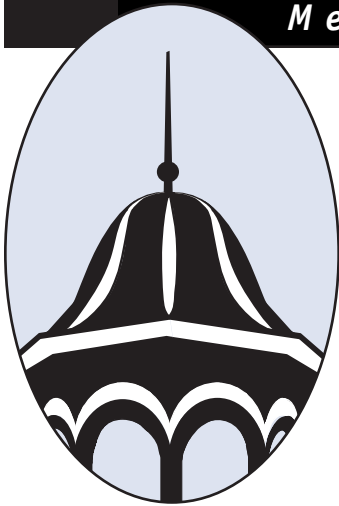


The Bridge

Memphis, Tennessee

Harding
University
Graduate
School of
Religion

Volume 45
Number 3
May 2004



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Oxford Named Alumna of the Year

Linda Oxford of Memphis was named Alumna of the Year at the Ministry Forum April 8. Linda, clinical director for Agape Child and Family Services, was one of the first women admitted to a degree program at the Graduate School of Religion and earned the M.A.R. in 1981. She has been married to Jim Rice for 23 years.

In her years as a marriage and family therapist and counselor, Linda's career of "caring for the health of others — mental, emotional, psychological, physical and spiritual — has been simply extraordinary," said Anthony Wood (D.Min, '02). Tim Stafford (D.Min. candidate), director of the Christian Student Center in Memphis, says that Linda "possesses uncanny powers of discernment." Linda is a member of the Highland Street Church of Christ in Memphis,



Linda Oxford receives the Alumna of the Year Award from Dr. Everett Huffard.

where she is known for her compassion and care.

Her peers recognized her as the "2003 Health Care Giver of the Year," an award presented by the *Memphis Business Journal*. Linda also serves as an adjunct professor at the Graduate School of Religion and holds Tennessee state licensure as a

clinical social worker and as a marriage and family therapist. With Daniel Wiener, she co-edited *Action Therapy with Families and Groups*, published in 2003 by the American Psychological Association.

In her acceptance speech, Linda said she came to Harding because she "wanted to become a marriage and family therapist and believed that human relationship problems could be resolved only if spiritual transformation occurred." Linda combines therapy and theology in her practice, inspired by and praying Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 5: "Equip me for a ministry of reconciliation."

The theme for 2003-2004 has been "Hope and Reconciliation." It is indeed fitting that one who practices this theme daily and offers it to others should be honored as 2004 Alumna of the Year.

Tucker Leaves Legacy of Service

Lott Tucker Jr. died March 7. He is survived by his mother; his wife, Mae Anne; two sons, Stephen and David; and six grandchildren. At his death, letters, notes and anecdotes arrived from former students and associates. Each one recounted a moment shared with Mr. Tucker, from describing a loan to playing baseball with him.

Students remember him walking around with a Styrofoam coffee cup, but rarely drinking from it.

Tucker began working in the University Business Office in 1951. He became vice president of finance in 1970. In 1996 he was named senior vice president and chief financial officer. In these capacities, he worked to ensure that students received

loans and scholarships to attend school, treating each one with grace and kindness. He served the College Church of Christ in Searcy as an elder for 30 years.

When the Graduate School moved to Memphis in 1952, Tucker was given the responsibility of managing the finances of the school, which he

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Around & About

Army Chaplains **Jim Maxwell** (M.A.C., '96) and **Tom Vail** (M.Th., '84) are now on active deployment in the Middle East. Chaplain **Gary Payne** (M.Div., '90), who has been in Iraq, is now home and is soon to be deployed to a training base in Germany.

Jeffrey Burton (M.Th., '80) and his family live in Cuero, Texas. Jeffrey is the missions deacon and teaches children's and adult classes. He works as risk manager for Regency Nursing & Rehabilitation Centers Inc. and is working toward licensure as a nursing home administrator.

Lendy and Megan Bartlett welcomed a daughter, McKay Marie, born Jan. 30. Lendy is working toward the master of arts degree in Christian ministry through the *Ministry-Connection* program. They live in Amarillo, Texas.

Sarah MacKenzie was born to **Greg** (M.Div., '97) and **Danielle Pollock** March 27. The Pollocks live in Senath, Mo., where Greg, a D.Min. student, preaches.

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Harding University Graduate School of Religion

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From the Dean



Digging Deeper

At an archaeological excavation, you are sure to hear the phrase "the answer lies below." The surface of an ancient floor or mosaic will be dated by the evidence below that floor. A mosaic on a public pavement unearthed in Caesarea did not mean much at first. By digging deeper, the team realized they had discovered a third century uncial inscription of Romans 13:3. This means that within 300 years of his imprisonment in Caesarea, Paul was quoted on the city streets! It was one of those great moments when the skills of the Greek scholar came together with the meticulous skills of the field archaeologist.

Effective ministry in our world requires all of us to dig deeper into the Word and ministry. It amazes me that with all the advancement in science, medicine and technology in our world, too many church leaders fail to appreciate the need for advanced training in the Word and ministry. I still find it necessary to justify the need for advanced training in ministry. Too many churches are in turmoil because the leaders have strained out gnats and swallowed camels. While a few scholars have failed to integrate theory and practice, the majority has dug deeper so they could serve the Lord more effectively. We experienced this on April 8 in the Ministry Forum, and I have seen it in recent weeks in the research projects that crossed my desk.

Ministry Forum on Hope and Reconciliation

Dr. Richard Oster opened the Ministry Forum with a challenge to dig deeper in our understanding of reconciliation. Terms that relate to the beginning of the Christian life — like repentance and confession — are terms Paul uses for all the Christian life. The authority of the ambassadors of Christ, he observed, comes from the one who sent the ambassador, not from those who host the ambassador. The focus on reconciliation, in the context of 2 Corinthians 5-6, is more about presenting

communities of faith acceptable to God than reaching out (which Paul argues convincingly elsewhere).

Dr. Vernon Boyd dug deeply into the history of the African-American churches, identifying some of the barriers to developing a closer relationship between the two predominant ethnic groups in the churches of Christ in the United States. The wall may never come down until we dig deeper into the history of both groups and allow our relationship in Christ to make us one.

Colby Hill then challenged us to dig deeper in understanding the hopelessness that destroys lives all around us, especially among the poor. We become people of hope by focusing on what God has done, by proactively working toward solutions, and by never giving up.

Research in Ministry

Three doctor of ministry research projects are digging deeper into factors that develop healthy churches. One preacher is digging into the tension every preacher faces between an enmeshed, emotional relationship with the church and maintaining his own individual identity. Another preacher is using a model for church health that will help him delegate more effectively and mentor new leaders. A third preacher is completing a two-year project of mentoring new leaders in the African-American church that he planted 16 years ago.

As with most archaeological digs, these projects may make only a quiet contribution to the cause of Christ rather than produce some flashy, newsworthy discovery. However, I have no doubt these projects will bless the preachers and the churches they serve. The task of digging deeper is an intentional commitment, a commitment that defines the Graduate School of Religion because we believe "the answer lies below." Our service to God demands more than a surface knowledge of the Word and ministry.

— Evertt W. Huffard (dean@hugsr.edu)

L.M. Graves Library *Gifts Received January 2002-December 2003*

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Lott Tucker addresses the crowd at the dinner honoring Jack and Annie May Lewis in February 1998.

Tucker continued from page 1

continued to do for 52 years. When Harding University assumed ownership of Memphis Harding Academy in 1957, Tucker was given the financial and administrative responsibilities. He served in this role until the academy incorporated as a separate school in 1978.

The Tuckers' hospitality was well known. Every Christmas, they hosted receptions for the faculty and staff. Since the Memphis staff was usually

unable to attend these, the Tuckers would drive to Memphis and take the Graduate School of Religion faculty and staff to lunch at the Summit Club, participating spiritedly in the gift exchange game after the meal.

The effects of one's life cannot be summarized in a few sentences. Lott Tucker Jr. influenced thousands through his humor, his kindness, his generosity and his commitment to Christian education.

In Honor of:

Robert Brewer
 Dr. Earl West
 Dr. & Mrs. Henry Farrar
 Dr. Evertt W. Huffard
 Clyde Lewis
 Mr. & Mrs. Lloyd Randolph
 Dr. Earl West
 Dr. Jack Lewis
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 Dr. Dave Bland
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 Stephen Broyles
 Rusty Campbell
 Joe Cannon
 J.C. Choate
 Ron Clark
 Dr. Eddie Cloer
 Cold Harbor Road Church of Christ
 Elizabeth Cox
 Mary Cunningham

Targeted Stewardship

by Larry Arick, director of advancement

On May 8 the Harding University Graduate School of Religion class of 2004 will receive diplomas. In tuition alone, it cost more than \$672,000 for the coursework these students completed. If the average scholarship was 50 percent, the total amount of scholarship awarded was more than \$336,000. Each student put his or her **heart**, **mind** and **strength** into completing these courses. We are very proud of them.

The gifts we receive to help train Kingdom leaders form the heart, mind and strength of the Graduate School's fiscal responsibility. Your gifts can be understood in light of these three categories.

The **heart** trains our students for the rigors of ministry. Your gifts for the general scholarship fund provide the scholarship assistance that our students receive.

The **mind** represents capital resources. We operate the largest theological library among the churches of Christ. With your generous gifts last year, we raised \$750,000 to expand it. This exciting improvement will soon be underway.

Strength sustains us for the long haul. As we constantly raise money for current needs, we are also building an endowment for the future. Which of these categories is most important? They are all essential to a balanced approach to giving.

We want you to feel a part of our work — preparing leaders for the church — regardless of the category of your giving. There are three levels of support for you to choose.

Friends Circle

Donors giving between \$120 and \$599 annually are in the Friends Circle. For as little as \$10 per month, you can be part of this group of Graduate School supporters.

Advancement Council

Those who give between \$600 and \$1,199 annually are on the Advancement Council. This level represents a commitment of \$50 to \$99 per month to the Graduate School.

Leadership Council

Donors who give \$1,200 or more annually are on the Leadership Council, a level that represents a higher financial commitment to the Graduate School.

We announced these new levels at our spring meeting of the Advancement Council on April 1. Afterwards, a student came to my office, saying that she had not known she could pledge just \$120 a year. After a minute's further thought, she said, "That is only \$10 per month. I think I can give \$15." She signed a pledge for five years.

Would you follow her example and make a pledge to Harding University Graduate School of Religion? To participate in equipping more servants of the Word, please call Larry Arick, (901) 432-7727, e-mail larick@harding.edu; or Mark Parker, (901) 761-1356, e-mail mparker@harding.edu.

Around & About *continued from page 2*

Matthew Dabbs and **Melissa Suggs** were married March 13 in Gainesville, Fla. Matthew is working toward the M.Div., and Melissa is working on a master's degree in counseling. They live in Memphis and work with the Millington Church of Christ.

Catherine Best and Michael Davis were married April 17 in Tuscaloosa, Ala. Catherine is a counseling student. The couple lives on campus.

John Kennedy and **Michael Heim** won the student paper competition of the Tennessee Association of Marriage and Family Therapists. John's paper explored "Depression in Marriage," while Michael discussed "The Fatherhood Enigma: Overcoming Barriers to Fathering." Both men are enrolled in the counseling program.