

the magazine of Southern Adventist University

spring 2016

columns



Sacred Spaces

Inspirational places and intentional programming help students recharge and reconnect with God. Page 20

A Vision Realized

The Bietz Legacy Event on April 28 served as much more than a farewell to President Gordon Bietz at the conclusion of his transcendent 19-year tenure. True, the occasion had its fair share of tearful moments, but students, employees, family, and friends who filled the gymnasium to capacity left with a spring in their steps, smiles on their faces, and hearts filled with hope. Witnessing the rich retrospective of such a Christ-centered career provides deep inspiration that even retirement can't dampen. Southern will be blessed by Bietz's vision for years to come as initiatives he championed continue to take root and bear fruits in the lives of students. To view the event recording, visit southern.edu/columns.



contents



14



20



24

features

14 | **O Captain! My Captain!**

After nearly two decades of guiding the university and 13 additional years as senior pastor for its campus church, President Gordon Bietz has retired. His enormous impact on our Southern community—physically and financially, spiritually and emotionally—is undeniable.

20 | **Sacred Spaces**

Worship occurs anywhere we connect deeply with the Savior. Despite this divine flexibility, many Christians are creatures of habit with a handful of locations that unlock our hearts to His leading more than others. Southern offers a variety of beautiful places and intentional programming that helps students recharge and reconnect with God.

24 | **Taste Buds**

Food and friendships go hand-in-hand. This universal truth is especially evident at Southern, where students from all 50 states and more than 30 countries move into close quarters and call Collegedale home for the year.

departments

- 4 | New Media
- 6 | Headlines
- 11 | Mission Minute
- 12 | Professor Inspiration
- 27 | Alumni Q&A
- 28 | Beyond the Columns
- 31 | The Word

columns

Volume 68 Number 1
Alumni Edition

Executive Editor Ingrid Skantz, '90

Editorial Manager Lucas Patterson

Layout Editor Ryan Pierce

Layout Assistants

Karyn Davis, current
Amanda Rich, current

Editorial Assistants

Julia Bonney, current
Sheann Brandon, current
Selena Zamudio, current

Photography

Terry Henson, current
George Nelson, current
Danielle Schafer, current
Ryan Pierce

President David Smith

Academic Administration Robert Young

Financial Administration Tom Verrill

Advancement Carolyn Hamilton

Enrollment Services Marc Grundy, '96

Student Development Dennis Negron, '85

Marketing and University Relations

Ingrid Skantz, '90

Alumni Relations Evonne Crook, '79

Send correspondence to

columns@southern.edu

Send address changes to

Alumni Relations
Southern Adventist University
Post Office Box 370
Collegedale, TN 37315-0370
or email alumni@southern.edu

Phone 1.800.SOUTHERN

Fax 423.236.1000

Email marketing@southern.edu

Website southern.edu

Scripture in this issue is taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version® (NIV). Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 Biblica. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.

COLUMNS is the official magazine of Southern Adventist University, produced by Marketing and University Relations to provide information to alumni, Southern Union constituents, and other friends of the university. ©2016, Southern Adventist University.

youtube



Find the video links at southern.edu/columns.



2016 marks the 100th anniversary of Southern's move to Collegedale from Graysville, Tennessee. To kick off this milestone year, President Gordon Bietz led a March convocation, his last as president, about the history and value of Adventist education.



God has crafted each of us uniquely—extroverts, introverts, and everything in between—so it is by design that the Lord responds and interacts with His children in different ways. In this video, several students discuss activities that draw them closer to God.



Zach Gray, associate professor for the School of Visual Art and Design, created a time-lapse of his work illustrating Revelation 1, where the Son of Man stands among the seven lamp stands.

twitter



twitter.com/SouthernNews



Four different classes of @SAUSVAD grads working on an NBC commercial!

» **Theo Brown, '10**
[@awesometheo](https://twitter.com/awesometheo)

It's hard to stay motivated on your run when you can smell Little Debbie's baking less than a mile away.

» **Lindsey Conkle, senior marketing major, @inTreble22**



Thanks Gym-Masters for an awesome halftime show! #CheerLocal

» **@GoMocs**

Southern's gymnastics team performed during a basketball game at UT Chattanooga in February.

Connect with Southern Adventist University:



website: southern.edu

youtube: youtube.com/SouthernAdventistUniversity

facebook: facebook.com/SouthernAdventistUniversity

twitter: twitter.com/SouthernNews

instagram: [@southernadventistuniversity](https://instagram.com/southernadventistuniversity)



instagram



Modeled after the wildly popular Humans of New York series, this Instagram account features stories and pictures behind the fascinating students who call Southern home.

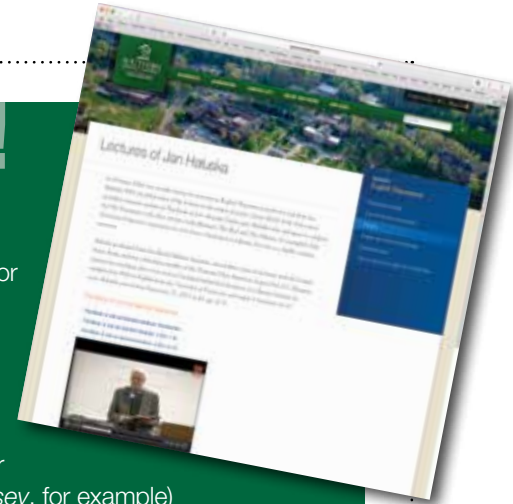
@thehumansofsouthern

worth a click!



In February 2014, just months before his retirement, English Department professor and chair Jan Haluska, PhD, recorded some of his lectures in the course Ancient Classics. This course included a six-part section on *The Book of Job*. Ancient Classics gave Haluska time and space to compare the Old Testament with other written works (Homer's *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, for example) while defending Scripture's superiority not only from a theological standpoint, but also as a highly complex narrative. Haluska passed away on September 25, 2015, having taught at Southern for 33 years. Gifts to the Jan Haluska Memorial Endowed Scholarship Fund will help students for years to come.

Visit southern.edu/haluska for lecture videos or to make a gift in his honor.



facebook

facebook.com/SouthernAdventistUniversity

College taught me that sometimes you have to say no to some opportunities in order to gain greater ones.

» **Andy Hausted,**
senior chemistry major

Hausted once took 28 credit hours in a semester!



Having fun with the Navajo students of La Vida Mission.

» **Fred Turner, corporate architect**
for Southern Adventist University

Turner chaperoned a group of 20 Southern students for a spring break mission trip to New Mexico.



A few of my kids from VBS!

» **Britta (Menhardt) Rusk, '88**

Rusk participated in a mission trip to Kenya.

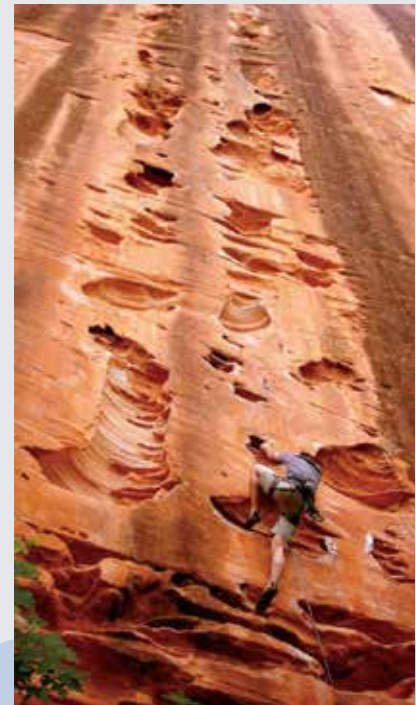
Wish I was at Southern for SonRise. Can't wait to see it next year—though I hope Jesus comes before then.

» **Jared Powrie,**
student missionary, Indonesia

Hard work pays off. We're going to nationals!

» **Marsie Mawuntu, senior biology major**

Mawuntu is a member of Southern's enactus team.



Ryan Kloosterhuis, '13 and '15

Kloosterhuis, an outdoor education graduate, scales Namaste Wall at Zion National Park in Utah. In his spare time, he also volunteers as an assistant with Southern's indoor climbing class.

David Smith Takes Office as Southern's 26th President



David Smith, PhD, accepted the position as Southern Adventist University's new president after the Board of Trustees formally invited him to serve via unanimous vote on February 10.

Smith's initial goals for Southern are to improve enrollment, find ways to make Adventist education more affordable, and reduce student debt. He also wants to give students increased leadership experience opportunities, create a more authentic spiritual life for students and faculty, and further build Southern's presence in the community.

Smith is no stranger to campus, having

worked as professor and chair in Southern's English Department from 1981 to 1998. He left to become president of Union College, where he served for 13 years before returning to Collegedale in 2011 as senior pastor for the university church. Smith sees strong similarities between his roles as pastor and president.

"I will still pray without ceasing for the spiritual welfare of those I serve and celebrate God's victories in their lives," Smith said. "I still get to work with a very special group of mission-focused people, including young adults, who energize me and challenge me to live what I preach and teach. And above all, I will continue to surrender my life to God, entrusting Him to work out His will for the institution I serve."

Smith began employment at Southern on April 4 as president-elect during the last two months of Beitz's tenure, and took full control of the office on June 1. He appreciated the opportunity for such a hands-on orientation to his new position, but so far there have been few surprises. And for good reason. Smith taught at Southern for 17 years, served on its board for five years, pastored the Collegedale Church for five years, and had two daughters graduate from the university (Kimberly Hutchinson, '99, and Jacinda Buxton, '93 and '94).

But even with that level of familiarity,

there are always new experiences.

"I've always loved Southern students, but they have been especially warm and friendly toward me, and that means a lot," Smith said. "I'm also surprised by how strong Southern's academic programs are. Right now our students are doing as well or better academically than counterparts on other Adventist college campuses."

Southern's faculty play a large role in that accomplishment, and the admiration is mutual. History and Political Studies Professor Lisa Clark Diller, '96, PhD, took classes from Smith as a student at Southern and observed his leadership again years later as a peer in the field of academic and spiritual discipleship.

"David's good humor and strong communication skills are effective for building community in any organization," Diller said. "He will bring these same gifts to bear on the challenges of leading a university in the climate of higher education that we all operate in, helping us make the case for Christian education on a residential campus." —By Lucas Patterson

Information from the Adventist Review was used in this article with permission. A longer feature article about President Smith, including additional details concerning his vision for Southern, will be published in the Fall 2016 issue of COLUMNS.

» by the numbers

All "by the numbers" in this issue of COLUMNS are connected to Gordon Beitz, Southern's retiring president (see related feature, Page 14). They reflect the joyful spirit and willing heart with which he led the university for 19 years.

600

Length in feet of the zip line Beitz rode during Spirit Week (see picture, Page 17).

2,076,872

Number of miles Beitz has flown (on Delta alone) for university business.

\$50 Million Capital Campaign Launched

Southern publicly announced the Campaign for Excellence in Faith and Learning on April 28 at the end of President Gordon Bietz's legacy celebration event in Iles P.E. Center.

Components of the \$50 million goal—nearly triple the amount of any previous campus campaign—include construction of a new student center and other facility improvements, increased endowments for scholarships and research, the continued greening of campus, and annual giving. Nearly \$32 million in cash and pledges has already been raised during the campaign's leadership phase, which quietly began in 2013.

After witnessing the support of these initial donors, Southern's Board of Trustees voted in February to finalize the campaign goal of \$50 million and fine-tune the ideas originally envisioned. University leadership is moving forward in confidence that this plan addresses Southern's needs in a timely and cost-effective manner, allowing for the greatest benefit to students.

"The Campaign for Excellence in Faith and Learning is mission-centered and therefore student-centered; our plans and



An early artist's rendering of Southern's concept for the Bietz Center for Student Life.

needs flow from that," said Chris McKee, '88, trustee and campaign co-chair alongside Terry Shaw, '84.

The legacy event and campaign's public launch have been strongly connected since 2015, when Bietz announced his pending retirement and made known a strong desire to witness the student center's groundbreaking before he left office. Bietz was completely unaware plans were in the works to name it after him.

"I managed to hold my emotions in check fairly well until hearing the student center announcement and seeing a rendition of the building," Bietz said.

The Bietz Center for Student Life, projected to open in fall 2018, will be located between McKee Library and Hickman Science Center. Herin Hall's layout and age make the empty structure unsuitable for remodeling; its removal facilitates this new construction, estimated at more than 40,000 square feet and costing \$13 million. Interior plans include considerable

amounts of flex space for student organizations and Life Groups to hold meetings.

If the Bietz Center for Student Life is Southern's brick-and-mortar centerpiece of this campaign, endowments are its less obvious but equally critical counterpart. In order to continue providing the Southern Experience, endowment funds for scholarships, faculty research, departmental lectureships, and mission endeavors must increase. Although the campaign component's goal is already close to being reached, Southern hopes to exceed expectations and significantly impact students for years to come.

God has blessed this effort in amazing ways while touching hearts to give generously. To reach the remaining goal will require a deep and continuing commitment from alumni, employees, and friends. For more information, or to make a gift toward the Campaign for Excellence in Faith and Learning, visit southern.edu/webelieve or call 423.236.2829. —Staff Report

2 70

Number of miles Bietz biked (to former location for Graysville Academy and back) as part of a Southern fundraiser.

4,324

Facebook "Friends" for Bietz, many of whom are current students and alumni.

5

Gallons of water dumped over Bietz's head during an Ice Bucket Challenge. To watch the video, visit southern.edu/columns.

\$2 Million Gift From Adventist Health System Funds Newly Endowed Chair

Southern's Board of Trustees voted in February to accept and establish the Adventist Health System Endowed Chair of Business Administration faculty position beginning June 1. Interest accrued from a \$2 million contribution by Adventist Health System (AHS) in 2015, the largest single corporate gift ever donated to Southern, will be used to defray the cost of an existing professor's salary in perpetuity.

Some of the newly endowed chair's responsibilities include: becoming knowledgeable about AHS' mission, purpose, and reach; functioning in an advocacy role for AHS; and fostering a good working relationship between AHS and the university. AHS will partner with the School of Business to provide both the endowed chair and students opportunities for engagement. Much of this work is supplemental, as a healthy relationship already exists

between the two institutions. Last summer alone, nine financial management majors from Southern were among 33 students nationwide accepted into AHS' highly selective Leadership Development program for 12-week internships.

Students learned about the new Adventist Health System Endowed Chair of Business Administration, and accompanying \$2 million gift, during a special departmental convocation last fall. Anyone visiting Brock Hall, home to the School of Business, will now be made aware of it as well. A plaque recognizing AHS hangs in the hallway with brass nameplates to list professors who hold its chairship. Robert Montague, PhD, will be the first inscription.

Montague, a certified public accountant, joined Southern's faculty in 1999. He previously held executive positions with a missionary organization, hospital,

and physician consortia, among others. Montague received his bachelor's degree in accounting from Loma Linda University, an MBA from the University of Missouri, and a PhD from the University of Iowa.

"AHS has always been a great partner for Southern, because many of our graduates find employment with them and have risen to positions of importance and responsibility through the years; in fact, sometimes former students are the very ones recruiting current students," Montague said. "The professional opportunities AHS provides us are extremely helpful." —By Lucas Patterson



Adventist Health System is headquartered in Altamonte Springs, Florida. With 46 hospital campuses and more than 8,300 licensed beds, it serves nearly five million patients annually. While each hospital is unique, all remain united in one mission: Extending the Healing Ministry of Christ.

[news briefs]

Christianity Today Honors Southern's Archaeology Work

Excavations by Southern's Institute of Archaeology yielded two of *Christianity Today's* Top 10 biblical discoveries for 2015. Crews at the dig sites found a ceramic piece with writing that dates to 1130 B.C. and a jar inscribed with a name from the era of King Saul. Both indicate writers were skilled enough to have penned scriptural texts at an earlier time than previously believed.

Thatcher Farm Expanding as Result of Acreage Gift

Thatcher Farm, Southern's outdoor classroom for sustainable agriculture students, was recently gifted five acres adjoining campus. This new space effectively quadruples the existing location's capacity for growing vegetables.

Business Team Wins Regional Competition

Enactus (formerly SIFE) is a community of student, academic, and business leaders working to create a more sustainable world. Southern's Enactus team took on specific projects this year that ranged from assisting U.S. military veterans to working with

students at Babcock University in Nigeria to reduce mosquito-borne illnesses in that country. Having won their regional competition, they will advance to nationals in St. Louis, Missouri. To stay abreast of results, visit facebook.com/southern.enactus.

General Education Requirements Reduced

Southern's University Senate recently voted to reduce the number of required general education credit hours from 56 to 45, providing students with more flexibility to take electives, switch majors, or commit to mission work. The new criteria takes effect beginning in the Fall 2016 semester.

Chattanooga Taps Into Social Work Students' Expertise

The Hamilton County Family Justice Center (FJC) has asked Southern's School of Social Work to play a major role in its program, with graduate students providing research and technical assistance to the FJC and area police. "Southern is a leader in social work, and we're excited to partner with them," said Chattanooga Mayor Andy Berke.

School of Religion Launches Summer Ministry Internships

Theology students at Southern have the opportunity to work full time under the mentorship of a church pastor this summer while earning scholarship money toward tuition. The School of Religion's new Summer in Ministry internship program was pilot tested in the Gulf States Conference last year with great success, and now 14 students will spend eight to 12 weeks working for churches throughout the Southern Union.

Junior and senior theology students were eligible to apply, and five have been accepted to work with the Georgia-Cumberland Conference, two with the Florida Conference, one with the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference, four with the Gulf States Conference, and one with the South Central Conference. Intern responsibilities include conducting Bible studies, preaching, and helping plan outreach activities for the church and community.

According to Greg King, '81, PhD, dean for the School of Religion, there are widespread benefits from this internship, including three in particular: students gain excellent experience in ministry, have the opportunity to confirm their calling, and get a real-world preview of what they'll be doing for a career.

But it's not just students who profit from the program. Local churches thrive from the enthusiasm, energy, and spiritual commitment of these young ministers in training. Plus, Southern Union funding helps facilitate Summer in Ministry internships, and the program offers ministerial directors a chance to evaluate students and see how they might fit into full-time ministry openings down the road.

"This program is a blessing for everyone involved," King said. "I'm excited for the opportunities for our students!"

—By Sheamn Brandon



Students and staff smile for a group photo at the conclusion of Southern's Christian Media Camp in 2015.

High School Students Invited to Academic Summer Camps

This summer Southern is hosting seven academic camps that bring high school students to the university for an opportunity to explore or sharpen their vocational focus before even starting college. Each three-day camp includes a spiritual component as well, modeling for students how Adventist education facilitates the marriage of career and calling.

The School of Journalism and Communication has held Christian Media Camp for the past two years, and students from across the Southeast and beyond came to learn about photography, blogging, new media, and more. Other academic departments witnessed its success, and this year there will also be summer camps in chemistry, computing, English, film-making, modern languages, and math/physics.

"Our favorite part of the journalism camp every year is seeing high school students awaken to new ways they can use their gifts for God's glory," said assistant professor Kendra Stanton Lee.

Gone is the traditional image of high school students spending their summer lounging by the pool. Today's youth—

and the parents who often help pay for college—remain open to the idea of spending this coveted "time off" in more constructive ways. But all fun is not lost! During the hours between academic activities and curfew, Southern staff will supervise a variety of recreation activities, both on and off campus.

Journalism camp was held May 23-25; all others take place July 25-27. Registration is \$100 for local students or out-of-town students staying with friends and family in the area, and \$150 for those requiring overnight accommodation in one of Southern's apartment buildings reserved exclusively for camp participants. All food, materials, and activity expenses are included in registration.

For students coming from beyond the greater Chattanooga area, vans will provide free transportation both to and from Southern at centralized pick-up locations in Atlanta, Knoxville, and Nashville. Specific details about each camp's topic, lodging details, and recreation activities may be found at southern.edu/camps. For more information, call 423.236.2581.

—By Lucas Patterson

[graduate school]

Southern Hosting Global Missions Forum in July

The missionary work of yesteryear was significant in seeding a global Adventist church, but as times changed, Christians have rightly needed to evolve new strategies for end-time outreach. This topic is paramount for students in Southern's Global Community Development graduate program. The July 14-17 TEAMS Forum (Transforming and Educating Ambassadors for Missions and Service) at Southern will open the door for others to join this critical conversation.

Nothing accomplished in short-term mission work is simple, but each year churches are getting better and more strategic in their approaches. Southern is eager to support congregations in capacity-building mission work by training future leaders through its master's degree in Global Community Development, a two-year program consisting of both online and community-based instruction. Administrators are excited that the TEAMS Forum is another avenue for the university to use its resources in service to the world church.

Churches and nonprofits interested in global missions must

address certain challenges and opportunities before they outline their strategies for partnering with local communities in transformational and restorative difference-making. Key values need to be identified to ensure the motivation for serving these communities is in line with Christ's mission while on Earth. Important items for personal reflection—and discussion at the forum in July—include mutual brokenness, serving locally first, using a holistic model, appreciative approaches, and strategic partnership.

Additional topics covered during TEAMS Forum will include best practices in engineering and infrastructure, agriculture and food security, enterprise and sustainability, emergency response, human rights and social justice, health and wellness, urban ministries, and logistics.

Come see what a 21st-century missionary looks like! Connect with people from across the North American Division and become equipped to make a greater difference in your local communities and abroad. To register for the conference, visit facebook.com/mgcdsouthern. —By Sharon Pittman

Education Program Partners With Rocky Mountain Conference

Graduate students in Southern's Outdoor Education program, along with 20-30 teachers from the Rocky Mountain Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, will immerse themselves in the outdoors for a two-week intensive June 12-24. Hosted at Glacier View Ranch in Colorado, participants will learn to maximize outdoor classroom potential while enhancing other educational skill sets.

"This creates a professional time for both our students and the conference teachers to learn and network together," said Doug Tilstra, PhD, Outdoor Education professor.

Intensives are made up of six areas ranging from Environmental Ministry to Dinosaurs and Issues in Origins. One of the classes being offered at Glacier View Ranch is Developing Outdoor Teaching Sites, which demonstrates how to best use natural resources at any location to improve curriculum. As part of this process, Tilstra and his team of faculty and graduate students will help Glacier View

Ranch do an assessment of their campus.

"This is a great opportunity for our students, but we're also leaving something real for the camp that's hosting us while having this professional workshop for teachers in the area," Tilstra said. "It's a win, win, win, all the way around!"

Through previous intensives, involving as many as 16 students each, the Outdoor Education program has worked with camp professionals, public school teachers, people of other faiths, and people of no faith. The diversity offers great opportunity for spiritual growth.

"We had a young art teacher who was raised in the church, then strayed away," Tilstra said. "But halfway through the intensive, she told me that being a part



Professor Doug Tilstra works with a student during an Outdoor Education intensive at Camp Wawona in California.

of this program had really reconnected her with God."

The next intensive is September 4-16 at Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in northeastern Minnesota. For more information about the Outdoor Education graduate program, visit southern.edu/graduatestudies. —By Sheann Brandon



Amanda Gaspard's time as a missionary in India changed her life forever.

Peace for the Storm After Terrorist Attack

by Annalyse Hasty, '13

December 2, 2015, is a difficult day to forget. A married couple walked into a holiday party at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, California, and opened fire, killing 14 and seriously injuring 21 people. The shooting—later classified as a terrorist attack—set into motion events that would change lives forever, including that of Southern graduate Amanda Gaspard, '06. She suffered multiple gunshot wounds to her lower arm, upper thigh, and knee.

The days, weeks, and months since then have been difficult. Gaspard has more than 200 pieces of shrapnel in her body and remains in a great deal of pain. Despite these incredible impediments to peace, she continues to recognize God's guidance and works to lead others into knowledge of His love. Her mission work today—telling people about how she finds comfort even in the midst of conflict—has roots dating back to Southern and her time spent serving abroad.

Career Shift

Gaspard entered Southern as a pre-med biology major and completed two years toward that degree before volunteering at orphanages in India as a missionary during the 2004–2005 school year.

“The time there changed my life,” Gaspard said. “All of the kids had lice, and most of them also had scabies. They didn't understand the importance of washing their hands or brushing their teeth.”

She could feel God directing her life down a different path, and her experience overseas greatly influenced Gaspard's decision to begin thinking about the public health field. When she returned to campus, she completed her biology degree but decided public health would be a better fit for her than medicine. She went on to pursue her master's degree in the field, which increased her passion for health reform and landed her the job at Inland Regional Center.

Online Ministry

Gaspard is still in the grieving process following December's attack. But the slow physical and emotional recovery has given birth to a coping mechanism that blesses not only her but also others going through a time of trials. While still in the hospital, Gaspard said Jesus gave her

the idea to package and share the Bible verses and hymn lyrics she was repeating in her heart with the rest of the world via social media and the Internet, so others might likewise be encouraged.

“I'm limited because of my physical disabilities, but with the help of God and my family, I've compiled more than 300 selections so far that have been particularly uplifting,” Gaspard said.

This project, named Peace for the Storm, launched in January on Instagram. It has expanded to Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, Tumblr, and even a website, peaceforthestorm.com. Many people have told Gaspard how this website has touched their hearts and changed their lives, which is music to her ears because she wants the focus to be about Jesus, “not the terrorist attack or the pain and suffering I'm going through.”

Personal Witness

Gaspard has always been thankful for opportunities to talk about the good news of God's love with others. The shootings and life-threatening injuries failed to diminish her enthusiasm for witnessing. Recently, someone made a rude remark about Gaspard's crutches. Graciously, she used the opportunity to talk about Jesus.

“His insensitive and hurtful comment turned into a witnessing opportunity with his family, and we shared Peace for the Storm with them,” Gaspard said. “By the end of the conversation, we were discussing the Second Coming!”

Looking back, Gaspard said it was hard to tell her classmates she would not attend medical school with them. Even though that decision ultimately led her to San Bernardino and the struggles of her current condition, she knows God will continue to use her for His glory.

“If you truly feel like Jesus is leading you in a different direction, pray, pray, and pray some more, and then do what the Holy Spirit impresses you to do,” Gaspard said. “No matter your career path, find some way to share Jesus with others. You don't have to be a victim of a terrorist attack to have a testimony. Jesus is coming again, and we have no time to waste in sharing the gospel with others!” ■

Passion for the Discovery

by Anna Bartlett, '14

It's a rainy winter morning as students slowly make their way to Hickman Science Center for an 8 a.m. class. Some groggily dig through backpacks for notes; many look like they could use an extra hour (or more) of sleep. But the mood changes quickly as Biology Department Professor Joyce Azevedo, PhD, enters the room.

"GOOD MORNING, CLASS! How is your week going?" Azevedo brightly asks before transitioning to an extra-credit quiz.

Afterward, Azevedo goes over the results. But instead of simply telling students which answer was correct, she keeps the class engaged using a variation of the Socratic method.

"Maybe it's A. Or is it B?" She looks at the class with a straight face and a twinkle in her eye.

"It's C," one of her students challenges. Azevedo grins. "Why?" she asks.

The process repeats itself as students inadvertently reveal their grade through various forms of self-expression. Many smile, a handful grimace, and still others wear a look of confusion; but all are attentive and awake—no small victory for a professor at this hour of the day.

Teaching Excellence Award

Azevedo grew up on a farm, where her enthusiasm for nature sparked embers of a future career. While collecting butterflies and memorizing the names of each bird and tree in her area, she developed a passion for the discovery process as well. This excitement remains evident today, whether in the classroom, in her office advising pre-med and pre-veterinary majors, or in the lab supervising student research on ancient plant tissue DNA.

"She is very enthusiastic," said Sidney Dunn, junior biology major. "You can definitely tell learning is exciting for her, too. I don't think I have heard her talk in a monotone—ever!"

Azevedo's passionate style helped her earn the President's Award in Teaching Excellence at Southern for 2015. Whether it's keeping students



Professor Azevedo engages her students through her love of biology as well as her love of Christ.

guessing during quiz time, granting them "opportunities" instead of tests, or relating class material to silly information to help it become memorable, her instruction is nearly always infused with fun.

"It's great to work with and learn from her," said Angie Lee, senior interdisciplinary studies major. "When the professor loves what she does and what she teaches, I end up enjoying the material taught in class."

While the laugh-while-learning approach has proven useful, it is not her only instruction tool. Azevedo's ultimate desire is for those in her classes to not just take away facts and figures, but to be enthralled by how God put the human body together and to carry this wonderment with them for the rest of their lives. This integration of faith and learning, a key component of all courses at Southern, has been successful. One anonymous professor review—often an occasion for students to air any grievances—put it this way:

"Dr. Azevedo combines academic excellence with biblical values. Although she doesn't force her beliefs on us, it is clear that she teaches rigorous biology classes from a spiritual perspective. This is why I came to Southern: to learn from professors like her."

Own the Information

True learning, according to Azevedo, means students understand processes so well they know how removing just one step from an experiment affects the outcome.

"I think this will help them more in the long run when they get out into the world and see situations involving biology that won't necessarily look like anything they saw in a textbook," Azevedo said. "If they have information that they own, they can apply it when they come across these situations and handle them appropriately."

Biology Department Chair Keith Snyder, PhD, summarizes why Azevedo is loved and highly respected by both peers and students.

"She is the consummate teacher: joyful, caring, and tough," Snyder said. "Dr. Azevedo's mastery of the courses she teaches allows her to simplify difficult concepts. Her mentoring attitude carries students through the difficult parts of critical thinking, enabling them to achieve more than they ever thought possible." ■



Praises and Prayers

Sophomore chemistry major Carter Ware began playing the cello in first grade and takes great pleasure from using his talents to perform praise and worship music alongside friends at Southern. February's Week of Prayer was one such opportunity. The annual campus series offers powerful testimonies and contemplative moments, ushered in each night by songs that set the mood. Reminding busy college students of the need to slow down gives the Holy Spirit more space for transformative work inside their crowded hearts and minds.

"With every speaker that moves his or her lips, or musician that plays, renewal seems to be taking place," Ware said. "Sometimes it involves a leveling of sorts; to build a better structure, you have to tear down what was there before. You can't grow spiritual muscles without exercising them."



O Captain! My Captain!

by Angela Baerg, '06

After nearly two decades of guiding the university and 13 additional years as senior pastor for its campus church, President Gordon Bietz has retired. His leadership legacy and enormous impact on our Southern community—physically and financially, spiritually and emotionally—is undeniable.

Contained within the text and tone of “O Captain! My Captain!”—Walt Whitman’s iconic poem about Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War—is a reverence for leadership that Southern Adventist University alumni, students, and employees often echo when asked to describe their own president, Gordon Bietz, DMin. It’s a comparison Bietz is humbled to hear; he is a big admirer of the 16th president and kept a Nathan Greene painting of Lincoln in his office. After 19 years at the helm, navigating the school through daily battles of eternal consequence, he leaves a legacy of steady growth that helped more and more students experience a traditional Adventist education and strengthen their relationships with God.

But the longest presidency in Southern’s history almost didn’t happen. In 1997, Bietz was president of Georgia-Cumberland Conference and a member of the search committee tasked with finding the university’s next leader. Midway

through the process, however, something unexpected occurred. He became the top candidate!

“At first I wasn’t interested; it was a direction I had never considered taking my career,” Bietz said.

But after much prayerful consideration, he decided to accept and see where God would lead. The rest, as they say, is history. Rich, rich history. So how can a grateful university comprehensively summarize nearly two decades of work in a magazine article? It can’t. Instead, COLUMNS asked Bietz to share a snapshot of his parting perspective as retirement approached. Following are his top five takeaways from time spent as Southern’s captain.

Campus Growth

Many challenges and blessings awaited Bietz at Southern. His arrival marked the beginning of 15 consecutive years of increasing enrollment, effectively doubling the size of its



1) President Bietz modeled servant leadership, as evidenced here by his work helping students move into Thatcher Hall during We-Haul. **2)** Bietz read a Fenton Forest story during the land dedication

ceremony for Southern's Sabbath Trail on Bauxite Ridge. **3)** Due to the length of his presidency, and the explosive enrollment growth experienced in those years, Bietz has personally handed out nearly half of

all diplomas ever awarded by Southern. **4)** Bietz had twin 9-year-old daughters when his family moved to Collegedale in 1981 so he could take a position as senior pastor at the campus church; he

now has six grandchildren! **5)** The ALS Ice Bucket Challenge was no challenge at all for Southern's good-natured president who gave a donation in addition to taking the soaking.

student body. As a result of that growth, and the length of his presidency, Bietz gave out approximately half of the 21,000 diplomas awarded since the school was founded in 1892!

More than \$80 million in construction projects were completed under Bietz's leadership. Florida Hospital Hall was built to meet the needs of the growing nursing student population, Hulsey Wellness Center was constructed, a new roundabout was put in to streamline traffic and identify the campus to visitors, and multiple academic buildings underwent remodels and expansions, including a complete renovation of Summerour Hall. To provide additional student housing, Southern converted the Conference Center into Thatcher South, added a wing to Talge Hall, constructed Southern Village apartments, and purchased both Spalding Cove and Winding Creek apartments near campus.

Marc Grundy, '96, vice president for Enrollment Management, feels fortunate to have collaborated with Bietz on these projects and more.

"He is a phenomenal leader who makes those around him

feel valued," Grundy said. "He always strives to make good decisions that honor and glorify Christ."

Strengthening Academics

Schools and departments around campus acquired numerous accreditations under Bietz's leadership, and undergraduate research became a priority as students began to regularly assist doctors at Erlanger Hospital. In addition, more than 375 students gave presentations during April's Campus Research Day. As a result of this collective work, Southern is enjoying its 14th consecutive year with a Top Tier ranking on U.S. News & World Report's "Best Colleges" list.

Big changes were also in the works for Southern's graduate programs. When Bietz became president, only a few graduate courses were offered—mainly "summer only" courses for teachers and pastors. However, Bietz and his leadership team believed there was huge potential for growth in graduate enrollment.

Soon programs began to be offered year-round, and addi-

"He is a phenomenal leader who makes those around him feel valued. He always strives to make good decisions that honor and glorify Christ."



6



7



8



9



10



6) Bietz always took time to pray with and encourage students before they went out on Community Service Day. **7)** Southern's Apple Festival for employees and their families used to be

held in Bietz's yard before it outgrew that venue and moved to the Student Park. **8)** Young alumni (and future alumni) at homecoming enjoyed listening to Bietz read a Fenton Forest story.

9) Groundbreaking on the Bietz Center for Student Life took place April 28; the naming of this new facility was kept top secret until announced live on stage during the Bietz Legacy Event that day.

10) Cynthia has been a welcoming presence at the front desk for nearly thirty years. **11)** In 2011, Bietz followed through on the promise to dye his hair if students met their fundraising goal to fight illiteracy

tional graduate degrees were developed for business, computer science, counseling, global community development, outdoor education, social work, and nursing. Currently, Southern has more than 700 graduate students who have the option of studying toward 13 different degree areas, including a doctor of nursing program.

"Dr. Bietz has been very supportive of the graduate programs, always encouraging us to find innovative ways to meet our students' needs," said Carl Swafford, '75, PhD, dean of Graduate Studies. "As a result, all of our programs are strong and have excellent reputations—both in the Adventist community and beyond."

Planning for the Future

To truly be a good steward of the university, Bietz knew he needed to do some long-range planning.

"Any harbor is fine if you don't care which way the wind is blowing," Bietz said. "I wanted to be proactive, choose a direction, and steer our university toward the right harbor."

As a result, he collaborated with many leaders on Southern's campus to create the Vision 20/20 Strategic Plan, a

"I believe a president sets the tone of campus, and it's really important as a mentor to be available for interaction."

summary of institutional hopes for how the university plans to grow by the year 2020. Many of the goals are spiritual: creating more mission opportunities, strengthening campus-wide focus on the biblical account of creation, and more deeply integrating faith into every academic discipline. Some are student-focused, such as increasing graduation retention rates and improving the work-study program. Others offer protection and enhancement of Southern's natural resources.

For example, a green initiative in the plan includes an ambitious design for building a ring road that directs vehicles around campus, leaving parking lots and roads between the Village Market and Iles P.E. Center available to be developed as student-friendly quads free from any traffic.

The Campaign for Excellence in Faith and Learning—which Gordon and his wife, Cynthia, personally endorsed with a generous gift of their own—ties these goals together. Bietz has been deeply involved in every level of the campaign (see related article, Page 7), personally inviting others to join him in giving. Although he connects well with alumni of every generation, fundraising did not come naturally for him.



11



12



13



14

in El Salvador. **12)** Bietz was so popular with students and alumni that even his cardboard cutout would warrant a selfie. **13)** Bietz and his cabinet held a foot-washing ceremony with student leaders

during the President's Office dedication after remodeling. **14)** It's a bird, it's a plane ... no, it was Bietz preparing to take a ride on the zip line during Spirit Week.

“Gradually I came to understand that I was just giving people who had the means and interest a meaningful opportunity to help the university grow,” Bietz said. “Those early conversations were made easier by the fact that I really believe in our mission.”

Under his leadership, more than \$30 million in cash and pledges has been raised to date for the current capital campaign.

“Gordon has been great in communicating his passion for Southern and its students,” said Chris McKee, '88, co-chair for the campaign's Steering Committee. “He is one reason this campaign has already raised nearly twice as much as we have ever raised before!”

Connecting with Students

Administrative jobs can bury even the most enthusiastic leader under an avalanche of paperwork. But Bietz strove to buck this trend, making time for what he called “walk-around management.” His goal? To be as accessible as possible for employees and students.

“I believe a president sets the tone of campus, and it's really important as a mentor to be available for interaction,” Bietz said.

Bietz enjoyed talking to students one-on-one and in large groups at convocations and chapels, even about controversial issues such as homosexuality, racism, and prejudice. He also hosted town hall meetings and opened the microphone to students, knowing full well that not all of his answers would be popular.



Southern's First Lady

In 1981, Gordon and Cynthia Bietz moved sight-unseen to Collegedale with their 9-year-old twins (Julie Kroll, '92, and Gina Gang, '92) so he could start a new job as head pastor of the Collegedale Church.

“If God had tapped us on the shoulder and said we would live here 35 years and Gordon was going to become president, I'd have thought, ‘I don't think so,’” Cynthia said. “The Lord is full of surprises!”

Cynthia almost immediately began working at Southern and has held a variety of positions. For many of the past three decades, her smiling face greeted visitors at the entrance to Wright Hall and her friendly voice answered switchboard calls. But don't be fooled; her influence reached far beyond the duties of a receptionist.

“Once a young man told me he couldn't afford a haircut and asked me if I would do it,” Cynthia said. “So I did!”

Other experiences were more subdued and sentimental, such as the time she anonymously bought and wrapped Christmas gifts for the family of a student she met in the lobby who had seven children. Such acts were not uncommon and most remain unattributed.

After Gordon spent 13 years at Collegedale Church and three years as president of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference, he joined Cynthia at Southern as its president.

She stepped into her role as the first lady with grace and poise, accompanying him to countless speaking engagements and supporting Gordon through his challenges. She also cheerfully opened their home for the Apple Festival, new employee welcome parties, Christmas open houses, and other employee events.

“People used to ask, ‘Aren't you going to give up your job now that Gordon is president?’” Cynthia said. “I would always respond, ‘I was here before he was!’”

She did, however, retire with him. Otherwise, Gordon joked, his last act as president would have been to fire her. Luckily, that wasn't necessary.



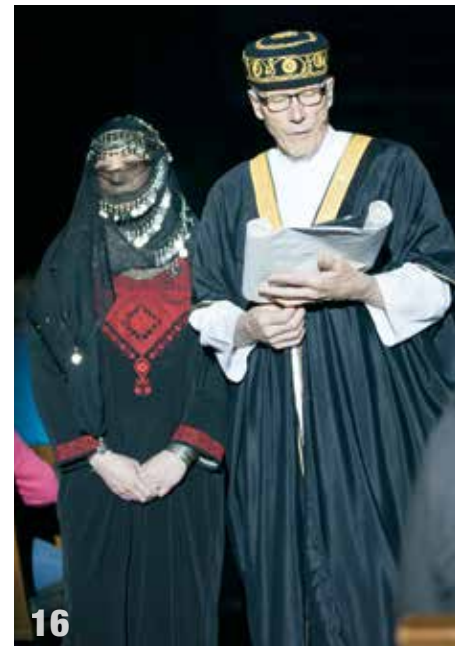


14

14 In his office, Bietz kept one of the stuffed animals given to students after sophomore Kelly Weimer died in a 2005 fire on campus. **15** During the student dedication ceremony in August



15



16

2015—which was also his wedding anniversary—Bietz gave his wife, Cynthia, 48 roses (one for each year of their marriage). She then distributed them to students so they could express similar

sentiments to their significant others. **16** The Bietzes were active participants in SonRise Resurrection Pageant, the massive production which draws approximately 10,000 visitors to campus

the day before Easter. **17** Pink flamingos came all the way from Florida to set the mood for Bietz's 71st birthday. **18** Just one year earlier, Bietz rode his bicycle 70 miles to Dayton, Tennessee, and back

“I have witnessed on many occasions his passion for interacting with students,” said Maurice Fider, ’15. “He always spoke to us with transparency and a spirit of genuine love.”

Students appreciated Bietz for not only his authenticity but also his whimsical adaptability. In 2011, Southern’s Student Association challenged the president to dye his hair if the campus raised \$5,000 for a literacy campaign in El Salvador. Bietz agreed to change his hair color to that of the winning team, which ended up being purplish-blue. Selfies with the president have always been in demand; that day, they were a must have! And what about the time Bietz took his turn among the students flying down a zip line on the hill between Wright Hall and Talge Hall? It quickly turned into one of those “Were you there when...” moments of campus lore. But even as the years passed and Bietz entered his 70s, the joyful presence with which he carried himself (and Southern) never wavered.

“Working with Dr. Bietz this year taught me what it means to be a serious leader while maintaining a light heart,” said SA President Jacob Metzner, senior theology major.

Examples like these are endless, and employees took notice.

“If you really care about people, they know it, they trust you, and they allow you to be their leader.”

“From serving pancakes on the promenade to reading Christmas stories in a rocking chair, it is obvious that Gordon loved his time with students, and they loved him back,” said Brennon Kirstein, ’94, DMin, campus chaplain.

Fire Tragedy

Some moments are memorable for all the wrong reasons. According to Bietz, the hardest part of his presidency began with an early morning phone call on April 26, 2005. There was a fire in Thatcher Hall, but details were hard to come by at 4:30 a.m. He quickly got dressed and made the short drive to Southern’s campus.

Female students had been moved to the Dining Hall. Spirits were high during an initial head count; it seemed as though everyone escaped safely. But as Bietz told students one of their peers was missing, excited chatter instantly fell into hushed shock. The president’s deep, reassuring voice cracked as he fought back tears to make the announcement. While evacuating, sophomore Kelly Weimer had died of smoke inhalation.

Bietz called Weimer’s parents (an experience he will “never forget”), met them at the airport, and accompanied



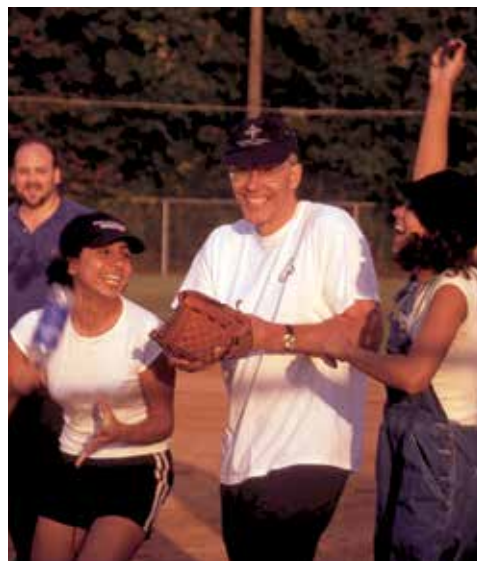
17



18



19



20

(former site of Graysville Academy) as part of a fundraiser connected to his milestone birthday. **19** The president's retirement was announced during a specially-called campus meeting in April 2015.

20 Bietz bows his head for prayer at the kick-off banquet for Homecoming Weekend 2015, his last as president of Southern.

Show Your Appreciation

Make a gift in Bietz's honor today and be sure to write him a farewell message on the donor scroll. Contributions are directed to the Southern Fund (his favorite) unless otherwise noted: southern.edu/bietzlegacy.

them to the morgue to identify their daughter. The university held a beautiful memorial service, and small stuffed animals were given to students for comfort as they tried to cope with their classmate's loss. The mementos had tags around their necks with Weimer's name, dates of her life, and these words from the Bible: "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!'" (Revelation 21:4-5).

Bietz received a stuffed animal as well and kept it in his office until retiring. The fire is a topic he hesitates to discuss; 11 years later, its effects are still traumatic. Yet even amid his own confusion and suffering during that dark moment in 2005, Bietz kept the campus community focused and moving forward.

"It's critical to have a level-headed individual leading and directing in difficult times," said Kari Shultz, '79, Student Life and Activities director. "When everyone was hurting, we knew our captain was there to steady the ship."

That confidence wasn't limited just to employees, either. Bietz visited with the Weimer family again when they were at Southern this March, touring campus with their son. He is enrolling at Southern in the fall.

Legacy of Love

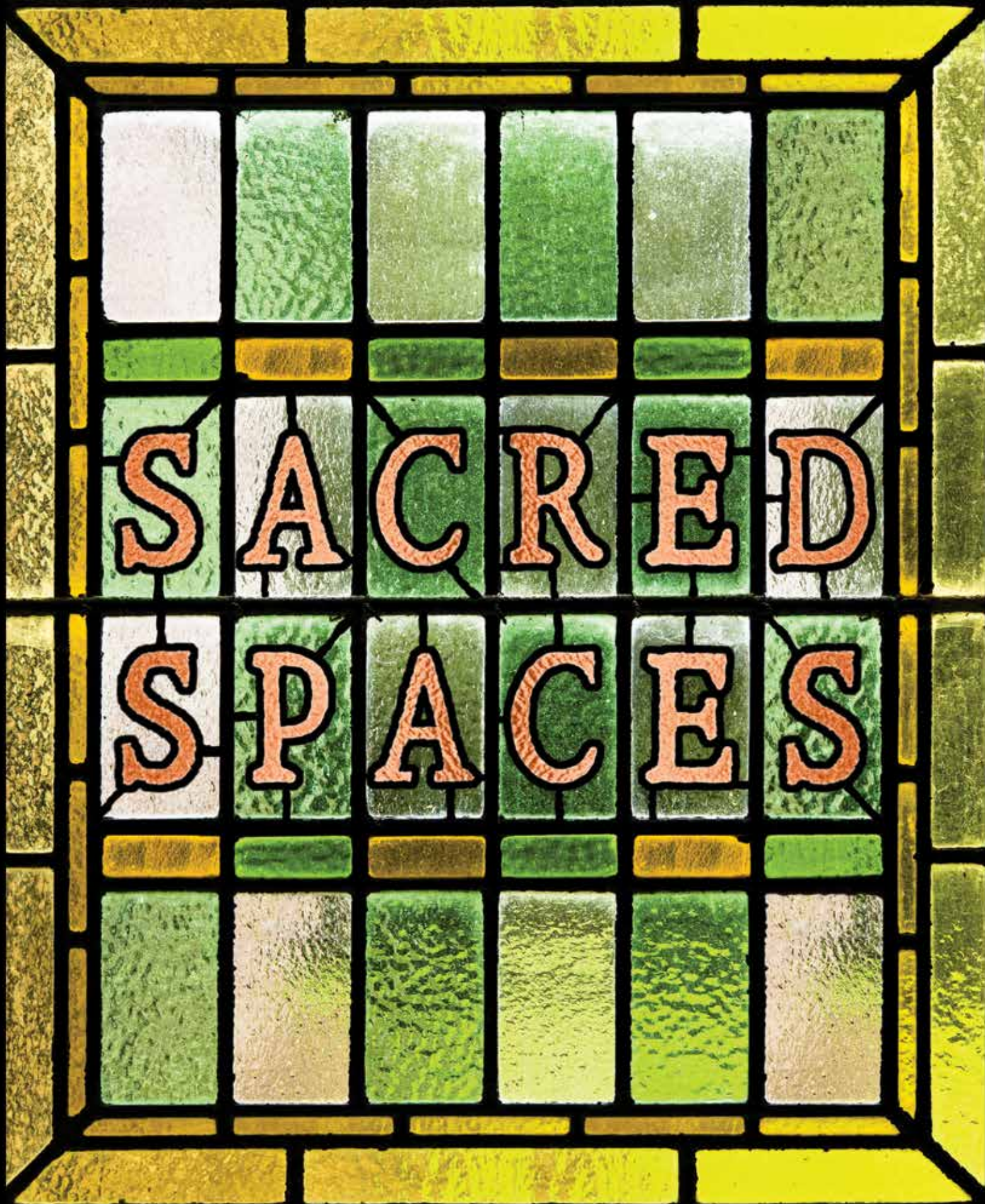
It was difficult for Bietz to say goodbye and walk away from the many projects started under his leadership, but he is excited to let incoming president David Smith help write Southern's next chapter (see related article, Page 6). Bietz looks forward to traveling, gardening, and remaining active in Adventist education. To that end, the North American Division has already asked him to serve on a part-time basis as its associate director for higher education and in other advisory capacities that will utilize his extraordinary talents.

Asked to summarize how he wishes his presidency to be remembered, Bietz offered this simple response.

"I love people and hope it reflected in everything I did," Bietz said. "If you really care about people, they know it, they trust you, and they allow you to be their leader."

Ron Smith, DMin, Board of Trustees chairman and Southern Union president, saw all of these traits and more during his time working with Bietz.

"I've had a birds-eye view of the man who has given decades of his life in professional and Christian leadership," Smith said. "He has showcased honesty, sensitivity, responsible scholarship, careful governance, and a large heart for every student who passed through the halls of Southern during his administration. He will be missed." ■



WORSHIP OCCURS ANYWHERE WE CONNECT DEEPLY WITH THE SAVIOR. DESPITE THIS DIVINE FLEXIBILITY, MANY CHRISTIANS ARE CREATURES OF HABIT WITH A HANDFUL OF LOCATIONS THAT UNLOCK OUR HEARTS TO HIS LEADING MORE THAN OTHERS. SOUTHERN OFFERS A VARIETY OF BEAUTIFUL PLACES AND INTENTIONAL PROGRAMMING THAT HELPS STUDENTS RECHARGE AND RECONNECT WITH GOD. *By Debbie Battin Sasser, '02*

Lynn Wood Hall, built in 1924 as College Hall and renamed in 1945, is the oldest major building on campus. Through the years, this venerable facility has served as administrative headquarters, operated as the campus post office, housed WSMC radio station, and worn countless other hats in service to the university. But perhaps its most lasting legacy is as home to Lynn Wood Chapel, site of many sacred moments.

"Alumni often get emotional sharing with me fond memories of their baptisms, graduations, and weddings held in Lynn Wood Chapel," said Evonne Crook, '79, Alumni Relations director.

The range of those activities is telling, a testament to the fact that sacred moments have always come in a variety of forms and fashions. Recognizing this, Southern recently modified its policies as leaders sought to offer students greater ownership in how they organize their spiritual time.

Nurturing students in their corporate and personal devotion to God has forever been a fundamental principle of Adventist education, and Southern's chaplain, Brennon Kirstein, '94, DMin, witnesses the unique spiritual development of students firsthand each year. Noticing the considerable differences between how extraverts and introverts worship, he encourages his Campus Ministries team to go out of their way in offering places and programs suited for a variety of personalities.

"I believe the Lord responds to and interacts with us in different ways," Kirstein said. "The more we understand about how God made us, the more we can get into a rhythm with Him that is natural and in keeping with the unique way He designed us."

RESIDENCE HALL CHAPELS

Thatcher Hall and Talge Hall offer worships in the morning and evening for both on-campus and community

students. A typical service lasts 20 minutes and involves music, prayer, and a devotional thought or personal testimony by a dean, resident assistant, or guest speaker.

"We know the topic hit home when women stay a long time afterward and talk to the speaker or approach deans to discuss struggles they're going through," said Tisha Looby, '10, assistant dean for women.

"WHEN I NEED PEACE OF MIND, I OFTEN HEAD DOWN TO THE CHAPEL AND POUR OUT MY HEART TO GOD."

The Black Christian Union (BCU) hosts Recharge, a Wednesday night prayer meeting, in Talge Hall Chapel each week. Students gather to share their praise reports and prayer requests, taking one another's

burdens to God in intercessory prayer. The event is not just for BCU members; anyone can come to these powerful worship sessions.

"Students find they need this time and enjoy bringing their cares to God," said Robert Moore, junior allied health major.

Residence hall chapels are open 24/7, making them ideal not only for corporate worship, but also as private spaces for personal devotions. John Landis, freshman theology major, uses Talge Hall Chapel in this way.

"The floor where I live is always bustling with activity, especially as it gets later in the evening," Landis said. "When I need peace of mind, I often head down to the chapel and pour out my heart to God. In these moments, I feel especially close to Him."



John Landis takes advantage of the Talge Hall Chapel for quiet study and reflection.

AN EMPTY SANCTUARY

Organ majors are privileged to use the world-renowned Anton Heiller Memorial Organ in the Collegedale



Zachary Woolsey has the Anton Heiller Memorial Organ (and the entire Collegedale Church sanctuary) to himself for a practice session.

Church of Seventh-day Adventists. There's a sense of awe just from walking in its cavernous sanctuary, especially alone and at night. Sophomore music major Zachary Woolsey regularly "studies" his craft there between 8 and 10 p.m.

"Practicing an instrument can be either stressful or relaxing and enjoyable, depending on my attitude," Woolsey said. "But there have been occasions when I go to the church to play and hear God speak to me through His beautiful language of music."

Heather Peel, senior music major, begins her days with early-morning organ practice in the sanctuary. She seldom finds the repetitive work to be transformative but has experienced profound moments of joy in these daily hours of solitude.

"The times I've crossed over from practice to something special are when I play music that I already know well, particularly hymns of praise," Peel said. "My focus shifts from getting notes right to making music, and music is what brings us up to meet God as He comes down to hear our worship."

PIERSON CHAPEL

Miller Hall is home to Southern's Modern Languages Department but previously housed the School of Religion. The centerpiece of this facility, both then and now, is Pierson Chapel. Once a month, the space is repurposed beyond academics and features a Sabbath school class taught entirely

in French. Approximately 50 attendees worship and fellowship together, including Southern students and faculty, foreign language students from Collegedale Academy, and both Adventists and non-Adventists from the community.

Pierre Nzokizwa, professor of Modern Languages, coordinates the group and invites different leaders to teach the lesson from month to month.

"This allows the group to grow and also gives us the opportunity to hear different accents that French speakers might have, as some are from Canada, France, and African-speaking countries," said Geovanny Ragsdale, associate vice president for Advancement.

The class sings, studies the Sabbath school quarterly, and reads aloud from the Bible—all in French! Refreshments are served, and the group organizes one potluck dinner each semester.

"I believe this experience can open our eyes to the global community of worshipers," Nzokizwa said. "It also helps students who end up going to France or elsewhere with Adventist Colleges Abroad to be less disoriented, because they have had this immersion experience in a foreign language."

GOLIATH WALL

A change of scenery and the opportunity to worship under the stars makes Fall at the Wall and Lawn Vespers popular worship events on campus. These well-attended activities are held at Goliath Wall, a sloping, grassy amphitheater framed by 200 horizontal feet of rock stretching 60 feet into the sky. Located in Southern's Student Park, this natural backdrop converts into a cathedral when as many as 1,000 students gather for music, spiritual messages, and prayer time.

"People told me it's the vespers I don't want to miss," said Hannah Lee, freshman general studies major.

Worshippers bring blankets or sit on the grass, and by the time the program starts, there is barely a vacant spot left to be found. The stone wall forms an impressive sound shell, creating acoustics that allow listeners to hang on every note and word being shared. Despite it being hundreds of yards from the nearest building, electricity is available and allows for lighting and multimedia presentations. Students do also use the Goliath Wall area as a space for recreation and personal devotion, but it is during these communal moments of worship that the woods in Happy Valley feel most like Heaven.



Students worshipping at the Goliath Wall.

CAMPUS TRAILS

Alyssa Williams, senior global policy and service studies major, finds the 18 miles of award-winning biking and hiking trails on White Oak Mountain to be a treasure in her worship toolkit. Their location, literally just a few steps from Southern's classrooms and residence halls, makes it

easy to take a break from the craziness of college life and refocus in nature.

“School can be an information overload,” Williams said. “Sometimes I crave that silence I find on the trails, because it’s when I hear God the clearest. I love paying attention to details and tuning into nature’s sounds.



Alyssa Williams finds peace and encouragement in the beauty of God’s creation.

How often do we stop to actually examine bark on a tree or the dew on the leaves? These

are God’s artwork, and they reveal His love for His creation.”

Kevin Freeman, senior allied health major, enjoys spending time with classmates but won’t hesitate to grab his hammock and head for the hills on Southern’s 1,300-acre campus. His only other companions for these afternoons spent recharging spiritually? A ukulele and the songs in his heart.

“For me, worship is very personal—it’s just between me and God,” Freeman said. “I always come away with a new thought, a new hope that tomorrow is going to be all right and that I don’t have to do it by myself.”

Southern’s commitment to providing unique spaces for reflection is further evidenced by ongoing projects. The university was recently gifted 250 acres adjoining campus on Bauxite Ridge, opposite of White Oak Mountain. More than 12 miles of new paths—including The Sabbath Trail, a 1.5-mile section that contains plaques sharing the history of Sabbath from creation to the New Earth—will soon be available for both student and community use.

With an abundance of physical, natural, and human resources dedicated to worship on campus, Southern highlights the true value of Christian education in an increasingly secular world. ■

Anonymous Messages, Authentic Moments

The student center’s Prayer Room, a small space more accurately described as a large closet, is always open. Its calendar remains free of commitments and scheduled meetings, allowing students to stop by whenever the Spirit leads. The room has hosted small group studies from time-to-time, but is better suited for private moments.

Physically, the room features a simulated stain glass window, lighting with a dimmer switch, pillows on the floor, and a cross where students nail notes describing their worries as a metaphor for surrendering them to God. Symbolically, it captures the mood of a generation too broken to be anything but honest about their fears and frustrations. The walls are covered from floor to ceiling with creative expressions of worship: prayer requests, praises, scriptures, song lyrics, and artwork.

As Southern moves forward with its new student center (see Page 7), plans are already in place to ensure this type of crucial yet causal space exists in any future facility. Below is a small sampling of anonymous prayer requests currently written on the walls. It’s never too late to take another’s concerns to Christ, so please consider praying right now for Southern’s students who left these for others to see:

Bring a fresh wind onto this campus.

Lord, give me the faith to realize and accept your call to change the world.

Not everything is planned, but God, we know you always have a plan for your children.

What now, my King?

If it is your will, God, then let it happen.

Take away my carelessness and apathy. Give me a heart burning for you.

Bring your lost sheep home, Father.

Give me love for your people.

Take our hearts and seal them.

I am broken. Please fill in the cracks.

Let what we do in here fill the streets out there.

Prayers for my future wife.



Taste Buds

By Kendra Stanton Lee, assistant professor

Food and friendships go hand-in-hand. This universal truth is especially evident at Southern, where students from all 50 states and more than 30 countries move into close quarters and call campus home for the year.

The smells of residence hall life can be a potent blend of fresh loads of laundry, too-strong cologne, and microwave popcorn. The scents wafting from kitchens around campus may surprise you, though. Cuisine from South Korea, the Bahamas, and Argentina—as well as a heavy dose of traditional Southern cooking—are regularly prepared in the residence halls. By bringing a literal taste of home to their home-away-from-home at Southern, students practice wellness and foster friendships for a lifetime.

Andrea Sequera, junior global policy and service studies major, remembers meeting most of her really good friends in the Dining Hall, where they ate together every day for two weeks during SmartStart. This was not the first time she recognized food as a tool for building friendships. Sequera's father is a pastor, and she grew up watching her parents welcome new church members into their home with a dish from

their native Venezuela. Arepas (corn pockets with savory fillings) were both a culinary gift and great conversation starter.

"It was something we knew people wouldn't have tried," Sequera said. "And we knew that they would like them—because they're awesome!"

Sequera models that same community-building approach to cooking in her residence hall by making arepas for her friends, biophysics major Jeanna Toulouse and biology research major Pamela Accosta-Torres, both juniors.

"Arepas are a little bit of home that I like to share with people; it helps bring them into my culture," Sequera said.

Comfort Food

Tramayne Knowles, a sophomore allied health major from the Bahamas, is also keen on the concept of sharing culture via food. This school year he could often be found spending Saturday nights with friend Miguel Scavella, a sophomore clinical psychology major from the same country, bringing a taste of their homeland to Talge Hall.

"I would love to cook more Bahamian cuisine," Knowles said, "but sadly, the ingredients I use back home are more difficult to find here."

Fortunately, Scavella and Knowles knew how to improvise and stretch their college-student budgets. Scavella said a staple dish is rice, plantains, and vegetarian meat. Other specialties include lasagna, fried rice, or a Bahamian dish called macaroni (similar to mac 'n cheese but

Recipes From My Room

Kathryn McNulty started a social media account to showcase her residence hall creations: [instagram.com/katsgoodeats](https://www.instagram.com/katsgoodeats). Vegetable lo mein is one of her favorite meals to cook in the Thatcher Kitchen and is made using only \$11 worth of items (minus the oil, sauces, and spices) purchased using her meal plan at the Village Market.

VEGETABLE LO MEIN (serves 4)

- Boil 1 packet of lo mein noodles
- Add sliced mushrooms, carrots, and bell peppers in a pan with oil and garlic to sauté
- Add water chestnuts and snow peas
- Add salt and soy sauce to taste
- Add stir fry sauce and chilli powder for spice
- Stir in noodles

with a few differences). Authentic ingredients aside, what reminds Knowles so much of home is simply the experience of cooking.

“When I am back home, I am always in the kitchen; so by getting into the kitchen here at Talge, I place myself within a small bubble of comfort,” Knowles said. “Cooking is something I know how to do, and I feel quite comfortable while doing it. When you first come to college, the new environment can be intimidating. But when I cook, I’m back in my element, doing what I love the most, the best way that I know how.”

Both men agree that sharing a meal helped to fill the initial “awkward silence” of living with strangers. But now, according to Knowles, if there is silence in the room, “it’s because everyone is enjoying their food!”

Pans and Plans

Junior business management major Kathryn McNulty enjoys frequenting the Dining Hall and other Southern eateries, but she discovered the power of kitchen camaraderie during spring break this past semester. She stayed on campus for the week in Thatcher South when most of the on-campus eating establishments were closed.

“I didn’t want to get fast food every day,” McNulty said. “My mom anticipated this and sent me a pan, so I was able to cook.”

McNulty spent the week recreating old favorites and trying out a few new recipes in the residence hall kitchen. The smells reached others who were staying on her hall during the holiday, and before long McNulty was sharing dinner and conversation with new friends who, until then, had been only familiar faces. She felt empowered by what was transpiring, and the sisterhood

born from collaboration in communal kitchens has made it easier for her to ask others for help when a spatula or a can opener is needed.

But many times there’s no need to even ask. Scavella and Knowles say the kitchens in Talge are a great help in their culinary endeavors, and it’s a blessing to have so many household conveniences already available, especially the ovens.

“It’s so much easier to cook a ‘real’ meal there compared to when I attempt to create something in my room’s microwave,” Knowles said.

For the record, students are allowed



Kathryn McNulty frequently shares her culinary creations with friends in the Thatcher South residence hall.

more than just a microwave in their rooms, and some have quite the kitchenette. Safety codes allow for small refrigerators, juicers, and other appliances that don’t use a heating element. Stories of students making grilled cheese or toast using an iron are, hopefully, just urban legend.

But something few would debate is the connection between romantic relationships and food. Junior theology major Felipe Mendes met his future girlfriend, also a Southern student, on a 2015 mission trip. They recently began dating. During a particularly busy week this spring, he let his meal plan run out, and sundown arrived before he knew it. Luckily, his girlfriend lived in Thatcher Hall and made him a large bowl of pasta for Sabbath lunch.

Friends Search for the Holy Grail of College Life: Free Food

by Karl Haffner

My freshman year at Southern was an education in itself. I learned a little about biology, a little about psychology, and a lot about life.

One of the most valuable lessons came on a Saturday night when my buddy Steve and I didn’t have dates (which could refer to almost every Saturday night).



Karl Haffner in college and today

Instead, we went to Chattanooga to meet people. We met Rosita at Dunkin’ Donuts. We chatted with Bob at Bob’s Coffee & Donuts House. We spent a few minutes with Donna at The Donut Hole. Much to our delight, we made an amazing discovery that evening: with a mixture of charm and coaxing, our new friends were willing to give us donuts. For free! By 11:30 that night we had a dozen lemon-filled, a half-dozen chocolate creams, a dozen bear claws, and an arsenal of other sugar bombs to share with guys in Talge Hall.

The next Saturday night we didn’t have dates. (You’re beginning to understand why, aren’t you?) Sitting in my room, Steve said: “You know, I’ve been thinking. If it works for donuts, why wouldn’t it work for pizza?” Faster than we could say “cheese,” we were at the nearest Pizza Hut.

“Smoking or non?” the cheery hostess greeted.

“We need to speak to the manager,” I said.

The manager came to the counter. “How may I help you gentlemen?”

“We were wondering, sir,” Steve said tentatively, “if, um, you had some free pizzas sitting around. See, we’re college kids with

(continued on next page)



no money, no dates, and lots of time, so we thought you might like to help us out. Betty, our old

Datsun, knows we're broke, but she pulled into your parking lot anyway, so we thought we'd ask. What do you say?"

By now, the manager was smiling. "Sure, what kind do you want?"

"Everything vegetarian except pineapple," I replied. "And since you're at it, could you throw in a couple cans of Sprite?"

The evening flew by as we collected free pizzas and pop around town!

The next Saturday night, we had dates. (Scary, isn't it?) Intent on showering our dates with the finest amenities, we crashed a flower shop that week and went to work.

"We're a couple of poor freshmen," I started, "and have dates this weekend. We'd love to give our dates some corsages. Any chance you'd be willing to donate to a worthy cause?"

"Sure!" she gleamed. "You boys remind me of my grandson. That's something he would do."

Our dates looked fabulous sporting their five-rose corsages. They were the classiest ladies in the whole bowling alley!

Lounging around the following week, I wondered how far we could take our discovery. "If it works for donuts, pizza, and flowers," I mused, "why wouldn't it work at the Honda dealer?"

The more we thought about it, the more we liked the idea. So we made our way to the dealership and requested a couple of Honda XL250R motorcycles.

That experience taught us two more valuable lessons. First, you don't get a free motorcycle unless you ask. Second, you don't get a free motorcycle even if you do ask (the Honda dealer looked as if we had asked him to bike to Mars), because you have to pay for anything worthwhile in life.

Count on it. Career success, financial gain, athletic skills, relational authenticity, educational accomplishment—all of these things require strong commitment and payment of some kind, whether it's time, money, or another asset. Too many people settle for the free donuts, pizzas, and flowers in life because they are unwilling to sacrifice for what is truly valuable. Want to be successful? Determine to pay the price, because nothing worthwhile comes free. Nothing.

"All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty" (Proverbs 14:23).

-Karl Haffner attended Southern in the early 1980s and is currently senior pastor for the Kettering Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ohio.

"Obviously, free cooked food isn't the reason I'm dating her, but I have to admit it was an affirming moment," Mendes said. "It's the little blessings that make our days, and this blessing was covered in Alfredo sauce and love!"

Brownie World

It's not just students who appreciate how food's value extends far beyond simple nutrition. Dean of Men Carl Patterson and his wife, Teresa, have built a ministry called "Brownie World." When he began working at Southern, Patterson saw a need for formal fellowship time among students after vespers, so he implemented



Carl Patterson prepares trays of brownies to share with eager students.

a new tradition. Now, the smell of brownies is a weekly phenomenon in Talge Hall. Patterson makes four pans of brownies, and his wife makes 36 pumpkin muffins. They welcome students into their home, attached to the residence hall, for Sabbath conversations over home-baked goods and milk.

"I take great joy in sharing this informal time with students, learning about why they're at Southern and how they're liking it," Patterson said.

That joy is mutual and often immediate!

"During my first semester at Southern, a friend invited me over to Patterson's house, and right away I felt like family," said Mitchell Griffin, junior

public relations major. "Now I see him as more of a friend than a dean; we always have great conversations and lots of laughter."

Patterson's event became so popular it expanded. A lot. He continues his weekly fellowship but challenged Southern's other deans, both in the men's and women's residence halls, to replicate the success of his gathering on a larger scale. Now there are two Friday nights a semester with fresh brownies, cookies, and punch in the Dining Hall. Logistically, that requires five ovens in Talge Hall running all at once to cook approximately 30 pans of brownies; the smell alone puts a smile on students' faces and gets them talking about the grace of free food and joys of Sabbath rest ahead.

Parallels between cooking and college life are easy to come by. Trying out new recipes; trying on new perspectives. Burning that new recipe; burning the midnight oil. Both in the kitchen and the classroom, Southern does its best to make life easier and more enjoyable for students who call this campus home. ■

Penny Duerksen-Hughes, '82, PhD

Associate Dean for Basic Science and Translational Research, Professor and Chair for Basic Science at Loma Linda University

What drew you to this career?

I enjoy figuring things out, and I have always been drawn to learning about our natural world.

What does your average day look like?

With my “professor” hat on, I teach medical and graduate students. With my “researcher” hat on, I assist colleagues and students to figure out how things function. With my “administrator” hat on, I ensure our system functions smoothly and in a way that reflects well of our mission.

You recently received a \$1 million grant; how will it be used?

It was awarded by the Ardmore Foundation to help us purchase a HiSeq 4000 gene sequencer, which is the best and fastest machine for sequencing genetic material. We are using it in our Adventist Health Studies (AHS2) research to figure out the molecular mechanisms behind Adventists who tend to live longer and be healthier. It's also helping us study the influence of prenatal conditions on the fetus, sequence cancers, and many other exciting projects.

What do you hope to achieve in the future with your research?

I very much hope our research can make life better, and longer, for women with cervical cancer. A second goal is to understand how the molecules that make up our cells respond to practices associated with good health.

You had full scholarship offers to state schools but attended Southern. Why?

I had gone to a public junior high and high school. I was eager to be a part of an institution that supported my faith!

What experiences here at Southern helped shape your career?

Receiving the Ulmer Scholarship was a big help, as was working with physics professor Ray Hefferlin. I also benefitted from taking classes that pulled pieces from many areas and demonstrated their connections. Being encouraged to apply for the National Science Foundation's undergraduate research program was instrumental, as well.

Southern emphasizes undergraduate research, and many students are currently assisting with studies at local hospitals. How important is this to their future careers in medicine?

A careful way of thinking, the ability to critically analyze evidence, and the need to persist in the face of discouraging results are all things that can be learned in research that will benefit future medical professionals. ■



We'd love to hear from you, and so would your classmates! Send updates about additions to your family, educational accomplishments, marriage, professional recognitions, or other news you'd like to share to:

alumni@southern.edu or **Alumni Relations • P.O. Box 370 • Collegedale, TN 37315-0370**

LEAP Into Bridge Building

In the previous issue of COLUMNS, I talked about how many of us have benefited from bridges built by those who came before us. We all have the opportunity to build new bridges for those who come behind us. I encourage you to start building some of these bridges today by participating in our Leadership Education through Alumni Partnerships (LEAP) mentorship program. I'm confident that a great number of you have the experience required to mentor fellow Southern alumni or current students, but you may need help finding the resources to do so. Our Alumni Association would love to provide the tools for supporting your bridge-building activities!

For LEAP information, visit southern.edu/alumni, email alumni@southern.edu, or call Alumni Relations Director Evonne Crook at 423.236.2830.



Jay Dedeker, '88
Alumni Association
President

50s Charles Harris, '52, and his wife, **Ruth (Dysinger),** '52, celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on March 22. Charles became a hospital administrator not long after graduation. The couple moved to Vietnam and then Singapore to work for hospitals and for Adventist missions. In 1973 they moved back to the United States, where both found employment with the Georgia-Cumberland Conference, and later, in long-term care administration. Their son, **Charles Harris,** '77, is a CPA and lives in Hawaii; his sons, **Christopher,** '05, and **Seth,** '08, also attended Southern. Their daughter, **Carolyn,** '78, married **John Dalton,** '79. Charles and Ruth live in Nashville, Tennessee, and attend church in Centerville, where she is the organist and he serves as elder and treasurer.



Frank Moore, '57, recently published a book through TEACH Services, Inc., titled *A Study of God's Love and Mankind's History*. Frank felt impressed to write this book after attending a seminar presented by a lay pastor, which examined God's love from creation until the end of the world. Frank hopes that those who read this book will fully understand God's love for humanity, accept the gift of salvation, and be ready to meet the Lord when He returns. Frank lives in Tallahassee, Florida.

70s Phil Worley, '76, and **Debby (Howard),** '75 and '77, celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary in June 2015. Phil is the math

specialist for an elementary school. Debby and their two daughters are nannies. They live in Johnstown, Colorado.

80s Donna (Lynn)

Lee, '85, obtained her Juris Doctor degree from Lewis & Clark Law School. She recently became a partner in the civil defense law firm Hart Wagner LLP in Portland, Oregon, where she defends physicians, nurses, dentists, chiropractors, naturopathic doctors, and other healthcare providers in malpractice lawsuits. Prior to establishing a career in law, Lee earned her doctorate in musicology from Duke University and was a university professor of 20th-century music history and theory.



Dan Jensen, attended, is director of advancement for the Greater Collegedale School System. Before taking that position, he worked in communications in the Potomac Conference and served as director of recruitment at Shenandoah Valley Academy. He has been married to Donita Parks for 28 years, and they have three children.

90s Angela (Ascher) Howell, '95, has remained in the Collegedale area for the past 20 years. She has two children, a Collegedale Academy sophomore and a Collegedale Adventist Middle School eighth-grader. After graduating, she held several marketing-related roles for Chattanooga-area nonprofits before serving for 12 years on the Enrollment Management team at Southern. She currently works at Collegedale Academy, managing recruitment and marketing activities.

00s Rachel (Day) Hansen, '06, attended pharmacy school at the University of Tennessee, earning her doctorate in 2011. Since graduating, she has been employed in north Georgia as a retail pharmacist. She married Scott Hansen in 2011, and the couple had their first child in December 2015. They live in Kennesaw, Georgia.

10s Jeremy Guth, '10, and **Alicia (Fernandez),** '10 and '11, were married in the summer of 2011. After living in Maryland for a few years, they moved to Gainesville, Florida. Jeremy is a microbiologist, and Alicia is a nurse.



Caitlin (Hobbs), '13, married Jason Kawamura on December 27, 2015. She is studying nutrition at Georgia State University and will graduate with her master's degree in August. Caitlin plans on becoming a registered dietitian and hopes to eventually work with Jason, who is studying physical therapy. They live in Atlanta, Georgia.



Vanessa (Lézeau) Daniel, '14, graduated with degrees in international business and international studies. She married **Joseph Daniel** (current), a Pacific Union College graduate whom she met while studying in Spain during the 2012-2013 school year. They settled in the Chattanooga area to pursue master's degrees at Southern; Vanessa will be completing her MBA at the end of this summer. During her graduate studies, Vanessa worked as an intern for McKee Foods Corporation and was hired as a full-time space management analyst in 2015.



Amanda Darkens, '15, graduated with a degree in physical education. She teaches physical education at A.W. Spalding Elementary School and Collegedale Academy.

Adam McQuistan, '15, graduated with a degree in mathematics and secondary education. He teaches math at Collegedale Academy, his alma mater.

Remembrance



Faye (Mixon) Strickland, attended, was born to Rudolph and Bonnie Mixon on August 10, 1930. She passed away in Spartanburg, South Carolina, on December 11, 2015. She was a member of the Tryon Seventh-day Adventist Church in Tryon, North Carolina. She is survived by her daughter, **Peggy Norton**, '81; son-in-law, **Jim Norton**, '82; and grandchildren, **Brian**

Norton, '08, and **Bethany Norton**, '11. She was preceded in death by her husband, Frank.

Beatrice Aline (Ralls) Pierce, '43, passed away on August 30, 2015, in Apopka, Florida, at the age of 91 after battling Alzheimer's disease. She was born on January 25, 1924, to Majel Ivey in Lenoir, North Carolina, and was quickly adopted by G. Odell and Aline Ralls. She attended Mount Pisgah Academy and Collegedale Academy. In 1947, she married **Charles L. Pierce**, '51, and held various positions of employment while accompanying him as he taught music at numerous Adventist academies, as well as Adventist universities abroad. They retired in 1989. She is survived by her husband of 68 years; daughter, **Cheri**, '76; and son, **Chuck**, '72. She was preceded in death by a brother and two sisters.

Lillian Rose (Dagles) Bolton, '62, passed away on December 2, 2015, at the age of 94 after a heart attack at her home in Bolton Landing, New York. She lived in that same town nearly all of her life, having been born there on September 13, 1921. Lillian received her bachelor's in education from Southern and her master's from State University of New York at Plattsburgh in 1973. She taught for 35 years—14 at Adventist schools and 21 at her alma mater,



Bolton Central School. She is survived by her foster sister, Alice Feulner; her twins, **Robert Bolton**, '67, and **Ruth Prosser**, '67; and seven grandchildren: **Kelly Rose (Bishop) Bolton**, '87 and '88, George Bishop, Carl Bishop, **Judy Prosser**, '01, Kevin Prosser, **Bill Bolton**, '03, and Bob Bolton. She was preceded in death by her husband of 63 years, Arland; her older brother, Robert; and her daughter, Miriam Bishop, attended. The Bolton family wishes to honor Lillian's legacy of teaching and witnessing by sponsoring a frontline medical missionary. Memorial gifts may be sent to Jesus for Asia/Haberkam Fund (P.O. Box 1221, Collegedale, TN 37315).

Oluf E. Olsen, '54, passed away on February 14, 2014, at the age of 81 after complications from cancer. He was born May 5, 1932, and graduated from Southern and then Loma Linda University's School of Medicine. He had a private ophthalmology practice for 38 years in Orlando, Florida. Oluf's hobbies included amateur radio, stamp and coin collecting, playing piano and organ, traveling, crossword puzzles, and reading. The joy of his life—other than visiting used book stores—was helping others, and he made several medical mission trips to Haiti, where he quickly learned to perform eye exams in Haitian Creole without an interpreter. He is survived by his sisters, Elsie LaFave and Carol Ringer; brother, Alle; daughters, Donna Manley and Meloney Dishman; sons, Karl and Kenneth; former wife, Dorothy Olsen; nine grandchildren; and five great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his mother, father, and wife, Arlene.

Five Generations of Southern Alumni

2016 marks the 100-year anniversary of Southern's move to Collegedale from nearby Graysville, Tennessee. While many alumni and employees are excited about the occasion, some have found particularly special meaning in the milestone. For the Swafford/Drusky family, this centennial celebration also marks five generations of students at Southern!

John Martin Swafford arrived in Collegedale in 1916 to assist with the logistics for moving the school. His two children, **Duffie** and **Lilly Swafford**, went on to attend Southern. Each set of children after them attended the school as well, with **Roy** and **Emmylou Drusky**, the fifth generation, graduating in May 2016.

Bobbye Swafford Drusky, '48, heard stories from her grandfather, John, about the move and how "the boys had to walk 40 miles driving a small herd of milk cows and living on homemade bread and molasses," she said.

A lot has changed at Southern since then, but the family is proud to have been a unique part of the university's rich history.



Bobbye Swafford Drusky, then and now.



Roy and Emmylou Drusky

Centennial Celebration

Harry Bennett, '37, turned 100 on March 2. President Gordon Bietz, along with additional Southern staff and approximately 50 local alumni, celebrated with him at a Fenton Forest-themed party hosted by the Avon Park Seventh-day Adventist Church. Bennett worked for many years

as a nurse in Florida, where he currently resides, and was presented during the event with a framed photo of him in front of Southern's nursing building taken at Homecoming Weekend 2014, the last time he was on campus.





Ready for Something New

Graduation can be emotionally exhausting; it celebrates both an ending and a beginning—that's a lot to soak in. Taking pictures with parents and grandparents, saying temporary goodbyes to lifetime friends, answering questions from family (and significant others!) about the all-important "next step"... squeezing these activities into a single morning makes exam week look like kids' play. During 2016 Spring Commencement on May 8, a record number of students did all of this and more while receiving diplomas from Southern during ceremonies at the Chattanooga Convention Center. Despite the amazing memories, graduates are ready for something new. After waiting patiently for several hours, a few of our younger guests appeared to feel the same.



love

By Gordon Bietz, president

I have told many people that my departure from Southern Adventist University's presidency is bittersweet, a term defined as something containing properties both pleasant and painful. When, for 19 years, you get up every morning and go to a job with people you enjoy, performing tasks for which you have a passion, and working to help students you love ... it's difficult to let go. On the other hand, it will be sweet to not hear that 5 a.m. alarm go off and to spend more time with my grandchildren, who don't see Opa and Nana nearly often enough!

Although I am excited about how God has led Southern and confident in the leadership of its incoming president, my experience in both higher education and pastoral work tells me to remain prayerfully vigilant for this school I love so dearly. The devil works hard to distract us from accomplishing meaningful, transformative work.

Critical Roots

As Southern looks to the future, it must never face the "cut flower" phenomenon—looking beautiful and bright but severed from our roots. Dead but not knowing it yet. Our roots grow deep in traditional biblical interpretation and are nourished by a commitment to truth. Let us never separate ourselves from those roots. This commitment to a distinctive Seventh-day Adventist environment means we should be a counter-cultural movement representing the Kingdom of God to the world rather than imitating the world (1 John 2:15).

Universities across the country are struggling to produce a moral foundation because they're unwilling to commit to a specific code of moral judgment. As James Hunter argued in his book *The Death of Character: Moral Education in an Age Without Good or Evil*, this quest is ill-fated:

"We say we want a renewal of character in our day, but we don't really know what we ask for. To have a renewal of character is to have the renewal of a creedal order that constrains, limits, binds, obligates, and compels. This price is too high for us to pay. We want character but without unyielding conviction. We want strong morality but without the emotional burden of guilt or shame. We want virtue but without the particular moral justifications that invariably offend. We want good without having to name evil. We want decency without the authority to

insist upon it. We want moral community without any limitations to personal freedom. In short, we want what we cannot possibly have on the terms that we want it."

Critical Conversations

The biggest problems the world faces today don't relate to building fuel-efficient cars or saving the planet. Our biggest problem is how we get along with each other: Palestinian and Jew, Protestant and Catholic, Muslim and Christian, black and white. Our educational systems should model the life of Jesus and graduate global citizens who create utopian communities where God's grace and love is manifest in our relationships with others. We must be in the business of nurturing employees and students who fulfill the command of Jesus to love one another (Matthew 22:39).

If education was simply the transmission of information, then we could take our star teachers and beam their classes to everyone. But you don't sing in a choir on the Internet. You don't play in the orchestra through fiber-optic connections. You don't compete in intramural sports on the computer screen, no matter how fast you move the mouse. Quality education—secular or faith-based—grows from conversations with mentors and peers as significant issues of life are addressed.

While writing this final editorial, I'm reminded of a quote from Albert Meyer I shared during my inauguration address 19 years ago: "Education is a conversation between the older and younger generations on what is important."

And what is important? One scripture says it all. "The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us" (John 1:14).

This is the sum total of why we have faith-based higher education. God became flesh for us so we could know Him. We model that message for future generations in our living-learning setting by building concrete ideas out of abstract doctrines. We create environments where the Word becomes flesh every day, in every class, through every contact with every student.

I pray the memory of my ministry at Southern reflects that desire: "This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another" (1 John 3:11). ■



SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY

HOMECOMING WEEKEND

OCTOBER 27-30, 2016



CELEBRATING
100
YEARS IN
COLLEGEDALE



HONOR CLASSES 1936, '46, '56, '66, '71, '76, '86, '91, '96, '06

HIGHLIGHTS

- >> 100th anniversary of Southern's move from Graysville to Collegedale
- >> 60th anniversary of the nursing program
- >> Reunion for former Student Services staff, residence hall deans, and resident assistants

Visit us online to view updated homecoming information, or contact Alumni Relations directly.

Website: southern.edu/alumni
Facebook: facebook.com/SAUalumni
Email: alumni@southern.edu
Phone: 423.236.2830