

# FORWARD

Alumni & Friends Publication of Williams Baptist College



## SPECIAL DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY EDITION



### WBC: The Dream at 75

#### WILLIAMS CELEBRATES ITS DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY

A college with a very proud heritage and an even brighter future.

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### Williams Launches New Honors Program With Coe Scholars

The title of Coe Honors Scholar is a tribute to the late Mr. and Mrs. Coe, whose gift helped endow the program.

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# WBC: THE DREAM AT 75

## Williams Celebrates its Diamond Anniversary

### DR. BRETT COOPER

Vice President for Institutional Advancement

Logically, it never should have worked. The country was still clawing its way back from the Great Depression. The region had seen one Baptist school after another close its doors. And yet a young pastor, all of 28 years old, had a dream.

“It is nothing less than miraculous that WBC will soon have existed for 75 years. A lot of people didn’t think it would last a year,” reflects Steve Williams (’65). His father, Dr. H.E. Williams, was that young pastor.

Indeed, the thriving college that now bears the Williams name celebrates its diamond anniversary in 2016. Its 75-year history is marked by remarkable progress, rooted in divine guidance and providence.

It was 1941 when H.E. Williams, pastor of First Baptist Church of Pocahontas, rallied supporters to begin a new work called Southern Baptist College. It all started in September of that year with 42 students enrolled.

“When the Lord spoke to him he was faithful to let the Holy Spirit guide him. When the Lord placed on his heart there was a need for a Christian college in northeast Arkansas and southeast Missouri, he did not let opposition stop him,” says Jim Williams (’61), also a son of the founder.

Looming large over Williams’ efforts were the failures of other Baptist schools in the region, including Maynard Academy, Woodland College, Mountain Home Baptist College and Jonesboro Baptist College.

“He felt led, despite the history of failure of such efforts, to try, yet again, and provide a distinctly Christian higher education opportunity in the region. He was fortunate to have the assistance and encouragement of alumni and supporters of the previous Baptist schools,” says Dr. Kenneth Startup, academic dean and historian of record at the college.

It was anything but easy. World War II would erupt by year’s end, draining both resources and prospective students. Donors had to give sacrificially just to keep the budding college afloat.

“Moreover, the early faculty worked for only the barest wages,” Startup notes. “And Dr. Williams and Mrs. Williams went so far as to turn their own home into a kind of dormitory. It was very

hard in the early years. I think *the key to the college’s survival is really summed up in two words: faith and sacrifice.*”

In spite of those challenges, Williams managed to recruit an impressive faculty from the start, launching a tradition of exceptionally qualified professors that continues to the present.

“Dr. and Mrs. Ben Lincoln, Charles Gwinup, Dr. J. I. Cossey, Dr. H.L. Waters, Dr. W.K. Wharton, Dr. S.W. Eubanks and Dr. J.T. Midkiff all taught in the early years. I’m sure they all could have made much more teaching elsewhere, but they had a desire to see WBC grow and prosper,” says Steve Williams.

The list of faculty luminaries at the college has continued to grow throughout its 75 years.

The first campus was the Pocahontas Community Center, which is now the site of Pocahontas High School. It remained SBC’s home until the night of Dec. 26, 1946, when an arson fire gutted the college’s main building.

Williams was already seeking to acquire part of the recently decommissioned Walnut Ridge Army Flying School, a few miles south of Pocahontas, and he had been granted use of a number of the former military structures.

Now, that old air base at Walnut Ridge would have to become home to a college, and quickly. Southern opened at its new campus less than two weeks later in January of 1947.

The college would eventually gain ownership of the property from the War Assets Administration, thanks in large part to support from US Senators William Fulbright and John McClellan, as well as Congressman Wilbur Mills. To this day, streets bearing the name Fulbright, McClellan and Mills are principle routes through campus.

Facilities were secured, but the battle to keep the college going financially seemed always to be uphill in the early years.

“It seemed like when I was young the college was always about a month from going out of business,” says Steve Williams. *“Dad was stubborn and single-minded when it came to the college. At times it was like he just willed the college to keep going.”*

SBC supporters provided vital funding through

gifts large and small. J.K. Southerland and Edward Maddox emerged as pivotal donors in the early years, and countless others also stepped up to fill financial needs along the way.

It all required huge amounts of time on the part of Williams, a price paid not only by him, but by his family.

“He spent most of his time working on behalf of the college. Southern Baptist College was his life. He was president, teacher, architect, construction superintendent, fund raiser, preacher, and did most of the college printing,” recalls Jim Williams.

Beatrice Williams, wife of the president, played a huge role in the college’s history, filling teaching and administrative duties, as well as tending to matters at home while her husband was away.

“She stayed in the background and did things to enhance his work,” Jim Williams says. “Mother never wanted the spotlight on herself. She was very humble.”

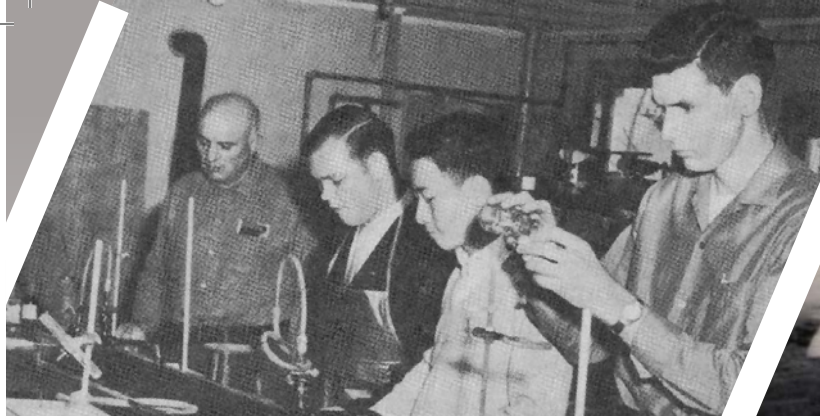
The college met its early challenges and enjoyed spurts of growth. The Korean War resulted in veterans seeking a college education through the GI Bill, and the Vietnam War also produced a boon in enrollment, largely due to draft deferments. Others came simply because of what the college had to offer.

“The college was small, the faculty was accessible, and I was challenged to think more broadly and deeply. The faculty cared about me as a student, but they also cared about me as an individual,” reflects Jerry Gibbens (’61), who returned to the college as a professor of English, a role he has filled now for 49 years.

In the early 1970s, the college faced critical transitions, most notably a change in leadership. Dr. Williams stepped aside in 1973, and the Board of Trustees named his son-in-law, Dr. Jack Nicholas, as the new president of Southern.

Nicholas had long been viewed by the board as a natural successor to Williams. A Southern graduate, he returned in the ‘60s as a psychology professor and had served as director of student affairs. Articulate, energetic and a devout Christian, he was ideally suited for the role.

He would inherit a mountain of challenges. Enrollment had literally dropped in half at the conclusion of the Vietnam War. The faculty



would have to be downsized, painfully, to match the student numbers. And new, public community colleges presented a grave threat of competition.

Martha Nicholas ('54), herself a longtime librarian at the college, earned the distinction of being the daughter of Southern's first president and wife of the second.

"Dr. Nicholas never applied for the job of president of SBC," she recalls. *"The challenges were so great at that time Jack only agreed to take the job after much prayer and deliberation, which resulted in being absolutely sure that this was what God wanted him to do."*

One of Nicholas' first moves was to name Dr. Jerol Swaim his academic dean. Together, the two set their sights on arguably the biggest transition in the college's history: four-year status.

"A key part of the leadership of Nicholas and Swaim was the recognition that the college needed to obtain full baccalaureate status," says Kenneth Startup. "This transition to full baccalaureate status transformed the college and really provided the foundation for the stability and strength of the college during recent decades. It was a vital transition."

It would take years to prepare SBC to transition from junior to senior college status. By the 1980s, though, leadership and faculty were ready to make the move.

"It was a very difficult challenge to get four-year status," Martha Nicholas says. "Dr. Nicholas was thorough in his preparation and diligent in presenting the need to become a four-year college. He also had some very good help from board members and others who supported the change."

The Arkansas Baptist State Convention, which owns and operates the college, rejected Southern's proposal for four-year status the first time it was presented. But, by the following year, the college rallied its supporters and won the crucial vote. In 1984, SBC became a four-year institution.

Along the way, Nicholas also led Southern to modernize its campus. New and attractive buildings began to replace the older structures, and the college began to look the part of an outstanding liberal arts institution.

In 1991, the college celebrated its 50th

anniversary with another big transition: its first and only name change. The generic "Southern" was replaced with the name of the founder, and Williams Baptist College was christened.

Nicholas also retired as president in 1991, after 18 years in the job, to be succeeded by the tenures of Dr. Jimmy Millikin ('56) and Dr. Gary Huckabay.

But WBC would truly come of age as a four-year, liberal arts college under the leadership of Dr. Jerol Swaim. Serving at WBC since 1964, Swaim had been history professor, academic dean and executive vice president. In 1995, he would add president to that list, a role he filled for 17 years.

"There were three major challenges facing the college when I became president: finances, enrollment and facilities," Swaim recalls. "A few months before I became president, the college had borrowed a half million dollars for operations. Also, the enrollment had dropped 25 percent, from 612 to 462."

Swaim saw the college through to unprecedented financial stability and numerous upgrades to its facilities. Iconic campus structures such as Manley Chapel and Swaim Administration Building (the name of the latter a surprise tribute by the Board of Trustees), as well as other notable projects, were completed during his tenure.

Swaim also conveyed a sort of institutional self-confidence to WBC. His love of Williams proved to be contagious, helping all associated with the college to appreciate it at a whole new level.

*"I think that it stemmed from the fact that the college had always had a very strong faculty and an outstanding student body," he says. "I simply could not imagine why anyone would not want to either work at or attend Williams."*

When Swaim retired in 2012, an old friend of WBC was named his successor. Dr. Tom Jones had served as vice president for institutional advancement at Williams for six years in the '90s, before leaving to fill the same role at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in California.

Jones became the sixth president of WBC, returning to find that some notable changes had taken place while he was away.

"Without a doubt, the most striking change was the transformation of the campus," Jones

says. "First-rate residence halls, a spacious and beautiful administration building, and an iconic chapel structure were surrounded by immaculate grounds and landscaping. The campus appearance really communicated the quality of the educational environment provided at Williams."

Jones has implemented vision strategies to help Williams set its sights on the next 75 years. He led a 15-member committee of faculty, staff and students in forming the Diamond Destiny Plan, outlining a number of goals that have since been met. A new committee is at work presently formulating the next phases of the vision strategy.

*"Williams is positioned to aggressively tackle the challenges and opportunities of the future in several areas,"* Jones says. "The support received from the Baptist churches of Arkansas through the Cooperative Program continues to strengthen our purpose as a Christ-centered institution."

"The increasing number of individual and corporate donors providing significant funds for scholarships, facilities and programs will provide an even higher standard of service to our students. And the exceptional level of Christian professionals who seek to join our stellar faculty and staff ensures a leadership quality equipped to handle the demands of a biblically based organization in an ever-changing industry."

Of course, for all the changes that have blessed Williams Baptist College over the past 75 years, the fact that much has remained the same is also worth celebrating.

"A Williams education continues to emphasize a Christian worldview. WBC still stresses that our graduates should be lifelong learners. Education at Williams takes place in the classroom, in the dormitory, the gymnasium and the cafeteria," says Jerry Gibbens.

Martha Nicholas notes, "It would be wonderful if my parents could see WBC today. I think they would be pleased to see that the college continues to advance in accomplishing its mission to provide a quality education in a Christian environment."

A sense of excitement permeates the Williams campus as it celebrates its 75th anniversary, indicative of a college that is mature, but not old. It is established, and yet agile. It is a college with a very proud heritage, and an even brighter future. ♣

# *Williams Launches* **NEW HONORS PROGRAM** *With Coe Scholars*

**W**illiams Baptist College will begin its new Honors Program this year and will select its first Coe Honors Scholars. Students selected for the prestigious program will participate in a wide array of academic opportunities and challenges.

The title of Coe Honors Scholar is a tribute to the late Henry and Verbeth Coe of Tuckerman, whose recent estate gift helped endow the program.

“The launch of the Williams Honors Program is intended to coincide with the college’s 75th Anniversary. We think it’s an ideal occasion to begin this major academic initiative, representing, as it does, the college’s profound commitment to academic excellence,” notes Dr. Kenneth Startup, who will serve as coordinator of the Honors Program.

According to Startup, the program is a logical move for WBC, due to what he describes as the college’s long-standing excellent and rigorous academic culture and decades-long tradition of academic honors activities and organizations.

“Currently, Williams is host to ten national and international academic honor organizations. Over the past decades, many of Williams’ best students have participated in these honor organizations. The new Honors Program is meant to enhance the larger academic culture at Williams by offering gifted, high-achieving students, in all disciplines, special, select opportunities for intellectual enrichment and recognition.”

The Honors Program will be open to students with a proven record of academic achievement. They will be invited, and expected, to participate in special field trips, symposia, lectures, and other academic enrichment activities.

On some occasions, the Coe Scholars will also serve as academic ambassadors for the college, helping to recruit high achieving students to attend Williams.

Henry and Verbeth Coe were longtime supporters of WBC who left an estate gift of \$1 million to the college for use in scholarships.

“The Coes were a quiet, unassuming couple who made a lasting impact on Williams Baptist College and its students,” said Dr. Brett Cooper, vice president for institutional advancement. “It is only fitting that their name be associated with the outstanding students who will take part in this program.”

Startup, who will complete his tenure as WBC’s vice president for academic affairs at the conclusion of the spring semester, will not be alone in leading the Honors Program.

“It has been a great privilege for me to work closely with a committee of senior faculty and administrators in developing the program. Fortunately, I will have the Honors Program Council, a group of senior faculty, to help with all of this,” says Startup.

“This process has been greatly assisted and encouraged by President Jones, the administrative cabinet, and by the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees. And, of course, we are indebted to the Coe family and other key donors for helping to fund the program. I am thrilled to select our first group of Coe Scholars and get the program underway.”

The first Coe Scholars will be named later this spring and the Williams Honors Program will formally launch in the fall 2016 semester. ▼▼



# CONSTRUCTION UNDERWAY ON BELLE HALL

Construction is underway on WBC's newest residence hall. Belle Hall, which will house 43 students, is expected to be completed later this year. A groundbreaking ceremony for the facility was held last fall.

"When school started last semester, we were at full capacity and utilizing overflow housing for our students. This new facility addresses this issue and allows WBC's resident student population to keep growing," said Williams President Dr. Tom Jones.

The new facility is made possible in part by a \$500,000 gift from the Jim Tom Butler family of Harrisburg. Butler is a member of the WBC Board of Trustees, and his family has supported the college for many decades.

The name for Belle Hall comes from his wife, Connie Belle Butler, and her family. The name Belle extends back several generations and has a rich history in her family, she said.

"Our family is honored to be a part of the ongoing progress at Williams Baptist College, and we are humbled that the

Lord has allowed us to be the vehicles of this blessing," Mrs. Butler said. "We are simply the messengers the Lord chose to deliver this gift to Williams, and we are thankful for that opportunity."

Jones said women will be housed in Belle Hall, while Nicholas Hall, which currently houses women, will become a men's residence hall next year.

"This arrangement addresses our most immediate need, which is residential space for our male students. Then, we will move female students into the new facility when it is completed later next school year," the president said.

The new facility is to be built just south of Nicholas Hall, which is located on Fulbright Ave.

Clark General Contractors of Walnut Ridge is constructing the facility, while Brackett-Krennerich & Associates Architects of Jonesboro designed the building. Total cost of the project is estimated at \$2 million. ♡

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*"Our family is honored to be a part of the ongoing progress at Williams Baptist College, and we are humbled that the Lord has allowed us to be the vehicles of this blessing."*

**-MRS. BUTLER**

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# WANDA PRINCE

## *A Life of Service*



“We’ll have to go sit in the other living room, this front one is where I’m working on sashes for the Greene County Spelling Bee.”

That is a greeting visitors are likely to hear when calling on one of Williams Baptist College’s earliest alums, Mrs. Wanda Prince (‘46). Only, instead of sashes, she could be working on any number of projects in which she regularly participates.

Prince graduated from WBC, then known as Southern Baptist College, in 1946. She was 18 years old, and the college had been established just five years prior.

“Dr. Williams was my pastor. That’s how I ended up at Southern,” recalls Prince.

“I told Dr. Williams I didn’t have the money to go to school, but he said not to worry about it and that he would get me a job. I grew up working in cotton, so I knew how to work. He got me a job with Mr. Floyd North, the college’s first dean, working in the print shop. We would print bulletins and things for the businesses in town. I worked my way through my time at Southern.”

Prince remembers attending a much different college than the Williams Baptist College of today. In fact, the locations are not even the same, as Prince was a student at WBC’s original campus, located in Pocahontas, Ark.

“We had one, three-story building in Pocahontas, much different than what I see when I visit campus today,” she notes.

After completing her studies at Williams, Prince spent the summer working on a military base and received an emergency teaching certificate due to the war. She eventually completed her bachelor’s in education from Central Missouri State University and earned her master’s in education from Arkansas State University.

Throughout her career, Prince spent time teaching at Walnut Ridge and Paragould school systems. While teaching, she traveled to India twice, once as a Fulbright Scholar in 1974, and again with the Department of Education in 1983.

“There’s quite the contrast between the culture I was used to and the culture in India. There are so many people there, and they are so, so poor,” says Prince. “I spent time working on research papers and writing textbooks. My concentration was on the green revolution, focusing on biogas and agriculture.”

Although she retired from teaching in 1988, she started teaching history at WBC’s extension site in Paragould for eight years.

And her life has yet to slow down.

Prince’s late husband of 34 years, Rev. Maurice Prince, suffered from Alzheimer’s Disease. She says the majority of her days were spent caring for him, so she decided she needed a hobby and took up writing short stories.

“I saw an ad for a correspondence course in short-story writing, and I sent off the paperwork. I did the whole course in just six months. That’s where my little book, “Back When” came from. It’s a collection of historical fiction stories, some based

off of my life or my family members’ lives,” says Prince.

There is seemingly no end to Prince’s list of hobbies and responsibilities. Between painting and woodworking, many of the decorations around her house are Wanda Prince originals, and she puts her talents to use in creating decorations for her church’s vacation Bible school.

She makes special holiday-themed cookies, hosts a dinner at her house every six weeks, has made 30 handmade quilts, some of which were sent to a Wounded Warriors Foundation, and has taken part in making 154 burial outfits for stillborn infants.

Currently, Prince serves as the chair of the Greene County Spelling Bee Committee, hence the making of sashes, is AWANA commander, manages children’s church, is the children’s committee chair, coordinates the bus ministry, and heads up the 70 years and older class at Paragould First Baptist Church, where she attends.

“A lot of the kids at church call me grandma. I get lots of hugs there,” notes Prince.

She also has 2 children, 7 step-children, 13 grandchildren, 32 great-grandchildren, and 2 great-great-grandchildren.

In her nearly 90 years of life, Wanda Prince has served God and others, and shows no signs of stopping. She acknowledges how thankful she is for the life she has led, as she smiles and says, “I’ve had a pretty good life for a cotton picker.”

# Williams to Receive Cliff Toney Estate Gift



Williams Baptist College has announced that alumnus Clifford Toney ('80) left the bulk of his estate to the college. Toney passed away at the age of 57 last August, following a lengthy illness. The gift is expected to be the largest in the school's history.

"We are honored to announce that Clifford's last act of stewardship benefited his beloved alma mater. Almost all of his seven-figure estate will help fund several key strategic projects that will allow WBC to offer an even higher level of service to its students," said WBC President Dr. Tom Jones.

Jones noted the estate is still being processed, and an exact value will not be known for several months.

Toney, a 1980 graduate of Williams, was a successful local businessman and was well known as an auctioneer around Jonesboro.

"Cliff Toney was a fascinating man with a quick wit, an outgoing personality and an abiding Christian faith. He is sorely missed by those of us who were privileged to know him, but we are delighted that his legacy will live through his generosity to WBC," said Dr. Brett Cooper, vice president for institutional advancement at Williams. ♡♡

## CELEBRATE WBC'S 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY WITH US!

Save the date for these events throughout 2016.

**SATURDAY, MAY 7, 2016**

**WBC Commencement Ceremony**

Southerland-Mabee Center  
10:00 A.M.

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 24, 2016**

**Convocation Chapel**

Manley Chapel  
11:00 A.M.

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2016**

**Homecoming/Parents Day**

The finale of the anniversary celebration, and you don't want to miss what we have planned!

Make sure you follow us on social media to stay updated on the 75th Anniversary. You will also see weekly trivia and throwback photos!

**f** Facebook: Williams Baptist College  
**t** Twitter: @williamsbaptist  
**i** Instagram: @williamsbaptistcollege

Use our hashtag **#WBC75** on social media to join in the celebration!



# DIAMOND DESTINY CAMPAIGN

*How you  
can make a  
difference*

**BRETT COOPER**

Vice President for Institutional Advancement

**A**s Williams Baptist College celebrates 75 years of making a difference in the lives of students, there is an opportunity for all of us to make a difference, too. It's called the Diamond Destiny Campaign.

The campaign is directly tied to WBC's strategic vision, the Diamond Destiny Plan, which outlines the goals and objectives that will position Williams to have the greatest impact in the years ahead. The Diamond Destiny Campaign, simply stated, is a means for Williams supporters to fuel that progress.

The campaign is divided into two phases, the Legacy Phase to raise scholarship dollars and the Vision Phase to fund much needed building projects.

The Legacy Phase of the campaign seeks to build giving toward WBC's Annual Scholarship Fund, our crucial yearly effort to help students get a high quality, Christian college education.

The Vision Phase of the campaign seeks to fund needed capital projects at Williams. Belle Hall, a beautiful new residence hall currently under construction, is one of those projects. Generous supporters have already committed part of the required funding, but more is needed.

Other pressing needs identified in the Diamond Destiny Plan include a new academic center, to provide the labs, classrooms and offices our college must have to continue moving forward. It is estimated such a facility will cost \$3 million.

Athletics is also an important element in the planned growth of Williams, and that means more facilities are now necessary. With 10 varsity sports and more on the way, WBC needs a new gymnasium, additional locker rooms, training facilities and offices. The cost of such a facility is expected to be \$6 million.

Notably, the early stages of the campaign have already netted the funds needed for the expansion and renovation of Mabee-Gwinup Cafeteria. This \$1 million project was completed, fully funded, in 2014!

Combining the Legacy and Vision Phases of the campaign, these overall goals have been established.

*Challenge Level: \$4 million  
Victory Level: \$7 million  
Celebration Level: \$10 million*

This raises the question, how can I help? There are several opportunities. We will have focused

efforts in local communities over the coming year, and we will ask our alumni to be involved in a special campaign this fall.

We have already asked our Board of Trustees to take part in the campaign. They responded with 100 percent participation and over \$600,000 committed!

Perhaps the quickest way to give is to go to our website at [www.williamsbaptistcollege.com/giving](http://www.williamsbaptistcollege.com/giving). Where the form asks for a designation, simply type Diamond Destiny Campaign.

You may also want to set up a monthly bank draft, or give in some other way. Contact me at [bcooper@wbcoll.edu](mailto:bcooper@wbcoll.edu) or Aaron Andrews at [aandrews@wbcoll.edu](mailto:aandrews@wbcoll.edu) with any questions you may have.

The future is very bright for Williams. Building on the success and stability the institution has enjoyed in its 75 years, WBC now joins with its many friends in helping establish the college for the years ahead, through the Diamond Destiny Campaign. ♡





# STARTUP RETURNING TO THE CLASSROOM

## BAINE TO BE ACADEMIC DEAN

For just the third time in 43 years, Williams Baptist College is about to have a new academic dean. Dr. Kenneth Startup has announced plans to step down as dean so he can return to the classroom, and Dr. Brad Baine ('00) has been tapped as his successor.

Startup will retire as dean and vice president for academic affairs at the end of this school year and return to teaching history full time, as well as directing WBC's new academic honors program.

"Dr. Startup has been a close friend, an advisor, and an effective administrator. His integrity is impeccable and his commitment to the Lord and the work of this institution cannot be matched by anyone," said Dr. Tom Jones, WBC's president.

Startup has been with WBC since he joined the history faculty in 1983. His expansive knowledge and passionate teaching style quickly made him a favorite with students. He ascended to the job of academic dean and VPAA in 1995.

He has served as dean for the past 21 years, succeeding Dr. Jerol Swaim, who filled the role for 22 years before becoming president.

Startup initially announced plans to retire and return to the classroom in 2012, but he eventually agreed to continue in his administrative role. Now, he says the time is right to make the transition back to teaching, which is his first love.

"It's been an honor to serve as VPAA at an institution with such a rich and vibrant academic culture. My 21 years in this position have passed by very quickly," Startup commented.

"I've certainly been privileged to work with outstanding faculty and administrative peers and a truly remarkable staff. The opportunity to return to the classroom and serve as coordinator of our new academic honors program really fills me with excitement and a sense of gratitude."

Williams is currently completing plans for an honors program for students who excel academically. In his new role, Startup will guide the launch of the honors program and oversee its implementation.

Baine will have the opportunity to head the academic program at his alma mater. He was a standout basketball player for the Eagles while he was a student at Williams, and his wife, Meredith ('98), was a WBC cheerleader.

Currently chair of the Williams Teacher Education Program at WBC, Baine has been appointed assistant vice president for academic affairs, a title he will hold until he becomes dean and VPAA in May. He will work with Startup in the meantime to learn more about the academic dean's office and how it functions.

Baine is a WBC graduate, and he also holds a master's degree from Arkansas State University and a Ph.D. from the University of Arkansas. A Greene County native, he has served on the Williams faculty since 2004, most recently as the LaDelle Moody Professor of Education and chair of the college's successful teacher education program.

"Dr. Baine has the academic credentials, the classroom experience, the community involvement, and the political experience needed to effectively accomplish the role of an academic dean. He is well-respected among higher education professionals within Arkansas and well-known among key civic and public officials in our state," said Jones.

Baine is a member of the Greene County Tech school board, and he is a deacon at West View Baptist Church in Paragould. The Baines have two sons. ♡♡

*"It's been an honor to serve as VPAA at an institution with such a rich and vibrant academic culture. My 21 years in this position have passed by very quickly."*

- DR. KENNETH STARTUP

LEFT: Dr. Kenneth Startup

RIGHT: Dr. Brad Baine



# AROUND CAMPUS

## HALFORD EARNS 500<sup>TH</sup> WIN

Carol Halford ('80) has been the head women's basketball coach at Williams Baptist College since 1984. In that time, the Malden, Mo., native has coached over 900 games. On January 28, 2016, the Lady Eagles defeated Hannibal-LaGrange University to earn her 500<sup>th</sup> career win. Halford, who won the NCCAA National Championship in 1993, ranks fifth in active coach win totals in the entire NAIA.

## JOY RING STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER DEDICATED

Williams cut the ribbon for its newest facility, named for the longest tenured professor in the history of the college, last semester. "Her peers can tell you that her commitment to her students and to Christian higher education is as strong as it ever was. She has made it her personal mission for the last half-century to see Williams students succeed, so it is only fitting that the Student Success Center bears her name," said James Miller of Melbourne, Ark., chair of WBC's Board of Trustees. The Joy Ring Student Success Center provides a range of tutoring and counseling services to help students have a successful college experience.

## WILLIAMS 51<sup>ST</sup> IN US NEWS RANKINGS

WBC has moved up in the latests rankings of *US News & World Report*. The magazine issued its annual college edition, and Williams is now ranked 51<sup>st</sup> among Southern colleges, which is eight spots higher than last year. The issue marks the sixth year in a row for the college to be listed in the magazine's "top tier" of colleges in the South. "The ranking represents a true affirmation of the quality education that Williams Baptist College provides its students," WBC President Dr. Tom Jones. "The fact that Williams continues to move upward in the rankings also indicates that our reputation continues to grow."

## ABF PRESENTS \$27,000 GIFT TO WILLIAMS

The Arkansas Baptist Foundation recently sold its Little Rock headquarters building and moved into the offices of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. The foundation decided to divide proceeds from the sale among institutions and agencies of the state convention, with WBC's share coming to just over \$27,000. ABF President Bobby Thomas presented the gift to Dr. Tom Jones, WBC's president, during a meeting of the Williams Board of Trustees in December.

## JONES NAMED LAWRENCE COUNTY MAN OF THE YEAR

Dr. Tom Jones has been named the 2015 Man of the Year by the Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce. Dina Rose, chair of the chamber's board of directors, noted that Jones has led Williams in forming its vision for the future, known as the Diamond Destiny Plan. He has been an active member in the chamber for several years and helped shape the Leadership Lawrence County program in the 1990s. WBC is a major economic entity in the county, bringing in hundreds of students and thousands of visitors each year.



**LARRY MOUNT ('69)** has retired as a principal editor for Thomson-Reuters and is a manager at Walmart. He has served on the city council of Round Lake Beach, IL, for 20 years. He and his wife, Sherry (Moore) Mount ('69), have been married for 47 years. They have two children, three grandchildren and one on the way.

**DANA KELLEY ('81)** has launched a new advertising and marketing firm known as The Solutions Group. The agency is headquartered in Jonesboro, Ark.

**DAVID HALLAM ('95)** and wife, Corina, live in Walker, Mo. They have been appointed to work with the International Mission Board in North Africa.

**ALIOU NIANG ('95)** has had an essay published in the winter 2015 edition of the Journal of Biblical Literature. He is assistant professor of New Testament at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. He is a member of the Commission on Baptist-Muslim Relations of the Baptist World Alliance, and a member of the Editorial Board of the International Voices in Biblical Studies-Society of Biblical Literature Peer-reviewed series.

**ROB WOMACK ('97)** is a large loss adjuster for Farmers Insurance. He and wife, Stacy, are expecting their seventh child in September. They live in Pocahontas, Ark., where Stacy is a full-time homemaker and homeschool educator, and Rob serves as a deacon at First Baptist Church.

**KIMBERLY (KNAPP) ENDSLEY ('98)** is a media specialist and an advanced placement U.S. history teacher at Hoxie High School. She earned a master's degree in educational theory and practice from Arkansas State University and a master's degree in library media science from University of Central Arkansas. She and husband, Herbert, live in Powhatan, Ark.

**STEVEN ('99) and KAREN (CHATMAN) MARLOW ('97)** live in Pocahontas, Ark. They have four children, Josiah, Ashlyn, Joel and Allyson. Karen has earned a master's degree in special education. She is an adjunct Spanish instructor at Black River Technical College and at WBC.

**LARISSA REED ('02)** is a licensed professional counselor. She lives in Winslow, Ark., and is working on an additional license in technology assisted counseling.

**AMBER CLINKINGBEARD ('03)** is the director of admissions at Ozarka College. She and son, Trey (4), live in Calico Rock, Ark.

She is also a senior director with Thirty-One Gifts.

**CHAD GRIGSBY ('03)** began working in April 2015 as a church planting strategist on the church planting team of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. He and wife, Jessica, will relocate to Northwest Arkansas to focus on starting churches in that region. Their son, Ezra, is three years old.

**JONATHAN MAGEE ('03)** and wife, Cindy, live in Natchez, Miss. He serves as associate pastor of worship and music at Parkway Baptist Church. They have three daughters, Abigail, Emily and Kathryn.

**JADE (MOUNT) SIMPSON ('04)** earned a master's degree in educational theories and practice from Arkansas State University. She has been teaching 2nd grade at Rector Elementary School for 12 years. She and husband, Casey, have one daughter, Hallie Claire, who will be one year of age on June 10, 2016.

**ANDREA (ASHCRAFT) GRACE ('05)** has been named the "Special Educator of the Year" by the Council for Exceptional Children. Andrea and husband, Jacob ('05), live in Paris, Ark.

**CHRIS MILLER ('06)** and wife, Adrienne, announce the birth of their child, Katherine Victoria Ann, on December 14, 2015. They live in Manila, Ark., where Chris is serving as associate pastor of children and missions at the First Baptist Church.

**AARON ('07) and CHELSEA ABBOTT ('12)** celebrated the birth of their second child, Benton Roy, on August 24, 2015. He joins big sister, Carobeth Rae (2), and they live in Springdale, Ark. Aaron is director of degree completion for student services at John Brown University and Chelsea is a 3rd grade teacher at Elmdale Elementary School.

**ANDREW DODD ('07)** is on active military duty in the U.S. Air Force. He and wife, Mandy (Cale) ('05), have two sons, Ethan (5) and Abram (2). They reside in Columbus, Miss.

**JAKE ROBINSON ('07)** is serving as family minister at First Baptist Church of Wooster. He and wife, Sarah, have a three-year-old son named Holt. They live in Conway, Ark.

**JAKE JOHNSON ('07)** served in the U.S. Marines Corps for six years. He was deployed to Afghanistan where he was a sergeant in the infantry. Currently he is employed by LawnAmerica as a route

manager. He and wife, Brittany, have three children and they live in Tulsa, Okla.

**AMANDA DOBBS ('08)** is student affairs coordinator at Black River Technical College's Paragould campus. She has completed the coursework for the Doctor in Educational Leadership degree at Arkansas State University and is working on completing her comprehensives and dissertation.

**ABBI SILER ('08)** has taken on the position of digital producer at Stone Ward Advertising Agency in Little Rock, Ark. She continues teaching as an adjunct instructor at Arkansas State University. Her husband, Jordan ('07), is the asset protection and accident prevention supervisor at Walmart.

**PAUL FISHER ('09)** and wife, Jenny, announce the birth of their son, Silas James, on November 10, 2015. Silas joins big brothers, Jude (6) and Malachi (2). They live in Burkburnett, Texas, where Paul serves as student minister at the First Baptist Church.

**AMANDA HENRY ('09)** is a kindergarten teacher at Walnut Ridge Elementary School. She and husband, Aqualah, have two daughters, Skyla (11), and Sydney (6).

**ROBERT COUNTS ('10)** was married to Amy Holt of Pocahontas on October 24, 2015. Robert is employed by USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service in Greene County.

**JENNIFER LONG ('10)** earned a master's degree in Christian education with an emphasis in social work from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in December 2015. She lives in Monticello, Ark., and is employed by the Arkansas Baptist Children's Home.

**ALIVIA (HACKWORTH) MCDANIEL ('11)** and husband, Jace, celebrated the birth of their first daughter, Paisley Mae, on December 20, 2015. They live in Jonesboro, Ark. Proud grandparents are WBC Athletic Director Jeff Rider ('85) and his wife, Kelly (Andrews) Rider ('92).

**PHILLIP ('12) and LAUREN (TAYLOR) PALMER ('11)** announce the birth of their son, James Myles, in October 2015. Phillip earned his doctorate of physical therapy from Southwest Baptist University in May 2015, and Lauren is working on a master's degree in counseling at John Brown University.

**CHARLES STOVER ('12)** and wife, Marisa, have moved to Hampton, Ark.

Charles serves as associate pastor and children's minister at the First Baptist Church. They have one daughter, Evelyn.

**CASEY TURNER ('12)** is employed as the operations coordinator at Girl Scouts Diamonds of Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas. She has earned a master's degree in public administration from Arkansas State University. She resides in North Little Rock.

**SHALICIA WILSON ('12)** is an English teacher at Hoxie High School. She earned a master's degree in secondary English from Arkansas State University and previously taught at Newport High School. She and daughter, Adelynn King (2), live in Walnut Ridge.

**TARAH (MARTIN) COOPER ('13)** and husband, Trevor, celebrated the birth of their first child, Elliot Weaver, on December 4, 2015. Trevor is pastor at Palestine Baptist Church and a para-professional at Greenwood High School. Tarah is a full-time homemaker.

**ASHLEY HARRIS ('14)** earned a Master of Science degree in biology from the University of Louisiana at Monroe in December 2015. She lives in Hampton, Ark.

**DUNIA (RODRIGUEZ) SCHWERI ('14)** earned a master's degree from Arkansas State University in 2015. She is a teacher at Hoxie Public Schools. She and husband, Matt ('13), have a one year-old son, David.

**HANNAH SCOTT ('14)** lives in Corning, Ark. She is a Kindergarten teacher at Corning Elementary School. She recently purchased her first home.

**KAM and CARLA ASHABRANNER (BOTH '15)** celebrated the birth of their son, Nolan Luke, on August 5, 2015. Kam became a physical education teacher at Hoxie High School. They reside in Jonesboro, Ark.

**BLAKE COFFMAN ('15) and COURTNEY WEATHERS ('15)** were married on November 21, 2015. They are both employed by the Lawrence County School District in Walnut Ridge, Ark. He is an elementary physical education teacher and she is an 8th grade literacy teacher.

**TYLER EMERY ('15) and ELIZABETH KESSLER ('15)** were married on December 12, 2015. They make their home in Walnut Ridge, where he is employed by Walmart. Elizabeth is employed at Olive Garden restaurant in Jonesboro.



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Southern Baptist Foundation  
State Farm Companies Foundation  
The Steel Yard, Inc.  
Union Pacific Corporation  
Windgate Charitable Foundation

#### GIFTS IN KIND

Mr. & Mrs. C.L. Clark  
Clark General Contractors  
Mr. & Mrs. J.R. Cox  
Dr. Summer-Lee DeProw  
Dr. & Mrs. Jeremy Dutschke  
Mr. & Mrs. Marvin Emmons  
Mr. Jim Hale  
Rev. & Mrs. Buddy Hinze  
Mr. & Mrs. Dale Leatherman  
Mr. Matt Pryor  
Mrs. Anna Smith  
Mr. Toby Spradlin  
West Side Baptist Church  
Greers Ferry, AR

## MEMORIALS

### MR. KEN AARON

Mr. Don Heuer

### MRS. GENE BEHANNON

Paul & Dora Meier

### MR. JOHN "J.B." BETHUREM

Mike & Rachel Fox

### MR. PAUL L. BONE

Mrs. Faye S. Bone

### MR. SHERMAN D. BRIDGMAN

Mrs. Dorothy O. Bridgman

### MS. JACKIE BURTON

Dr. Patricia Glascock

### MR. KYLE BYNUM

Mr. & Mrs. Kim Bridges

### CAERY FAMILY

Mrs. Willie Caery Whitney

### HENRY & VERBETH COE

Jerry & Barbara Gibbens

### MR. KENNY COY

Nancy Pettit & Family

### MRS. ETHELENE DAILEY

Dr. & Mrs. Ken Gore  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Norvell  
Mrs. Susan Watson

### MR. JIM DAVIDSON

Bob & Peggy McMillon

### MS. TERRI DAVIS

Mrs. Nancy Pettit

### MRS. ESSI DELISI

Mrs. Nancy Pettit

### MRS. ZADA DICKEY

Jerry & Barbara Gibbens  
Dr. & Mrs. Ken Gore  
Ms. Joy Ring

### MS. RUBY ELKINS

Mrs. Nancy Pettit

### MR. JACKIE EMERY ('64 Alum)

Mr. & Mrs. Cleo Massey

### MR. CODAY FOWLER

Mrs. Zoe Fowler

### ED & EFFIE GAINES

William & Laverne Gaines

### MR. CHARLES KEITH GEURIN

Rickey & Virginia Goff

### MRS. VICKI GRAVES

Jim & Pam Williams

### MR. DOUG HALFORD

Ms. Rebecca Bohannon  
Dr. Brett Cooper  
Mrs. Angela Flippo  
Jerry & Barbara Gibbens  
Dr. & Mrs. Ken Gore  
Noranda Aluminum, Inc.  
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### MRS. BILLIE HARTY

Jerry & Barbara Gibbens

### DR. DANIEL HARRISON

Ms. Joanna Ohnanik

### MRS. VIRGINIA HARRISON

Mr. Len Bradley  
Mr. William Claybrook  
Dr. Brett Cooper  
Dan & Denise Donnett  
Linda & Richard Jackson  
William & Connie Kauer  
M.B. Kirkham  
Ms. Ann Phelan Lee  
Dana Miniham  
Stacy & Colby Moorsberg  
Charles & Susan Rice  
Saints & Sinners Sunday School Class  
First Methodist Church, Manhattan, KS  
Ms. Kathryn Seltzer  
Serious Seekers & Searchers (SSS) Class  
First Baptist Church, Manhattan, KS

### MRS. DORTHA (Huddleston) HICKS ('56 Alum)

Mr. & Mrs. Glen Hicks

### MR. JACKIE HILBURN

Mrs. Margaret Hilburn

### MR. MARK HOBBS

Mrs. Carol Belford-Lewallen  
Dr. Brett Cooper  
Mrs. Angela Flippo  
Rickey & Virginia Goff  
Dr. & Mrs. Ken Gore  
Mrs. Susan Watson

### DR. EARL R. HUMBLE

Mr. Calvin Humble  
Mrs. Mable L. Humble

### MS. AMANDA KILCREASE

Mrs. Nancy Pettit

### MR. DOUG LATTIMER

Mrs. Nancy Pettit

### MR. TODD MCCORD

Mr. Jason Dixon

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Mrs. Doris F. Meyer

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### MR. BILLY SINGLETON

Larry & Marta Jones

### J.K. & CLEO SOUTHERLAND

Ms. Kay Southerland

### MRS. BERNIECE SEAL STEWART

Rev. Paul & Dr. Deborah Seal

### DR. KENNETH SULCER

Harold & Terry Roberts

### MR. CLIFFORD TONEY

Dr. Brett Cooper  
Fellowship of Christian Singles  
Lifegroup, Central Baptist Church,  
Jonesboro, AR  
Jerry & Barbara Gibbens  
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Mrs. Pamela S. Rusher  
William & Linda Wood

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Mrs. Brenda R. Vantrease

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Jerry & Barbara Gibbens  
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### MR. JAMES BART VOYLES

Rickey & Virginia Goff

### MS. BETTY HOLMES WESS

Mrs. Nancy Pettit

### MR. GENE WHEELS

Lloyd & Carol Belford-Lewallen  
Dr. Brett Cooper  
Dr. & Mrs. Kenneth Gore  
Mrs. Charlotte Wheelless

### MR. TOBY WHITE

Jim & Pam Williams

### JAMES & CORDELIA WILLIAMS

Mr. Dwight A. Williams

### DR. & MRS. H. E. WILLIAMS

Mr. & Mrs. Herby Branscum, Jr.  
Jesse & Mary Cotton  
Thomas & Jo Hinson  
Mr. & Mrs. Ken Masterson  
Jim & Pamela Williams

### MR. MIKE WILLIS

Johnny, Lynn, Brandon & Lindsay Burns  
Nancy Pettit, Laura & Kristin Arft

### MR. JERRY LEO WINTERS

Jerry & Barbara Gibbens

## HONORARIUMS

### BASKETBALL PLAYERS 1962-1964

Mr. Cleo Massey

### DR. BRETT COOPER

Lloyd & Carol Belford-Lewallen  
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Manley

### BOB & MARILYN GOODWIN

Larry & Marta Jones

### DR. & MRS. GARY GREGORY

Jerry & Barbara Gibbens

### DR. BOB & DOLORES MAGEE

Mrs. Mable L. Humble  
Paul & Heather McCarty  
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Weber

### DR. RODNEY REEVES

Ms. Barbara Kimble

### MS. JOY RING

Mrs. Mable L. Humble  
Dr. Larry Sloan

### DR. LARRY SLOAN

Dr. & Mrs. Justin Towner

### DR. KEN STARTUP

Dr. Duane & Evelyn Bolin

### MR. & MRS. KENT THOMPSON

Jerry & Barbara Gibbens

WBC THANKS  
ALL ITS  
SUPPORTERS  
WHO MADE  
GIFTS IN  
2015.



## FRIENDS WE'LL MISS

### CAROLYN (BENN) PATTERSON

('55) of Benton, Ark., passed away on September 10, 2015, at the age of 81. She was a teacher in the Benton public schools for 36 years and also taught Sunday School at Highland Heights Baptist Church most of her adult life. She was preceded in death by her husband, Jimmy Patterson. She is survived by her son, Phillip Patterson, and wife Kim, two grandsons, and three sisters.

### FRED HARRIS ELAM ('65)

of Little Rock, Ark., passed away at the age of 74, on July 1, 2015. He served in the United States Navy. He was gifted with a beautiful tenor voice and musical ability. He sang in several

quartets including the Southernares while in college and the Spokesmen quartet at his church in Mountain Home. He is survived by his wife of 41 years, Laveda Faye, son Jason Elam, step-daughters, Sherry Fenton and Lisa Smart, siblings and grandchildren.

### CHARLENA MIDKIFF

passed away on January 29, 2016, in Jonesboro, Ark. She was married to the late Dr. J.T. Midkiff, a WBC history faculty member and administrator who served from the 50s to the 70s. She was a retired public school teacher, member, Sunday school teacher and leader at Walnut Ridge First Baptist Church. She is survived by Paul ('70) and Sharon (Capps) Midkiff ('69), retired WBC art professor Dr. David Midkiff ('72)

and wife, current WBC English professor, Dr. Sheri (Pickett) Midkiff ('71), Stephen ('73) and Deborah Midkiff, Phillip ('83) and Diane Midkiff, Daniel and Ann Midkiff, and their families.

### REV. JIM ELLIS TILLMAN, SR.,

passed away on January 16, 2016, in North Little Rock, Ark., at the age of 83. He was vice president for development at WBC for over 13 years during the 1970s and 1980s. He faithfully served in churches in Texas and Arkansas, including serving as pastor of First Baptist Church in Walnut Ridge. In his latter years of ministry he was employed by Resource Services, Inc., and assisted churches of all denominations to raise money for

their capital improvement campaigns. He is survived by his wife of 41 1/2 years, Margaret Bailey-Tillman; children Jim Tillman, Jr., of Godfrey, Illinois, Cindy Parker of Melbourne, Arkansas, and Vickie Burton of Vancouver, Washington; four grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; and sister, Becky Scott of Vicksburg, Mississippi.

### GENE WHEELS

58, of Powhatan, Ark., passed away on November 12, 2015. He was the husband of Charlotte Wheelless ('94), current assistant professor of education at WBC. His adult children, Patrick Wheelless, Nick West, and Jessica Wheelless (13), three siblings and eight grandchildren survive him.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

# TO THE NEXT 75 YEARS

“Blessed with an enthusiastic campus community, generous alumni, friends and churches, and a solid financial position, we plan to continue that commitment for the next 75 years.”



**DR. H.E. WILLIAMS, THIS INSTITUTION'S FOUNDER, WAS A TIRELESS AND TENACIOUS MAN DRIVEN BY THE VISION TO ESTABLISH A BAPTIST COLLEGE TO SERVE THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF THIS REGION. HE HAD THE UNYIELDING BELIEF THAT A BAPTIST COLLEGE SHOULD BE ACCESSIBLE TO ANYONE REGARDLESS OF THEIR FINANCIAL POSITION. STILL RESOLUTE IN THAT CONVICTION, WILLIAMS NOW THRIVES AS AN ACADEMICALLY VIBRANT AND FINANCIALLY SOUND INSTITUTION THAT FOCUSES ON THE LIBERAL ARTS, STANDS ON THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE, AND IS COMMITTED TO THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST.**

In this issue of the *Forward*, you will read of people, projects, and events important to our college's vision and success. You will read about that first campus in Pocahontas and the plans we have for celebrating our 75th anniversary this year. You will read about current students, as well as a cherished alumnus who blessed his beloved alma mater following his untimely death. And, you will read the names of our faithful supporters in 2015 who helped us continue our vision of producing exceptional graduates prepared to competently engage local global cultures through a Christ-centered worldview.

For 75 years, Williams Baptist College has remained committed to providing an affordable Christian college education to the young people

of our state. Blessed with an enthusiastic campus community, generous alumni, friends and churches, and a solid financial position, we plan to continue that commitment for the next 75 years. Please pray with us as we seek to continue the College's legacy of honoring the Lord through those efforts. ♡

*During this 75th year of celebrating WBC milestones and blessings, post your personal memories to [75thmemories@wbcoll.edu](mailto:75thmemories@wbcoll.edu), our Facebook page, or Twitter account. Go to [williamsbaptistcollege.com](http://williamsbaptistcollege.com) for anniversary event schedules and information.*

**Tom Jones**  
PRESIDENT

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Mailmaster



# FORWARD

## GOLF TOURNAMENT

May 20, 2016

Sage Meadows Country Club

4406 Clubhouse Drive  
Jonesboro, AR 72401

Proceeds from the golf tournament will benefit the WBC Athletic Department

For more information contact the Office of Institutional Advancement at WBC at [870-759-4108](tel:870-759-4108) or Aaron Andrews at [aandrews@wbcoll.edu](mailto:aandrews@wbcoll.edu)

**COST**

\$400 per team

**FORMAT**

4 Person Scramble

**REGISTRATION FEE COVERS COST OF**

Green Fees	Practice Green
18 hole play	Golf Cart
Driving Range	Lunch

**FEATURES**

Team prizes  
Assorted Hole in One Prizes  
Closest to the pin  
Longest Drive  
Mulligans \$10, Limit 2

PHOTOS FROM *Williams Singers Reunion at Homecoming 2015*



Williams Baptist College  
56 McClellan Dr.  
Walnut Ridge, AR 72476