**Baker, Shannon** (MACE studies) has recently completed a mission trip to Asia. Previously she has traveled to the Middle East, Europe, Mexico and Africa. Baker is the former Director of Public Relations at NOBTS. Her husband, Larry earned two degrees at NOBTS (BA '99; MDiv. '02).

**Bazer, Gary** (MACE '97) was recently called as pastor of First Baptist Church, Burlington, Colo.

**Blosch, William D.** (DMIN '04) recently had his second book published entitled "Conquering Jericho". It is a guide to spiritual warfare through prayer walking.

**Brittain, "Bubba" (John)** (BA '97; MACE '99) earned his PhD in 2008.

**Morris, Rebecca E.** (BGS '92) was recently employed by the Georgia Baptist Convention as an Archivist/Historian.

## Births

**Barlow, Jerry** (MDiv. '78; ThD '82) and Lynne (BA '08) announce the birth of their first grandchild, Sarah Jane Edmonston on April 11, 2008.

**Cook, James "Jay"** (MDiv '94, DMin '02) and wife, Kristi, welcomed their daughter, Amelia Rose Cook into the family November 24, 2006. He is also the new pastor of First Baptist Church, Pascagoula, Miss.

**Danford, Kendal** (MDiv '98) and wife Jennifer celebrated the birth of their second daughter, Lydia Beth Danford on July 8, 2008. Kendal serves as campus minister through Baptist Collegiate Ministry at Francis Marion University in Florence, S.C.

**Day, Alan (Cheyne)** (MDiv. '00) and wife, Misty (MACE '98), announce the birth of their second child, Sadie Anne on May 7, 2007. Sadie was welcomed home by big brother, Calvin.

**Herring, Chuck (John)** (MDiv. '86; DMin. '93) and wife, Darlene, announce the birth of their granddaughter, Aynsley Taylor Shivers, on April 11, 2008.

**Smith, Traci Grantham** (MACE '96) and husband, Clint, welcomed daughter, Baileigh Karis, August 23, 2007 to their family.

**Thompson, Darrell** (MDiv. '81) and wife, Myra, announce the birth of their first grandchild, Ethan Layne Mamire on Dec. 10, 2007. Their second grandchild is due July 18, 2008.

## Deaths

**Achord, Arthur T.** (BDiv '57), instructor for the NOBTS extension program at Angola State Penitentiary, passed away March 30, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Edna Jones Achord of Morgan City, La.

## NOBTS alumnus named as Carson-Newman president

**A** 1977 graduate of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has been chosen as the new president of Carson-Newman College in Tennessee.

J. Randall O'Brien's selection was announced at the July 8 meeting of the school's board of trustees. O'Brien comes to Carson-Newman from Baylor University, where he served as executive vice president and provost, as well as a professor of religion and visiting professor of law.

"This is indeed a sacred calling upon our lives, which humbles us and inspires us," O'Brien said in a press release issued by Carson-Newman. "Along with the Carson-Newman family, Kay and I celebrate all that God has done, is doing and is going to do through Carson-Newman College, as together, we continue to build a Christ-centered college to impact the world."

O'Brien holds master's and doctoral degrees from NOBTS, a master of sacred theology degree from Yale Divinity School and a Bachelor of Science degree from Mississippi College. He has done additional work at Harvard and Oxford.

Along with his administrative duties at Baylor, O'Brien has served as a faculty member, moving through the ranks first as an instructor in religion to eventually become chair of the



**J. Randall O'Brien**

department of religion. During his years at Baylor, O'Brien also served as Acting Dean of the George W. Truett Theological Seminary and Executive Assistant to the President. O'Brien was

named provost at Baylor in 2006.

From 1980-87, he held a tenured faculty appointment in Old Testament and Hebrew at Ouachita Baptist University. Prior to joining the Baylor faculty, O'Brien served for three years as senior pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Little Rock, Ark. He has served in pastoral roles at 19 churches in Louisiana, Arkansas and Texas.

A McComb, Miss., native, O'Brien recently served as southwest regional president of the National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion and currently serves on the executive board of the International Association of Baptist Colleges and Universities. He has published four books and more than 70 articles in journals and Bible encyclopedias.

A decorated veteran of the Vietnam War, O'Brien is a recipient of the Bronze Star, the United States Air Medal, the Combat Infantryman's Badge and the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross.

O'Brien and his wife Kay have three children. He assumes his new post Jan. 1, 2009.

**Allen, Thelma** (BRE '52) passed away February 14, 2008. She is survived by her husband, J. D. Allen of Graceville, Fla.

**Barr, Robert E.** (MDiv '89) passed away June 3, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Pam Brewer Barr of Jackson, Miss.

**Boman, Willard** (BDiv '67) passed away February 5, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Marguerite Boman of West Palm Beach, Fla.

**Davis, Dorothy E.** (MRE '65) passed away June 25, 2008. She is survived by her husband, Dr. James H. Davis of Celebration, Fla.

**Doggett, Jerry** (ADPM '79) passed away February 18, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Lynda Sue Doggett of Petal, Miss.

**Fogleman, Charles W.** (BDiv '47) passed away April 21, 2006. He is survived by his wife, LeVergne Moles Fogleman of Lake Charles, La.

**Garris, C. Grady** (BDiv '65) passed away June 27, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Sylvia Sweatman Garris of Smoaks, S.C.

**Gibbins, Spurgeon S.** (BDiv '57) passed away Spring 2008. He is survived by his wife, Marian Gibbins of Kingwood, Texas.

**Graves, Ralph** (ThM '70) passed away June 3, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Ouida Hardy Graves of Jackson, Miss.

**Harper, Cecil L.** (BSM '56) passed away May 16, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Patricia M. Harper of Brandon, Miss.

**Hartley, David J.** (ThM '71) passed away September 13, 2006. He is survived by his wife, Deanna Hartley of Ludowici, Ga.

**Hill, Sr. William "Carlie"** (MRE '65) passed away January 17, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Oleta Lewis Hill of Jackson, Miss.

**Jacks, Rebecca S.** (MRE '02) passed away May 31, 2008. She is survived by her husband, John Tyler Jacks of Jackson, Miss.

**Junkins, Tilford L.** (BDiv '50) passed away May 15, 2004.

**Goad, Gary C.** (MDiv, '86) passed away July 6, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Linda Ackerman Goad of Ormond Beach, Fla.

**Larrimore, Thomas A.** (MRE '59, BSM '60) passed away November 27, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Florence Ann Larrimore of Jackson, Miss.

**Lee, Michael H.** (MDiv '76) passed away June 23, 2005. He is survived by his wife, Dena Franks Lee of Enterprise, Ala.

**Paderewski, Earl** (NDEG '51) passed away September 1, 2002.

**Paderewski, Mary F.** (DPCM '95) passed away July 5, 2008.

**Pitchford, Etta S.** (former student wife) of passed away September 8, 2006. She is survived by her husband, Roy Pitchford (ADPM '87, MDiv '90), of Alexandria, La.

**Powell, Lenno** (ThD '59) passed away February 12, 2008. He served as Student Body President for NOBTS. He is survived by his wife, Patsy Kelley Powell of Thibodaux, La.

**Smithey, Mark M.** (CPM '07) passed away April 9, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Julie Smithey of Jemison, Ala.

**Snipes, Frances Boswell** (BRE '55), passed away July 25, 2008. She is survived by her husband Rev. Marion Roger Snipes (BRE '55) of Columbia, SC.

**Sudduth, William L.** (DPCH '67) passed away June 23, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Maggie H. Sudduth of Tuscaloosa, Ala.

**Wilson, Kimberly** (MDiv '00) passed away May 20, 2008. Wilson served as the NOBTS Housing Director from 2000-2001.

**Young, Winton R.** (DPCH '65) passed away May 11, 2008.

### Missionary Appointments

#### International Mission Board



**Michael Allen** (BACM 05, MA 08), and his wife, **Michelle Badon Allen** (MA '08), have been appointed to serve as a missionary apprentices in the International Mission Board's Central, Eastern and Southern Africa Region.

Michael, a Decatur, Ga., native, will serve as an evangelist and church planter. During his time in seminary, Michael served as Youth Minister at Westside Baptist Church in Snellville, Ga., and later as Associate Pastor at Calvary Baptist Church in Lilburn, Ga.

A Mobile, Ala., native, Michelle graduated from the University of South Alabama before coming to NOBTS. Her ministry experience includes service as an IMB Journeyman and as Youth and Children's Minister at Calvary Baptist Church in Lilburn, Ga.



**Leah Brown** (MA '08) has been appointed to serve as a missionary apprentice with the International Mission Board in South America. Brown earned a Bachelor of

Science in Nursing at McNeese State University in Lake Charles, La. She served as a registered nurse while she attended seminary.

**Teddy Holmes Jr.** (MDiv '86) has been appointed to serve as a Strategy Coordinator with the International Mission Board in the Central and Eastern Europe region. He has spent the past 19 years



## looking back

Dr. Ken Gabriesle leads worship for a group that includes Professor Emeritus Dr. Harry Eskew in this photograph from the 1990s. Gabriesle, who joined the NOBTS faculty in 1995, recently left the seminary to become the Worship/Music Specialist for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma.

Readers have identified the student featured in "Looking Back" photograph from the Summer 2008 Vision. **Richard Luebert** (BDiv '55) has identified the student witnessing in the French Quarter as **Robert Holmes** (BDiv '55). **John F. Gibson Sr.** (BDiv '53, ThM '54, ThD '56) and his wife, Margaret also replied to identify the student as Robert Holmes.



as the Associate Pastor of Missions and Administration at Forest Hills Baptist Church in Nashville, Tenn.

Holmes earned a Bachelor of Science degree at Louisiana State University before studying at NOBTS. He and his wife, Beverly, have three children: Jennifer (25), Lindsay (22), and Megan (12).



### "Where y'at" Alumni?

Give the Office of Alumni Relations your ministry updates by phone at (504) 282-4455, ext. 3331, or by email at [alumni@nobts.edu](mailto:alumni@nobts.edu).

### Online Community

Be sure to check out the new online community for NOBTS Alumni at [www.nobts.edu/alumni](http://www.nobts.edu/alumni).



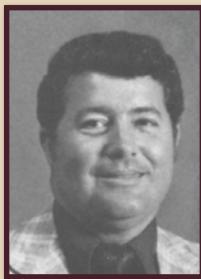
# A LOT HAS CHANGED IN 30 YEARS . . . . WHY?

**Jerry Barlow**

Petal, Mississippi

1978 MDiv Graduate

**Yearly Tuition: \$420**



**Phillip Chenault**

Decatur, Alabama

2008 MDiv Student

**Yearly Tuition: \$2,610**



1950

1960

1970

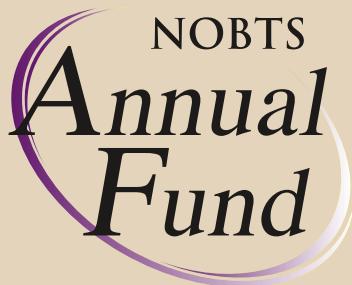
1980

1990

2000

2010

A person can expect many changes over three decades. However, in this case the answer is that Cooperative Program giving has not kept pace with inflation. Students paid very few fees thirty years ago because the Cooperative Program paid for most of their seminary education. Today, the Cooperative Program covers less than half of the costs for Southern Baptist students. Encouraging your church to give more to the Cooperative Program is one way to help students pay for their seminary education. Giving directly to the NOBTS Annual Fund is another. Gifts to the Annual Fund from generous donors help cover inflationary costs so students like Phillip Chenault won't have to.



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New Orleans, LA 70126  
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