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ASBURY

Greater Things

THANKS TO PRESIDENT SANDRA C. GRAY'S **LEGACY OF VISIONARY LEADERSHIP**, ASBURY UNIVERSITY IS LOOKING FORWARD TO EVEN GREATER IMPACT FOR CHRIST. (PAGES 2-15)

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Giving Thanks

From the classroom to the provost's office to the presidency, Dr. Sandra C. Gray has modeled academic excellence. Through deep faith, profound prayer and sincere humility, she has been a spiritual leader on campus. And as a trusted advisor, community leader and advocate for Christian higher education, she has left a legacy in her community and state, across the U.S. and around the world. **As Dr. Gray retires from the presidency this summer to enter a new season in her life, it's with hearts full of gratitude that we utilize the first half of this "Ambassador" to offer thanks for all God has accomplished during her season of service at Asbury University.**

Greater Things

THE CONTINUING LEGACY OF DR. SANDRA C. GRAY

THANKS TO PRESIDENT SANDRA C. GRAY'S LEGACY OF VISIONARY LEADERSHIP, ASBURY UNIVERSITY IS LOOKING FORWARD TO EVEN GREATER IMPACT FOR CHRIST.

During her early career as a bank executive, Sandra C. Gray was on her way out the door, headed to work, when God changed her life. She felt a strong impulse to kneel and to surrender her life's work to God's will. She did so immediately, and felt God calling her to a new career as a college professor.

This story is detailed in the book "A Purpose Rare: 125 Years of Asbury University" and is remarkable not merely because Gray heard God's call, but because she has faithfully followed that call ever since. The first woman to serve as president of Asbury, Gray (who is retiring this summer) has modeled faithful, Spirit-filled leadership in academics, spiritual life, partnerships and long-term vision for Asbury's future.

Gray began teaching at Asbury as a Business professor in 1989. She served in this capacity for 17 years, additionally serving as provost during the interim presidency of Dr. William Crothers. When the presidential search committee invited Gray to become a candidate for the presidency of Asbury, she turned to prayer for guidance. The Lord spoke to Gray through Scripture in John 15:16, which reads, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit — fruit that will last." On the committee's first vote, Gray was elected unanimously by secret ballot.

From professorship to her presidential inauguration in 2007, Gray's years at Asbury have been marked by God's clear leading. During 2018, she heard the call yet again — this time, direction from God that it was time for her tenure to draw to a close.

"Twelve years ago, when I was appointed president, I knew with certainty it was the call of the Lord," Gray told the campus community during Chapel last August. "As I have lived into this call under the leading and direction of the Holy Spirit, I have also known with a certainty that He would reveal when it is time to step away. His Word teaches, 'To everything there is a season.' The honor and privilege of serving as president of Asbury University during this season is beyond my inadequate words."

Following Gray's announcement, the depth of respect for her 12 years of leadership — not only across campus, but throughout the U.S. and around the world — has become even more apparent. One of the greatest tributes to Gray's leadership is the depth of confidence placed in her academic, spiritual and strategic vision. Gray's presidency has been a season of tremendous growth and development for Asbury University — and thanks to her faithful leadership, we anticipate even greater things to come.

Academic Vision

During Gray's tenure, Asbury has deepened its commitment to academic rigor. One of the most visible developments has been a change in name and organization — Asbury College became Asbury University in 2010. In part, the change reflected a desire for more accurate terminology. In many international contexts, "college" refers to the equivalent of high school and

"It wasn't the day that we changed our name that made us a university. It's been Dr. Gray's guidance and leadership that have helped us live into being a university."

"university" describes a post-secondary institution. Becoming Asbury University brought terminology in line with what Asbury had already been for some time — a rigorous institution of higher learning with a global reach.

Before the transition to University, Asbury had also begun implementing a new academic structure, organizing departments into "colleges" or "schools". Today, Asbury University is made up of five such units: the College of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences, the School of Communication Arts, the Howard and Beverly Dayton School of Business, the School of Education and the School of Science, Health & Mathematics.

"She was the impetus behind it and it wouldn't have happened without her," said Dr. Bonnie Banker, a longtime Asbury employee who originally hired Gray while serving as provost. "I can also say that it's been under her leadership that the concept has evolved. It wasn't the day that we changed our name that made us a university. It's been Dr. Gray's guidance and leadership that have helped us live into being a university."

Gray has also been intentional to walk alongside other campus leaders to bring up new academic programs, building strong teams that can work independently and efficiently, constantly imagining what challenges the next five, 10, 15 or 30 years will bring and how Asbury can even better fulfill its mission in years to come.



Dr. Gray with former Asbury presidents on inauguration day in 2007.



Asbury College becomes Asbury University in 2010.

The Emerging Leader-Scholar Program

Enriching campus diversity is yet another way Gray has modeled a commitment to academic excellence. Recruiting and supporting ethnic minority students not only helps Asbury better reflect the Kingdom of God, it also broadens the academic experience, as students learn from one another's diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Gray championed the creation of Asbury's Emerging Leader-Scholar Program, which has become a catalyst for rich personal growth for U.S. ethnic minority students. The program began as a collaborative idea between the Office of Intercultural Affairs and the Admissions Office, and was implemented in 2011 thanks to Gray. She played an integral role in finding a donor to help with the initial funding of the program, making an Asbury education even more affordable for a diverse student body.

"It has allowed us to have additional scholarship opportunities for our U.S. ethnic minority students, which is incredible," said Rev. Esther Jadhav, assistant vice president for Intercultural Affairs. "It adds to our community in that way. It has also benefited the students because it is a program focusing on leadership development."

Selected students are awarded a \$5,000 scholarship each academic year and hone their leadership skills through mentorship opportunities, workshops, events and serving in a leadership role on campus.

Tinson Lam '19

"If it wasn't for Emerging Leaders, I would never have put myself out there to seek out opportunities of leadership," said Tinson Lam '19, a Music Education major and Emerging Leaders scholarship recipient. "Whoever gets this opportunity should definitely take advantage of it."



The \$12.6-million Miller Center for Communication Arts opened in 2011 and is just one of several facility projects in the past decade.



During Dr. Gray's tenure, Asbury has implemented several new academic structures including the naming and opening of the Howard and Beverly Dayton School of Business in 2014.

"A great example of how she plans for the future is the Collaborative Learning Center," Banker said, speaking of the proposed building to house the Math, Science and Business programs. "She never stops envisioning 10 years ahead in terms of development... how we're going to use new facilities and the space created in existing facilities."

In 2014, Asbury introduced the Howard and Beverly Dayton School of Business, named in honor of longtime friends of the University. Gray was instrumental in the creation of the school. As a former Business professor, the project was close to her heart from the beginning, and she lent wisdom in the process of envisioning a new kind of business school.

"We began to think differently. People in business need to look at their vocation as a calling to ministry," said Dr. Mike Kane, dean of the Dayton School of Business. "She really got behind that theme, but she saw more than that. She saw it as a catalyst for a lot of other professional programs on campus. Even in this university model, where you typically think of different colleges and schools, the 'glue' Dr. Gray is bringing is the idea behind the Collaborative Learning Center — how that building and the programs in that building will actually unite us in a more collaborative role."

Gray envisioned the transition to University as a strategic decision that would better reflect "who we are in this century" — and increasingly, a major component of that vision has been online education and graduate programs.

Online education has become a staple for many colleges and universities — in the U.S., more than 6.2-million students enrolled in a distance-education course during the Fall 2016 semester. Online programs are likewise creating new avenues at Asbury, including degree-completion courses, online bachelor's degrees and multiple online graduate programs in Communication, Business and Education.

Unlike many institutions, which often create "virtual campuses" separate from their residential processes and policies, Asbury has not pursued the bottom line of new revenue at the expense of institutional identity. Instead, Asbury has insisted that every online class must be integrated in the spiritual and community life of campus. Asbury's careful embrace of new technology is due, in large part, to Gray's leadership.

"From the very beginning, Dr. Gray has been committed to the principle of one unified Asbury University with one common mission," said Dr. Josh Fee, dean of Adult & Online Learning. "I tell every student, 'When you come to Asbury, you may be taking your program online, but you're not an online student. You're an Asbury student.' That has set us up well to avoid any drift away from our mission and

"Dr. Gray provided great support and leadership in navigating how we [offer different formats of education] while still holding onto our historical commitment. She has helped us think about who we need to become without losing sight of who we are."

to ensure we pursue academic excellence and spiritual vitality regardless of the delivery method."

Fee credits Gray with spearheading the Institution's movement into offering different formats of education to populations Asbury had not previously served, including adult students seeking degree completion and graduate students. As technology develops and academic programs transform to keep pace with changing needs, however, Asbury moves forward from a position of strength. As we look to the future — and even greater impact to come — we are grateful for a president who has been committed both to our heritage and to our future.

"Dr. Gray provided great support and leadership in navigating how we do that in new ways while still holding onto our historical commitment," Fee said. "She has helped us think about who we need to become without losing sight of who we are."

THE CONTINUING LEGACY OF DR. SANDRA C. GRAY

Spiritual Mentorship

As someone profoundly shaped by mentorship herself, Gray has invested time, prayer and love in many students' lives. Below are just three perspectives on the impact of her mentorship.



"Dr. Gray is my Spiritual Mom, mentor and friend. Her friendship/mentorship made a life-long difference as well as an eternal impact on my life. I was the first Christian in my family... the value of my new-found faith was in conflict a lot of times with the value I was brought up in... both family and culture. God used Dr. Gray's life to influence me in a powerful way. I looked up to her as an example of a Godly woman in and out of the classroom. Dr. Gray loves Jesus wholeheartedly; she loves Asbury; she loves people. That love has grown deeper in increasing measures through the years. Those who have known her and been touched by her are blessed beyond measure."

— Mei Lan Ou '94Thallman
Young Adult Staff, Grace Covenant Church (Pa.)



"I first met Dr. Gray while in high school during my college visit. Starting my freshman year, Dr. Gray and I would meet about once a semester for coffee. I had the privilege of learning more of her story — the great trials and triumphs — the following four years. Listening to her speak is like drinking from a fire hydrant of wisdom. It always amazed me that even amidst all that was going on in her world, she made time to be intentional and fully present. She became not only someone I admired from afar but also a dear friend. She is full of strength and power, yet leads with such grace and humility."

— Kayleen Bengtson '16
Mortgage Loan Officer, Bank of America (Texas)



"My relationship with Dr. Gray has been and continues to be one that has deeply impacted me and shaped the ways in which I have learned how to be a better leader and how to deepen my walk with God and my prayer life. Her mentorship has impacted my life immensely. She has modeled devotion to a life of prayer which had encouraged me to be more intentional with prayer and to live a life of praying without ceasing."

— Victoria McClary '17
Youth Ministry Leader, Wilmore United Methodist Church (Ky.)

Spiritual Leadership

When students, faculty, staff and alumni describe Gray's leadership, several descriptors often come to the fore: "Godly; Spiritual; Prayerful."

Consistent with Asbury's heritage, Gray's presidency has been marked by authenticity, profound commitment to prayer, rootedness in Scripture and firm commitment to the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition. Strong faith is crucial to Asbury's self-understanding as a Christian liberal arts institution, and Gray's example points the way for continued impact in the future.

"I love hearing stories about Dr. Gray's selection, and what I hear about most often is this quick affirmation that campus came together because of the authenticity of her faith," said Rev. Greg Haseloff, campus chaplain at Asbury. "There was this universal perception of her being a Godly leader. Her vision, business acumen and her navigation of relationships on campus all flowed out of her life of prayer and her very vital relationship with Jesus."



"What I hear about most often is the quick affirmation that campus came together because of the authenticity of [Dr. Gray's] faith."

Paradoxical though it may seem, Gray's personal faith has played a significant role in Asbury's public identity. For many, current students included, Gray is the face of Asbury. The authenticity of her faith is not only an inspiration, it has been critically important for some students.

"Genuineness is a mark of her faith, and that is something that's crucial for students," Haseloff said. "Her tenure has coincided with a defining time in our culture. Our culture increasingly distrusts institutions and authority, but Dr. Gray's leadership at Asbury has brought a level of trust in who she is and in God's guidance of Asbury in such a way that it has filtered down to students' trust of God's work in their own lives."

Gray's deep prayer life has been central to her presidency, as well. Many faculty and staff attest to her prayerful decision making and her desire to seek God's will.

"As a result of her faith, it's not been about her; it's been about the Institution," Banker said. "It's not been about her success; it's been about the Institution's success. The more she can deflect focus from herself, the better she prefers it, because she's all about God working through Asbury University to make it what He wants it to be."

Scripture has likewise been a marker of Gray's spiritual leadership. Her Chapel messages, bookending each semester, are always rich with Biblical wisdom. Her speech naturally turns to the words of the Bible and she regularly challenges campus to be more rooted in God's word.

"There's no doubt that Scripture has carried a high place in her own journey and in her leadership on campus," Haseloff said. "She has been, as John Wesley might say, a 'woman of one book.'"

As culture continues to shift dramatically, Gray has challenged campus to prepare "a ready people for a waiting world" — both pursuing needed change in order to faithfully fulfill Asbury's mission and holding fast to the history and heritage that make Asbury unique.



"Dr. Gray's leadership at Asbury has brought a level of trust in who she is and in God's guidance of Asbury in such a way that it has filtered down to students' trust of God's work in their own lives."

"There can be a tension between the cultural relevance that we have as a place of Christian liberal arts education and the orthodoxy and the heritage that are so important to us," Haseloff said. "She has held that tension very well. She listens well and has connected the depth of our Wesleyan-Holiness tradition to where our culture is and to the issues going on in the lives of our students, giving vision to our decisions."

Looking to the future, it's clear that Gray's whole-hearted faith has strengthened campus. Continuing a long tradition — and providing just one of many examples — she models the authenticity, deep prayer life, commitment to Scripture and sincere desire for God's will that will sustain Asbury for generations to come.

To read these testimonials in full — and to submit your own — visit asbury.edu/GreaterThings

THE CONTINUING LEGACY OF DR. SANDRA C. GRAY
Partnerships & Advocacy

Gray has continually been a champion for Asbury University — and for Christian higher education. Below is just a sample of friends of the University who asked to share some thoughts.

Dr. Dan Schafer, President, World Gospel Mission: It would be difficult to overstate Dr. Gray's leadership giftedness. The danger is far greater that it might be understated. Sandra's leadership on the board of World Gospel Mission over the past decade plus has made WGM a better organization — much better. She will be greatly missed!

Harold B. Smith, President and CEO, Christianity Today: I can't say enough about all Dr. Gray has meant to Christianity Today, CT's Board of Directors (of which she's been a part since 2010) and to me personally. Thank you, Sandy, for modeling for me what it means to lead in the name of our Risen King! And for always being ready to direct our ministry gaze upward.

Congressman Brett Guthrie, U.S. Representative, Kentucky's 2nd District: When I was named chairman of the Higher Education Subcommittee last Congress, one of the first people I turned to was Dr. Gray for her invaluable perspective on Christian higher education. She is extremely dedicated to the students and to the mission of Asbury University, and the school has thrived under her leadership.

Stan Gaede, President, Christian College Consortium: Integrity "is" Sandy. It's how she lives her life, whether in the pulpit or the pew; whether on stage or behind the scenes; whether with friends, fans or family. She doesn't morph to master the moment. She lives the life to which the Lord has called her. Now. Always. Thanks be to God.

Gary Cox, President, Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges and Universities: President Gray's rock-solid support and low-key leadership style has been most valuable to me and AIKCU. When she speaks, her colleagues listen!

Stan Key, President, Francis Asbury Society: I know of no better way to talk about the leadership impact of Sandy Gray than to underscore the far-reaching influence of her humility. Whether manifest in her open countenance, her accessibility, her transparency, her bold stand on moral issues, her obvious love for members of the community, or the way she prayed with students at the altar in Hughes Auditorium, the aroma of her humble spirit is perhaps the defining legacy of her leadership style.

Harold Rainwater '69, Mayor, Wilmore, Ky.: Dr. Gray has always respected and valued the town of Wilmore and its employees and leadership. From hosting dinners to helping fund community projects and needs, she has been willingly involved.

Shirley V. Hoogstra, J.D., Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (President): Sandra Gray's commitment to the global work of Christian higher education, her interest and engagement in the advocacy work of the CCCU, her collegiality with her peers from other CCCU institutions, and her conviction of the value of a faith-integrated education experience have served as a great example for the CCCU.

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Institutional Growth and Development

Gray and her leadership team have helped place Asbury on a firm footing for the future, not only in academics and spiritual life, but also in institutional health. During her tenure, Asbury has made significant strides in enrollment, facilities construction/renovation, fundraising and increased partnerships with like-minded organizations: all essential for healthy and sustainable growth.

Last year, Asbury celebrated its highest-ever enrollment, with a total of 1,965 students enrolled (including undergraduate, graduate and degree completion). Campus diversity has increased dramatically and international and minority students now account for nearly 20 percent of the student body. A number of new facilities have been opened, renovated or constructed during Gray's tenure, including the Student Center, Miller Center for Communication Arts, Kirkland Complex, Jameson Recital Hall, Bowdoin Athletic Facility, Windsor Manor and Joe Pitts Center for Public Policy.

Many of the above facilities were renovated or built through another keystone of Gray's institutional legacy, "Ignited: The Campaign for Asbury University." The most comprehensive capital campaign in Asbury's history, Ignited seeks to raise an ambitious \$62 million, funding scholarships, faculty development, facilities and more. Publicly launched in 2016, Ignited has already surpassed the original \$62-million mark. More work remains because specific initiatives, including the Collaborative Learning Center, are not yet fully funded. However, the enthusiastic outpouring of generosity from alumni is a vote of confidence in Asbury's mission as envisioned by Gray.

"Dr. Gray has one of the most important roles — if not the most important role — in the Ignited campaign," said Dr. Mark Troyer, vice president for Institutional Advancement & Strategic Partnerships. "She's laid out the vision of Asbury University and communicated that to alumni and donors."

Throughout the course of the campaign, Gray has spoken at many regional events across the U.S., taking advantage of hundreds of opportunities to explain the goals of Ignited, from academics to scholarships to facilities to the long-term health of the university. She



From national and international partnerships (at the opening of Asbury's Joe Pitts Center for Public Policy above and in South Korea, left) to academic think tanks and alumni gatherings, advocating for Asbury University and Christian higher education has been at the forefront of Dr. Gray's presidency.

has played a pivotal role in the University's efforts to secure grants from grant-making foundations by providing an example of organizational stability. Perhaps most importantly, she has clearly, consistently and gracefully articulated Asbury's vision and mission.

"There is an authenticity and a grace to Dr. Gray," Troyer said. "People who are with her feel like they're the most important person in the room when she's talking to them. And her strong desire to see success doesn't come from a desire for herself, but for the Institution and what God has called it to be. Her understanding is that none of this happens without prayer; without God's presence and blessing. That's unique, and it helps people trust her and trust the University."

Looking to the future, Gray's efforts for institutional growth point the way for continued impact. The next president of Asbury University — whoever he or she may be — will take leadership of an organization that is academically rigorous, spiritually vital, mission-focused and invigorated by strong enrollment and a successful capital campaign of historic proportions.

Gray's humility, often remarked on by those who know her, makes it difficult for her to accept praise for the strong foundation built during her tenure at Asbury. It's certainly true, as she points out, that Asbury's successes are due to the blessing of God and the continued efforts of many others — faculty, staff, alumni, students, parents, donors

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and friends. No single person can take credit, and in true Asbury style, no one tries.

The fact remains, however, that presidencies are significant, often epochal, markers in the life of a university. It is a fitting tribute to the institution she serves that Dr. Sandra C. Gray's transition is a time of celebration, gratitude and joy. The "Gray epoch" has certainly been a time of rich blessing.

During this final semester of Gray's presidency, we have a unique privilege to reflect — to look back with gratitude, and to look forward with eagerness to new blessings and opportunities under the leadership of a new president. Thanks to Gray's legacy of leadership — vision, humility, courage and faith — we boldly anticipate even greater things to come for Asbury University.

"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." (Jude 1:24-25) ■



A Fireside Chat with Dr. Gray

Young alumna **Alexa Goins '16** and current students **Benjamin Campbell '19** and **Sophie Saint-Firmin '20** met with President **Dr. Sandra C. Gray** at Asbury's Windsor Manor Guest House.

Q: I'm sure you know that you're an icon amongst the student body. There are stickers of you and you have quite a large fanbase. What do the relationships you built with students mean to you?

A: I'm sorry to correct you, but no, I'm not an icon (laughs). And I didn't know there were stickers. I have seen a few t-shirts, but I just really am passionate about our students and the energy, joy, hope

and potential that is within you in making a difference in the world. I'm excited with what God is doing in the story that He's writing through your lives.

Q: What will you miss the most about your time at Asbury?

A: That's very difficult because I would say everything. I love the opportunity to work together with a team. I have great

colleagues, faculty, staff, students, administration and board. I love the interaction we have together in trying to build God's work and His Kingdom through Asbury. I love the extended relationships we have with our alumni, friends and constituents in Wilmore and literally around the world. I'll miss all of it.

Q: We know there are many, but what's one of your favorite memories as president?

A: There are some memories that have just kind of lodged in my soul. Certainly, occasions in Hughes Auditorium with students gathering around the altar. The community that we experience in Hughes is very sacred and I hold that very humbly. But I also just love the other memories I have with students, whether it's cheering on the basketball team or going on retreat with students. Also, having special guests on campus. We have had guests from all over the world. It's pretty amazing the way this little oasis in Wilmore, Kentucky, impacts the world.

I also have memories of encountering people unexpectedly in other countries. In Honduras, I saw a grounds worker that had on an Asbury t-shirt. I stopped him with my limited Spanish. He didn't know what Asbury was, but somehow someone had passed along an Asbury t-shirt to him. I think the memories are those that are bigger than life. When it's really bigger than students. It's bigger than I am. It's bigger than Asbury. It's the eternal message and memory — those are the ones that have lodged in my spirit. We get to do this through Asbury, but it's really the building of an eternal Kingdom.

Q: Your career at Asbury University has been one of remarkable faith, not only in God but in standing by the Institution through so many different seasons. What faith lessons did you learn while leading our community?

A: I have learned to trust God for those things that I do not yet see. In my human spirit, I would say, 'OK God, show me

"In my human spirit, I would say, 'OK God, show me and I will trust You.' And He says, 'No, trust Me and then I'll show you.' I think that's been one of my greatest lessons — to trust Him in the unknown."

and I will trust You.' And He says, 'No, trust Me and then I'll show you.' I think that's been one of my greatest lessons — to trust Him in the unknown. That's even Scriptural where He talks to us about the unseen and says that the unseen is greater than the seen. For us sitting here humanly, it's hard to say that because we want to see. It's first trusting and then giving Him room to show me. There are many Biblical stories that follow that. The Israelites had to stick their toes in the water before the Red Sea parted. It didn't part and then God said, 'OK, come on through.' They had to step in and that's really a story of symbolism. I have to trust Him first and then He will show me.

Q: Who most influenced you in your time at Asbury?

A: When I first came into the role, I appointed a prayer cabinet of some folks that I knew would be prayer warriors. They have carried me many times I'm sure. That really deeply influenced me because I knew that when I might become weak, there would be people standing with me. Our past presidents, I'm glad to have been friends with them. They have all had great words of wisdom. My husband, Ken, who is as solid as the rock of Gibraltar. He has a little more freedom to speak into my life and to say at times, 'You need to slow down a bit.' Ken has been the most influential because he's been able





“I want to leave the message that our mission is very worthy. We have a very strong mission in preparing and equipping students to lead in their family, society and the world. I want us to continue doing that.”

to have the hard conversations with me maybe other people wouldn't have, to speak truth and wisdom into my life with love.

Q: *When you look back on your time here, what's the ultimate legacy you want to leave?*

A: I've thought about that one and it's hard. I want to leave the message that our mission is very worthy. We have a very strong mission in preparing and equipping students to lead in their family, society and the world. I want us to continue doing that. I want you

students to graduate and have great jobs, but I care about who you are in your family. I care about who you are in the community and the church. I want you very much engaged in the church. I know that in today's generation, many young people are leaving the church. Worship in community is very important, but also, impacting the world. I hope that you see the world as Jesus does. Although we live in narrow compartments, you can think largely and your heart can be large. I want you to see yourself as a citizen of the world and to engage the world outside of your own comfort zone.

Q: *What's next for you? What hobbies or projects will you be working on after leaving Asbury?*

A: June 30th is my official last day. July 1st is my official next season. I don't know what that next season is. The Lord and I have made a covenant together. He said, 'I want you to finish strong and to finish well for Asbury this semester and July 1st will take care of itself.' He holds it. I have a sense of urgency for our culture. Any way I can be useful and effective, I want to be used. If that's in a prayer closet someplace or if it's on the other side of the world, I don't know.

My husband is an architect and most of his work in the past few years has been in Africa. I've never been able to join him on his projects. He's spent a lot of time following me, so I'm hopeful I can follow him a bit more in the next season.

The Lord will have to show us that. I love to read. We love to travel. We love to serve. We love to garden. I have many things I enjoy doing. I can promise you, I'll never be bored. I've never been bored a day in my life. Whatever the Lord brings to me July 1st is what I will do. Even that is a step of faith because it's not comfortable for me to not know what's next in my life. Somehow, there's a freedom in this that I've never experienced before. He knows and He's got it. I do look forward to it because I know with each season, God has something that He wants to use us for if we'll be available. I look forward with anticipation to what that might be.

Q: *How can the Asbury family connect with you in the future?*

A: I would love to hear from all of you. I would love to continue praying for you, to speak into your lives in any way that I can... I'd like to be an encourager to you in all that you do. We'll make sure that there's a way for you to do that. The beautiful thing about this, too, is that Ken and I are Kentuckians. This is home. We're not going anywhere. I'm looking forward to being able to just be a member of the community and being available in whatever way God calls. ■

“My Greatest Champion and Confidante”

Q: *Would you mind sharing what your husband, Ken, has meant to your season at Asbury University?*

A: More than 12 years ago, a couple said 'yes' to the call of the Holy Spirit to enter a new season. As the Board of Trustees talked with me about assuming the presidency, Ken and I were acutely aware this was a joint decision — it would require mutual agreement that the call was of the Lord. Ken is an architect and was engaged in his profession with great enthusiasm and fulfillment. He'd continue his work, but we knew (vaguely then) this would disrupt life as we knew it. Faithful as the Lord always is, He made it clear this was the call upon our life. We both said 'yes.'



It has been a blessing and joy to journey with Ken as my greatest champion and confidante. But he has also championed the mission and cause of Asbury University, recognizing the eternal impact of our graduates and constituents past, present and future.

Leaders need someone with whom they can be honest. Sometimes painfully honest! But in the president's role, I recognized early on the value of my life partner who could understand without knowing all the details or facts. Because of the high level of confidentiality and sensitivity required in many matters, I have leaned on Ken's capacity to listen well, to be present and to care. He has a gift for speaking wisdom and truth, and for recognizing those occasional moments when he needed to say 'we need to talk,' to which I would say: 'uh oh.' Usually it was a gentle reminder that I needed to slow down, to reboot. A good cup of cappuccino would pave the way. (He makes the best! It's as close to what we get in Italy as one will find).

There have been many pragmatic, selfless ways Ken has invested his heart and soul in the work of Asbury, as well. Early morning, late night airport runs; putting his work on hold to travel with me; being present for countless dinners and appearances; critiquing a message; juggling normal life/living activities; and most importantly, praying for me. When we are both home in the morning, we pray together for Asbury, for his work, and that God's perfect will would be done in our daily activities.

I am forever indebted to Ken for his steadfast commitment to the work we have done together at Asbury University.

An Inspiration to All

EXCERPTS FROM
ASBURY FAMILY
ON DR. GRAY

Alumni



"Dr. Gray is one of the most amazing saints I know. A few years back, a few of my former classmates and I went back to visit Asbury and were able to make it to Chapel. Out of the blue, she invited us to her office. When we got there, she asked for updates on our lives and then shared memories of when we were students of hers. She even had one of the show-and-tell items one of us turned in for a report we had done in her class. And this was from 20 years prior! She still has a razor-sharp intellect only to be matched by her Spirit-filled heart... She is a leading servant at the feet of the ultimate Servant, and that is how I shall remember Dr. Gray."

— Pablo Velazquez '95

Faculty



"As a faculty member since 1973, I've been through a large variety of leadership and institutional changes at Asbury... I will always appreciate the stability that we had as an institution thanks to Dr. Gray. Her commitment to not only Asbury, but to Christian higher education, is evident. I will also remember her for the kindness she always displayed to others as I worked with her as both president and as a fellow professor... Christian higher education has seen many changes and challenges over the past few decades and Dr. Gray's leadership provided the steady hand needed to navigate that water."

— Dr. Burnam Reynolds '70

Staff



"Who could have dreamed when you first joined the faculty, we would enjoy 30 years of friendship? Who would have imagined when I came to your Lexington business office with application materials... you would so willingly respond to God's new direction for your life? Or who could have imagined, after that unexpected beginning, all of the various positions you have held and all the countless hours of committee meetings in which we have had the opportunity to collaborate?... Thank you for being such a great model of Christian servanthood. Asbury University has been blessed in innumerable ways through your steadfast, Godly leadership across the years. Your incredible influence can only be fully measured in eternity. Asbury has been the benefactor of your faithful service! Blessings, my friend!!"

— Dr. Bonnie Banker

Students



"Dr. Gray has inspired me to push through any barriers and to do it while giving glory to God. She's been instrumental in the growth — in terms of diversity and intercultural programming — at Asbury and that has been a huge part of my life. I once met with her to talk about the possibility of having a position like Student Intercultural Programs (in student government) and not only was she in full support of it, but she desired to continue the conversation... My freshman year, Emerging Leaders were invited to her house. During prayer requests, I explained it was the first time I'd really been away from home (a thousand miles away) and it was taking a toll on me. Not only did she offer to pray for me, but she also opened up her home to me. Such a kind gesture from such a kind and genuine person."

— Stephanie Beltran '19

Dr. John Oswalt

President, 1983-86

"I've been very grateful for President Gray's faithful service to God and Asbury. She has led the institution with remarkable effectiveness. I have been especially grateful for two qualities she has brought to the task. First, her humility... She has exercised authority ably, but without having to polish her own ego. Second, her sincere expression of Christian faith. There has never been a question but that she saw the first aspect of her task to be the spiritual one... In these ways and more, Asbury has been singularly fortunate in the presidency of Dr. Sandra Gray."



Asbury University Presidents (clockwise from top left): Crothers, Gyertson, Rader, Gray and Oswalt.

Dr. Paul A. Rader '56

President, 2000-06

"Asbury University has been gifted with the grace-filled, God-honoring and visionary leadership of President Sandra C. Gray. We are grateful. Committed to providing the best in Christ-centered higher education, she has led with courage, humility and bold faith. Confident of the future God has planned, she has guided the Asbury University community to ensure that through every dimension of its burgeoning and vital life, there sounds the clarion call to 'Holiness unto the Lord.' Thank you, Dr. Gray! God bless you and God bless Asbury University."

Dr. David J. Gyertson

President, 1993-2000

"Each chapter of Asbury's history has demanded new leadership uniquely equipped in mind, heart and hand to, as Charles Wesley's hymn exhorts, 'serve the present age, our calling to fulfill; O may it all my powers engage to do my Master's will.' God's faithfulness to those who are faithful has again been demonstrated to Asbury through Dr. Gray's steady, focused and gracious guidance. Her servant leadership lifestyle, complemented by her husband, Ken, is at the heart of why and how God has used their sacrificial contributions so effectively at Asbury and beyond. Well done, good and faithful servants!"

Dr. William C. Crothers

Interim President, 2006-07

"How blessed Asbury has been to have a president like Sandra Gray, who personifies all that is great about the University. She has high integrity, a humble spirit and a kind heart. She is an inspiration and challenges all of us to be better. She models Christ-like leadership and people are attracted to her spirit and want to follow. She is a strategic leader and thoughtful in her decision-making... She has elevated the status of Asbury through her many professional engagements and by her commitment to excellence and exemplary Christian life."

Larry Brown '80

Chair, Board of Trustees



"For such a time as this' is a phrase Dr. Gray has used often as she acknowledges God's perfect timing and provision. As president, she has optimized the phrase. No one doubts her reliance on the Lord, spiritual sensitivity nor dedication to the University. She was uniquely prepared for the role — experience, vision, management style and personality — and has carried it out flawlessly. Her interactions with the Board, the campus community and all of Asbury's constituencies have been direct and handled with exceptional grace. All will agree Dr. Gray has been the leader God chose 'for such a time as this' in Asbury's journey."

C. E. Crouse '68

Former Chair, Board of Trustees



"I've had the privilege of working with Dr. Gray for the 12 years she has served Asbury as president. I've watched her deal with many different people and issues. In every situation there was a constant theme. Beyond trying to make a good decision, which she did, she was always concerned about how her decisions would affect the people involved. She has a genuine love and respect for our students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends. She would tell you that her heart is continually filled with the blessings, mercies and wisdom she receives from her Heavenly Father. She has certainly been a tremendous blessing to all of us." ■

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Help us honor Dr. Gray during Reunion 2019 — June 20-23!

Fellowship with friends, worship in Hughes, catch up on campus news and help us celebrate President Sandra C. Gray's faithful leadership during Reunion 2019.

Learn more and register at: asbury.edu/reunion



AMBASSADOR ASBURY UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

VOL. 46 | ISSUE 1 | SPRING 2019

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ASBURY UNIVERSITY is a private, Christian, liberal arts institution, providing academic excellence in a context of spiritual vitality. This nationally recognized, non-denominational university offers more than 150 undergraduate areas of study, plus degree-completion, graduate degrees and high school dual-enrollment programs to a student body of nearly 2,000. Founded in 1890, the University's globally aware heritage has produced more than 22,000 living alumni who live and serve in all 50 of the United States and more than 80 nations.

If you are interested in making a bequest to Asbury University, use our full legal address:

Asbury University
One Macklem Drive
Wilmore, KY 40390-1198.

For specific information, call (800) 888-1818, x2104.

Comments, alumni news and letters to the editor are welcome at the above address.

On the Move?

If you've changed addresses recently, please be sure to let us know by sending your new address, phone number and e-mail to alumni@asbury.edu

Reunion 2019 Focuses on Faithfulness



HE IS *Faithful*

Asbury University • Reunion 2019

June 20-23, 2019
Register now at asbury.edu/reunion

Fellowship. Friends. Music.
Worship. Inspiration. Refreshment.

Bringing together alumni from all class years, Asbury's "Reunion 2019: He Is Faithful" is an opportunity to reconnect with the people and places that made your college experience so special — and to experience God's constant faithfulness in and through the Asbury community.

All alumni are invited, with special events honoring "banner year" classes (years ending in four and nine). With activities for all ages, ranging from class luncheons for the returning alums to programming for elementary to high school students who are interested in attending Asbury, the Alumni Office looks forward to welcoming back alumni, families and friends.

This year's Reunion theme is "He Is Faithful," a reminder that is both humbling and reassuring.

"It is a constant reminder that is good for everyone to have deeply rooted

in their hearts, He is faithful," said Lisa Falin '90 Harper, director of Alumni Relations. "We want to ensure that everyone is reminded that He is truly faithful in all times, especially in times of change."

Though special events will be offered for certain banner year classes, such as the 25th or 50th reunions, Asbury is preparing to welcome alumni from as far back as 75 years, and class planning committees have already met in anticipation for the coming festivities.

"It's always fun to see alums get excited to come back to Asbury for Reunion," Harper said. "We hope to give them the best weekend we can possibly provide."

This year's events include a special musical opportunity. Alumni who participated in vocal ensembles at Asbury are invited to rehearse together and sing in Hughes during Sunday's worship services. Rehearsal times are available online at: asbury.edu/reunion/schedule.

As in previous years, Reunion will be coordinated with the help of several dozen Reunion Ambassadors: current Asbury students who participate in all aspects of Reunion events.

"I appreciate seeing students interact with the alumni," said Liz Stephan '09, assistant director of Alumni Relations. "They form a connection through their shared experience at Asbury, even though time of their attendance is different."

The Reunion schedule is packed with events including: coffee with current and retired faculty, class lunches, the always-popular Old-Fashioned Hymn Sing, an ice cream social, fireworks, a concert and celebration honoring Dr. Gray, and much more. ■

CAMPUS *Corner*

News, Notes & Other Items of Interest



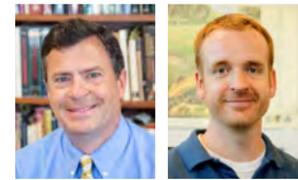
Asbury Makes a Capital Investment

Every January, **Dr. Steve Clements '83** (chair of Asbury's Social Science & History Department) takes a group of Asburians to Washington, D.C. for a week of networking and deep exploration into our nation's capital. This year, students attended the National Association of Evangelicals Christian Student Leadership Conference where they participated in sessions on Evangelical Political Engagement, Creation Care, Immigration and more. The group met with several leaders, politicians and alumni throughout their time in the city. Also, in attendance was Asbury President **Dr. Sandra C. Gray**, who was visiting D.C. for the Christian Colleges & Universities Presidents Conference.

'Major' Growth



In a season of growth and expansion, Asbury's Adult Professional Studies program is now offering two new online health programs. APS students can learn how to impact the world's health industry through the Online Health Promotion and Wellness Program and the Online Public Health Program. Learn more at asbury.edu/aps. Additionally, majors in Equine Science, Finance and Pastoral Ministries have also been added to the traditional undergraduate offerings, with a few other new programs set to be implemented in the coming months.



Dr. Daniel Strait Dr. Ben Brammell

AU Professors Named Lilly Faculty Fellows

Asbury faculty demonstrate the University's commitment to academic excellence and spiritual vitality both in and out of the classroom. So, it's no surprise that in less than a full year of participation in the Lilly network, AU already has two Lilly Fellowship professors.

Dr. Daniel Strait and **Dr. Ben Brammell** were selected to participate in the highly competitive Lilly Faculty Fellows Program. The two-year fellowship holds space for mid-career faculty leaders to explore the intersections of the Christian faith and the academic vocation. Join us in congratulating Strait and Brammell on this recent accomplishment!

Asbury Celebrates Christmas with Jaci Velasquez

Hughes Auditorium was aglow with lights and winter décor as popular Christian recording artist Jaci Velasquez belted out the notes of "I'll Be Home for Christmas" during the University's annual Christmas concert. The show took place on Nov. 30 and served as Asbury's yuletide gift to the community. Velasquez wowed an audience of alumni, community members, faculty and students with a slew of Christmas tunes and Velasquez's hits, including "God so Loved the World," "On My Knees" and "Un Lugar Celestial (A Heavenly Place)."

Asbury on PBS KTDS

APS student **Tara Haynes '19** is a prime example of what it means to start at Asbury and impact the world. Haynes was named Kentucky's PBS KIDS Early Learning Champion after being nominated by Kentucky Educational Television (KET). She was chosen for her work with Pine Mountain Settlement School in Harlan County, Ky. Haynes serves as an environmental educator and assists with a kindergarten readiness program. Please join us in applauding Haynes for her hard work and dedication to impacting the world in Eastern Kentucky.



Did You Know?

Career preparedness is a cornerstone of an Asbury education. That's why every year, Asbury's Culturally Responsive Teaching Program sends education majors (below) to Knott Co. in Eastern Kentucky where they observe classrooms and learn the importance of cultural awareness in a variety of classroom environments. In that same vein, pre-med students learn how they can use the sciences to be God's hands and feet during the Global Missions Health Conference each November.



The wintry weather didn't stop a group of persistent Asbury students from joining with thousands of locals at the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Unity Breakfast & March in downtown Lexington on Jan. 21. "Experiences like this one are important for Asbury students to have because we are Christians," **Demarion Johnson '21** said of the march. "As Christians, I believe that we need to feel the joys and heartbreaks that our brothers and sisters feel if we are claiming a life found in Jesus."

HOLINESS EMPHASIS WEEK

Wake Up!

CLAIMING THE SPIRIT'S WORK IN OUR DAY

Eyes Wide Open

Holiness Emphasis Week challenged students to become active participants in their spiritual lives while exploring the spiritual disciplines of the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition. Salvation Army Captain **Andrew Miller III '02** served as the week's speaker, while musical guest Josh Lavender led worship. Students were especially encouraged to embrace the theme of "waking up" with a reading of Ephesians 5:8, a motif of the week.



EMBRACE
REDEMPTIVE
SOCIAL ACTION

Embracing Each Other

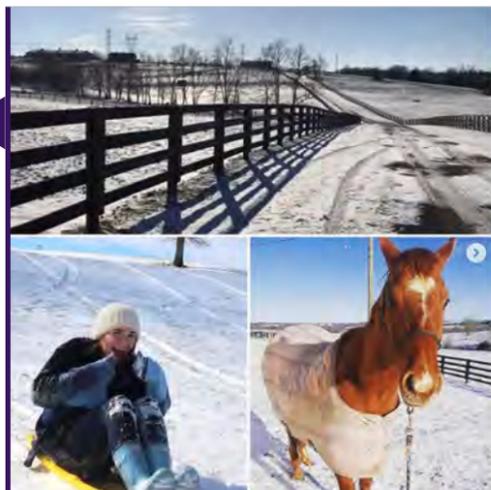
What does faith look like when we subtract the cultural context we've been raised in? Asbury's first annual Embrace Conference sought to answer this question, as it centered around the intersection of Christianity and social justice. The redemptive social action conference was put on by the Intercultural Affairs Office and featured keynote speaker Christina Edmondson, dean of Intercultural Student Development at Calvin College. During the two-day conference, hundreds of students and guests attended a variety of sessions on grace-filled reconciliation, as well as a Chapel service and a live recording of Edmondson's Truth's Table Podcast.

Does Asbury University Love Its Math Majors? Let Us Count the Ways



During Math Week, Asbury celebrated its Math Department students through a series of fun events. A highlight of the week included the Math & Literature Discussion, which was a special cross-department collaboration connecting the dots between the

two disciplines. The week culminated in the annual COMAP Mathematical Contest in Modeling where students worked from Thursday to Monday evening to solve real-life math equations.



January 30th brought a cold front to campus! With temperatures dropping to three degrees Fahrenheit and subzero wind chill, it was so cold we had to call off school.

From Kentucky to Kenya



Caleb Hartley '19 is a true son of Asbury University. His story is one of doors being opened and opportunities being given to him that he would not have experienced had he not been an Asburian.

With academic focus on both pre-medicine and intercultural studies, Hartley is preparing for a future in the mission field, where he hopes to be an ophthalmologist in places where standard vision care is difficult to come by. He is currently the protégé of **Dr. Gary Wortz '00**, an ophthalmologist, with whom he is currently working on research projects.

Hartley has served in the mission field already, working one summer in Kenya at Tenwek Hospital, a medical center founded by Asburians. "The mission field is where my heart is," Hartley said, "All of the experiences here and [in Kenya] have solidified what I feel God is calling me to do in life."

As for Asbury, he admits that many of these opportunities would not have been given to him elsewhere. "Asbury opened so many connections for me, and it's great to have the network of Asbury friends both here and all the way around the world," he said. ■



EYE ON THE EAGLES



- Date: Monday, April 29, 2019
- Location: Champion Trace Golf Course (Site of the PGA Tour's Barbasol Championship)
- Time: 8 a.m. - Registration
9 a.m. - Tournament Begins
- Register: Single Player: \$200
Foursome: \$800
- Sponsor: \$1,750 (Includes one Foursome, Signage and Activation Opportunities)
- Food: Specially Catered Lunch, Featuring Bluegrass Favorites

Be sure to visit asburyeagles.com as online registration is now open!

Follow Asbury Athletics
(with several live-streamed games) at
asburyeagles.com

STROKES OF GENIUS

The Asbury men's and women's swimming teams were selected to the College Swimming & Diving Coaches Association of America Scholar All-America Teams for success in the pool and classroom. To earn the honor, teams were required to post a GPA of 3.0 or higher for the fall semester and maintain a roster of 12 or more student-athletes. The men's team compiled a 3.27 GPA and the women totaled a 3.13 GPA. Also, freshman **Alex Wu** (right) was named the 2019 Swimmer of the Year during AU's appearance in the Appalachian Athletic Conference Championship meet. He, along with 11 teammates, represented the Eagles in the NAIA National Championship meet in Columbus, Ga.



SUPER SPONSORS HELP EAGLES SOAR



The Asbury University Athletic Department announced Chick-fil-A as the newest member of its sponsorship team. Chick-fil-A's involvement is comprised of three strategic components, including game-day promotions, advertising on AU Basketball radio broadcasts and exclusive sponsorship of AU Basketball social media posts. "We are happy to be a part of a great program like Asbury Athletics and partnering with them to add to the excitement at some of their home basketball games," said **Jeff Stryker '87**, owner/operator of two Lexington Chick-fil-A restaurants.



Asbury Athletics launched the "Asbury Sports Minute" — presented by Suff's Furniture — in January on WNJK-FM 105.9. The daily feature airs Monday through Friday during morning and afternoon drive-time and highlights the accomplishments of student-athletes, coaches and alumni. Many of the daily features are produced by AU students from the nationally-acclaimed School of Communication Arts. "We are most appreciative of WNJK-FM for providing this platform and for our good friends at Suff's Furniture for supporting this new initiative," said **Mark Whitworth '84**, Asbury's Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics. "It is exciting for us to tell the story of #TeamAU."

By the Numbers:

MEN'S TENNIS
OPENED THE SEASON
RANKED NO. 21

In addition to the men's national ranking, both the men's and women's teams at Asbury were chosen No. 1 in the River States Conference preseason rankings.



In the Spotlight:

Asbury's **Lizzy Rempel '20** was named an American Volleyball Coaches Association Midcentral Region Honorable Mention winner. Rempel was also chosen to the River States Conference All-First Team. Rempel recorded 471 kills, for an average of 3.93 kills per set, this season.



For more on what's happening at Asbury, visit asbury.edu/news-events



The Higdon family — here with children Ryder and Elliette Grace — want to lift up a state they regard so fondly by establishing a scholarship at Asbury for students from Eastern Kentucky.

It's the kind of story that seems commonplace in Asbury University circles and rare anywhere else. She grew up in Florida. He grew up in California. The roots they've planted in Washington, D.C., are bearing fruit in Kentucky.

Michael and Jamie Corbett '04 Higdon have long made a habit of opening their hearts and their home to recent graduates in the Washington, D.C., area. Jamie is an adjunct professor at American University and Michael served in the office of Rep. Hal Rogers, a Congressman for Kentucky's 5th District, for 11 years before becoming a lobbyist and founding a consulting firm in 2017. Cultivating a vibrant alumni community has become a rewarding ministry for the couple, but they also have a desire to lift

up a state they regard fondly by establishing a scholarship at Asbury for students from the 5th District.

"While Kentucky's Appalachian Region enjoys a rich history of faith, music, coal and art, the region is at great risk of losing its next generation either from the scourge of drugs, generational poverty, or simply a lack of skill-creating opportunities," Michael said. "Our prayer is that this scholarship will not only provide a young person in Eastern Kentucky with an opportunity to attend Asbury, but even more, inspire him or her to return home with a degree and a desire to change a block, a city, a county, the countryside."

As a second-generation Asburian, Jamie is deeply aware of the

Yours, Mine, Ours

Michael and Jamie Corbett '04 Higdon share a love for Asbury University

privilege — and the responsibility — of continuing Asbury's legacy of spiritual vitality.

"I have been given so much," she said. "Giving is a tangible reminder to me that it's all from God, and it's all for His glory. Why Asbury? Because it has been an incredible blessing to me and my family, and because our culture needs men and women of faith, committed to excellence in their craft, and anchored to the unchanging Truth of the Good News of Christ Jesus."

"You could argue that Asbury could rest on its laurels, but I'm so impressed with the growth, goal-oriented vision to take new ground," Michael said. "Jesus didn't call His disciples to huddle; He called them to go to the ends of the earth. That same Spirit is at work at Asbury. I see a sincere desire to advance the Kingdom of God, and at the end of the day, that's the focused team I am so blessed to be a small part of." ■

"Giving is a tangible reminder to me that it's all from God, and it's all for His glory."

The Race Marked Out For Us

Hebrews 12:1-2 says: "Since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on the pioneer and perfecter of our faith." I am writing this in an airport on a long layover as I get ready to meet some great Asburians who are cheering us on in our quest to prepare students to impact their families, communities and world for Christ. As I walked through the airport, I had something in my shoe that was bothering me. My mind focused on it, obsessed about it, and searched for a place where I could get it out so I would be able to walk unhindered. Its amazing how those little things take up our thoughts, our focus, and so easily entangle us in a daily "race" that is marked out for us.

The race marked out for Asbury is a long one. Sometimes it has been easy running, other times with things that hinder us. Asbury has many in its "cloud of witnesses" who have been running for a long time, cheering on the next generation as the baton is handed off. I've been privileged to meet and hear about many of our "cloud of witnesses" stories. I am convicted and inspired by alums who sacrificed to come to Asbury, who sacrificed to support the next generation of Asburians, who prayed and continue to pray for us that we may run unhindered in our "race marked out for us."

I've been privileged to run on the same relay team for a few decades with a leader who continually challenged us to focus on our race, to put aside the things that daily hinder us, to fix our eyes on Jesus the perfecter of our faith and on our mission. Its not easy to run unhindered as a Christian University in

today's culture. It takes focus, discipline, tough decisions. Dr. Sandra Gray has been a great fellow runner and coach helping us focus on our task as a long race, not a short sprint.

We are excited to have short-term goals and to have achieved many. In our Campaign, for instance, it may be the endowment of a new scholarship, the finishing of a recital hall, the completion of an athletic facility or the money to help faculty do professional development. We are coming down the home stretch on some of the bigger goals before this Campaign is complete during the summer of 2020. Collaborative Learning Center, Student Center and current use scholarships are those "finishing well" projects that we continue to run in this Ignited Campaign race.

Thank you for your partnership, for your prayers and for being a great cloud of witnesses cheering us on and indeed running the race with us. ■



Dr. Mark Troyer
Vice President for Institutional Advancement & Strategic Partnerships

AFFORDABLE GIFTS ANYONE CAN GIVE

Have you ever wished to help Asbury students, but felt you couldn't afford to give?

There are ways you can give today while still preserving your assets for retirement and providing for your family.

Here are some gifts anyone can afford to make:

- WILL or TRUST
- BENEFICIARY DESIGNATIONS
- LIFE INSURANCE

Please contact us to learn more about these types of charitable gifts and how you can make an extraordinary commitment to help further Asbury University's mission.

Rev. Stu Smith '77, Senior Planned Giving Officer | stuart.smith@asbury.edu | (800) 888-1818, x2350



Investing in the Future

Hundreds of volunteers. Thousands of donors. Millions of dollars raised to deepen and broaden the impact of Asbury's mission. In less than three years since its public launch, "Ignited: The Campaign for Asbury University" has transformed Asbury's future, energizing scholarships, facilities renovation and construction, academic programs, faculty development and much more.

Asbury's first comprehensive campaign, Ignited has also become — by many millions — Asbury's most successful capital campaign. At **\$63,689,530**, fundraising has already surpassed our ambitious \$62-million goal, but work still remains to complete each campaign priority by the end of the campaign in Summer 2020. Three top fundraising priorities remain — the Collaborative Learning Center (CLC), the Student Center Revitalization and Current Use Scholarships.

This spring and summer, as President Sandra C. Gray's tenure draws to a close, we have a unique opportunity to honor her legacy by advancing funding for the CLC — a project she has championed from the beginning. The signature academic facilities component of Ignited, the CLC will be home to programs in Science, Health, Mathematics and Business, bringing students and faculty together in cross-disciplinary collaboration. With

\$3,864,222 remaining to be raised, the CLC presents a significant opportunity to affirm Dr. Gray's vision and honor her legacy with a gift that will benefit students and faculty for years to come.

The Student Center Revitalization — in need of **\$1,815,634** for completion — is an investment in Asbury community life. In the center of campus, the Student Center already provides needed space for fellowship, conversations, games, movie nights, panel discussions, talk-back sessions and much more. The proposed renovation would enhance all of these offerings, nearly doubling the square footage by opening the currently unused first floor. Multiple entrances based on campus traffic patterns will maximize the space as a campus hub.

With **\$3,814,006** remaining before full funding, Current Use Scholarships make an immediate difference in students' lives. Endowed scholarships — while an essential part of long-term strategy — pay dividends on accrued interest. Current Use Scholarships, however, are awarded to students immediately and in full. This support makes a tremendous difference for students who choose to seek an Asbury education as the costs of private colleges and universities continue to rise. Current Use Scholarships bring the Asbury experience within reach for every student.

"We stand in awe of what God is doing through Asbury, and through the thousands of donors who have come alongside us to advance this mission."

The ongoing energy and momentum of Ignited is truly a testament to the generosity of our donors, as well as their sincere commitment to Asbury's mission. In 2018, we celebrated the

initiation of **15 new scholarships** — 11 endowed scholarships (four of which are already fully funded!) and four non-endowed scholarships.

Teamwork is vital in advancing Asbury University's mission, and has been essential in the success of the Ignited campaign. Since the beginning of the campaign, more than 270 volunteers have served in advisory and fundraising roles. Volunteers have served through opportunities including Ignited subcommittees, Ignited Campaign Steering Committee, Board of Trustees, Alumni Board, Planned Giving Council, Athletics Advisory Board, Young Alumni Committee, Youth Becoming Leaders Advisory Board, Reunion Gift Project Committee and multiple Science and Business Think Tanks on the Asbury campus.

"We stand in awe of what God is doing through Asbury, and through the thousands of donors who have come alongside us to advance this mission," said Dr. Mark Troyer, vice president for Institutional Advancement & Strategic Partnerships. "Let's continue to run this race and keep our eyes on the finish line. The strategic investments we make today will continue bearing fruit for generations to come." ■

Finishing Well



Collaborative Learning Center

Goal: \$17,000,000
Still Needed: \$3,864,222

77.3%



Student Center Revitalization

Goal: \$5,000,000
Still Needed: \$1,815,634

63.7%



Current Use Scholarships

Goal: \$17,000,000
Still Needed: \$3,814,006

77.6%

Total Campaign Goal: **\$62,000,000**

Given:

\$63,689,530

Facilities

Goal: \$24,000,000
Given: \$21,284,245

88.7%

Scholarships

Goal: \$27,000,000
Given: \$27,145,975

Over 100%

Experience

Goal: \$11,000,000
Given: \$15,259,309

Over 100%

To learn more or support the campaign visit:
asbury.edu/ignited

Oh, Glory!

From “the poorest part of town” to Carnegie Hall, Shawn Okpebholo’s musical journey has been guided by faith.



On a Friday in December 2018, **Dr. Shawn Okpebholo '03** found himself seated in New York’s Carnegie Hall, a wave of emotion hitting him as the curtains rose and the show began. But it wasn’t just any show. That night the composer’s piece, “Oh, Glory,” was debuted during a performance by mezzo-soprano J’Nai

Bridges and pianist Mark Markham in the country’s most respected performance hall.

“It was really a surreal moment because I’m a kid that grew up in the projects, the poorest part of town, and then because The Salvation Army and other people took a chance on me, years later I’m sitting at the most famous concert hall in the U.S. hearing my music being performed,” Okpebholo said. “That just shows what God can do.”

Okpebholo’s gift for music was evident from a young age. He began going to church at The Salvation Army in Lexington, Ky., where he received training that allowed him to hone his musical craft, but even more importantly, that is where Okpebholo met Jesus.

Perhaps this is why, for Okpebholo, faith and music are intrinsically linked. As his training continued, Okpebholo realized that the composition and creation of music appealed to him even more than the performance aspect of it. So, his passion for composing ignited.

It was also through The Salvation Army Student Fellowship Band that Okpebholo was introduced to Asbury University’s Composer Emeritus James Curnow ‘66.

When it came time to choose a college, Asbury was a no-brainer as it would allow him the opportunity to continue studying under Curnow.

“Those were very formative years of my life,” Okpebholo said. “Because it was a small department, the faculty really saw my passion for music and saw my potential. Many of them really invested time to make sure I could get to the next level.”

Reflecting on the time he spent tucked away in Wilmore composing some of his early works as a music major, brings back fond memories for Okpebholo, who still keeps in contact with his close friends from Asbury.

“Asbury was one of the most enjoyable times in my life because I was living in community with my best friends,” Okpebholo said. “I was getting a good education, but I was also living with people that I love and in a Christian community, which is something very unique.”

Music runs deep in the Okpebholo family. Shawn’s wife, Dorthy, is a professional violist playing for several orchestras in Chicago, while their two daughters’ musical talents are already mirroring those of their impressive parents.

When he’s not working on his latest masterpiece, Okpebholo serves as a professor of theory and composition at Wheaton College where he’s been teaching for eight years. Previously, he taught at Northern Kentucky University and Union University.

“A lot of my theory pedagogy and skill pedagogy comes straight from Dr. Vicki Bell, who is still teaching at Asbury,” Okpebholo said. “I have a very relational approach to teaching. I really try to provide a human element to music theory and composition, which all comes from how I was taught at Asbury.”

“Asbury was one of the most enjoyable times in my life”

“My creative process is a very spiritual process”

the societal ruminations that have been in the collective American consciousness for the past several years.

Musicality and spirituality go hand-in-hand for Okpebholo, who says he doesn’t see the two as separate, but as wedded aspects of his life. Even in his non-sacred pieces, he easily notices the ways in which his faith played a part in the composition process.

“My creative process is a very spiritual process,” Okpebholo said. “I’ll finish a piece of music and reflect back on how I got from point A to point B. Take a big orchestra piece, for example. I’m like, ‘How did that happen?’ Yes, I have skills. I have the training to write music, but I’m convinced that the Holy Spirit is with me the whole time because to create something out of nothing, just like God did with us, requires some sort of higher power. As a Christian, I know what that is.”

His creative process is often born out of ruminations, as Okpebholo often thinks in music. When it comes time to compose a new work, the notes and scales just seem to pour out seamlessly.

His most recent work was born out of not just the musical ruminations that occupy Okpebholo’s mind, but also

His new album of spirituals reimagined, which will debut before the end of the year, represents many things. It draws heavily upon the experiences of slaves but also on Okpebholo’s own modern black experience amidst divisive political and social times. “I’m half Nigerian and so even that aspect is influencing my music as I continue to try to reconnect with the music of my father,” he said.

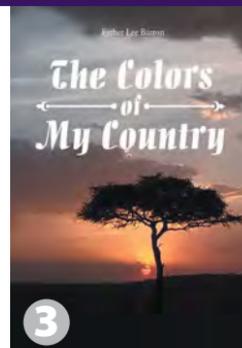
“Oh, Glory” is among those works and is written from the perspective of a mother speaking to her child who is sold into slavery. The mother assures her child he/she will be truly free in Christ and reunited in the heavenly kingdom.

“My new album is totally in response to what’s going on in our country,” Okpebholo said. “The messages are much clearer in what I’m trying to do in terms of justice, respect and the idea of what freedom means... Freedom is truly being free in Jesus Christ. That’s all throughout those negro spirituals. So, my experience is informing my music a lot these days.” ■



CLASS NOTES

Please submit all class notes and photos to the Alumni Office at: ambassador@asbury.edu



1960s

1 **Rachel Bright '60 Erny** has published a collection of poems entitled "Beyond the Door," written by her late husband, **Ed '57**, in his younger years.

Van Graham '66 has been appointed dean of the School of Business at LeTourneau University (Texas).

Becky Hutchens '68 Bullock and **Bill Reinheld '68** were married Nov. 23, 2018, after reconnecting at Reunion in 2018.

In 2018, **Mark "Skip" Elliott '69** received a grant and published his study, "Greenhouse Gardening for the Purpose of Self-Sustaining Ministry in the Former Soviet Union" in Russian, Ukrainian and English.

1970s

Rick '70 and **Sherry Bechtold '70 Gillam** are proud to announce that they have welcomed their 35th grandchild.

William Brooks '72 has been accepted into the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health to study the third-leading cause of death in the U.S., hospital error.

Carol Amey '78 retired June 30 2018, after more than 40 years as a nurse at Asbury's Student Health Service. She has moved back to her family in N.J.

Timothy Rehner '78 was named the dean and director at The Ohio State University at Lima.

1980s

2 **Laurel Willingham-McLain '82** received a national award for her service in educational development. She was recognized by the Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network in Higher Education with its highest honor, the Bob Pierleoni Spirit of POD Award. Willingham-McLain has been the director of the Center for Teaching Excellence at Duquesne University (Pa.) since 2006.

3 **Esther Lee '83 Barron** has published her book, "The Colors of My Country," through Covenant Books. It is available on Amazon.

Linda Wentworth '85 Barnes has published a 12-week small group study entitled "Pride and Humility – A Guide to Better Understanding Yourself and Others." She has been a pastor's wife for 31 years. She and her husband currently serve Mount Oak Fellowship UMC in Mitchellville, Md.

Timothy Holder '88 has another book out. "Presidential Stories" is a devotional featuring Scripture

accompanied by a story from the life of a U.S. President. In October 2017, Tim was ordained into the ministry.

1990s

David Pitts '91 was promoted to Chief Information Security Officer of a mid-sized government contractor in Bethesda, Md.

4 **Nate '98** and **Angie Riffard '97 Maust** are excited to announce the adoption of Jessie on Nov. 19, 2018. Jessie is welcomed to the family by her older siblings Lucy, Jack, Crew and Eli.

James Carroll '97 graduated on Dec. 20, 2018 with his Doctor of Philosophy in Leadership, specialization in Higher Education, from University of the Cumberlands (Ky.).

2000s

Ian and **Miriam Slagle '01 Swanson**, along with big brother, Andrew, and big sister, Nina, welcomed Eric Miles on Oct. 13, 2016, in Arlington, Va.

Andy Miller III '02 was the Holiness Emphasis Week speaker at Asbury, January 28-February 1.

5 **Ann Black '04 MacKenzie** published "From Scarlet to Snow," a spinoff of Snow White. The tale is an allegory about the kingdom of heaven and what each child of God is entitled to because of His "adoption" of us.

6 **Clayton '04** and **Cresse Freed '03 Wesley** welcomed their fourth child August "Auggie" Tobiah on Oct. 15, 2018. He is joined by future Asburians Madison (11), Micah (8) and Tucker (1).

7 **Erik '05** and **Andrea Thiemkey '05 Rishel** welcomed their firstborn, Anderson Benedict, on Sept. 22, 2018.

8 **Jennifer Rebecca Seitz '06 Reynolds** was elected to Lexington's Urban County Council in Lexington, Ky. on Nov. 6, 2018. She was inaugurated on Jan. 6, 2019. Her

husband, **Josh Reynolds '04**, her parents, **Marty '78** and **Judy Traina '78 Seitz**, her in-laws, **Burnam '70** and **Machel Roher '72 Reynolds**, and her son, Isaac Roberto Antonio, and friends were in attendance at the inauguration. This is Jennifer's first term in office.

Benjamin '07 and **Caitlin Phillips '08 Lewis** have moved back to the U.S. from Athens, Greece, and are excited to be living near Washington, D.C., where Benjamin is working with the International Commission on English in the Liturgy.

9 **Phil Bowdle '08** has written a book, "Rethink Communication: A Playbook to Clarify and Communicate Everything in Your Church." The book officially launched January 22 and is the #1 Best Seller in Amazon's Church Growth category.

Tristan Fretwell '09 is an attorney with Taft Stettinius & Hollister LLP in Indianapolis, Ind.

2010s

Andrea and **Philip Wood '10** welcomed Henry Grant, Feb. 3, 2018. In July 2018, Philip started Wood Realty Group at Keller Williams Bluegrass Realty.

10 **Savannah Nisbett '11 Landerholm** was the first graduate of Baylor's School of Education's Ph.D. in Higher Education Studies & Leadership.

Ethan Kelly '12 has started his own hedge fund, Providence Capital Management, LLC, an investing fund for individual and institutional investors.



CLASS NOTES



11 Joel '13 and Olivia Windham '17 Sigler moved to Dothan, Ala. in February and joined the staff of Harvest Church Dothan as Youth Pastors. Their first child, Malachi Joel, was born Oct. 15, 2018.

12 Josh '16 and Jessica Guy '16 Williamson welcomed twins, Judah Joshua and Evangeline Elisabeth, born Nov. 6, 2018. Big sister Hosanna is delighted.



12 Julie Spaulding '17 married Brennan Johnson on Jan. 19, 2019 in Lexington Ky.

13 Paul Sigler '17 and Riley Tribelco '17 were married in Wilmore, Ky. Jan. 20, 2018. They reside in Wilmore. Paul creates videos for companies, churches, individuals and mission organizations (siglercine.com). Riley works at Meadowlake Farm teaching vaulting and at



Cornerstone International Mission Base in Wilmore.

13 Rosebelle Easthom '18 married Brandon Hendrix '17 in June 2018. In August, Rosebelle won a Student Production Award for directing. The Award was given by the National Academy of Arts and Sciences for the Ohio Valley Region. ■

Bike Across America

Clark Blade '67 recently undertook the second iteration of a journey few will ever complete even once — a cycling trip across the U.S. Along with close friend Curt Mavis, Blade spent just over two months traveling 3,977 miles from Anacortes, Wash., to Rockport, Maine.

"It's an entirely different way to travel," Blade says. "First of all, you get an up-close and personal view of the sheer beauty of God's creation — from the Cascades to the Rockies to the Adirondacks. More importantly, though, you get a different view of people."

Blade and Mavis took multiple opportunities to share God's love with those they met, paying for someone's laundromat visit, for instance, or buying a stranger a needed meal. At the same time, they experienced unexpected blessings from others, like a host who offered cyclists free food and lodging in a converted and fully furnished barn.

"Something amazing happens on country roads at 12 miles per hour," Blade said. "It's an opportunity to dispense and receive grace." ■



alumni

Elizabeth Ballard '37 Tompkins
Education/Rug Designer
1/22/2019, Lexington, Ky.

Phyllis Brock '40
Accounting, 1/27/2019
Rossford, Ohio

Rev. G. William Sims '41
Military/Ministry, 10/25/2018
Herrin, Ill.

Marilyn Frost '44 Dyer
Diplomat/Education, 11/11/2018
Chapel Hill, N.C.

Leanore Marske '44 Grinager
Accounting, 10/21/2018
Wilmore, Ky.

Doris O'Dell '44 Wilcher
Executive Assistant/Human Resources
1/28/2019, Lewis Center, Ohio

Jack McCullough '46
Counselor/Education, 8/25/2018
Prescott Valley, Ariz.

Dr. J. Moody Presley '46
VA Medical Director, 10/31/2018
Port Orange, Fla.

Patricia Carte '46 Shinn
Education, 12/17/2018
Scott Depot, W.Va.

Loretta Scott '47 Henry
Church Organist, 8/6/2018
Foley, Minn.

Sinalee Payton '48 Groves
Music Education, 11/24/2018
Louisville, Ky.

Bernice Ripley '50 Bode
Education, 10/21/2018
Chagrin Falls, Ohio

Rev. Francis Kinzler '50
Ministry, 1/8/2019
Fargo, N.D.

Rev. Albert Whelchel '50
Ministry, 1/9/2019
Wilmore, Ky.

Betty Wright '51 Ashley
Education, 10/10/2018
Harwood, Md.

Rev. Floyd Hale '51
Ministry/Writer, 10/10/2018
Mount Vernon, Ill.

Betty Harrer '51 Smith
Education, 12/8/2018
Frankfort, Ind.

Rev. John Brackman Sr. '52
Asbury Trustee/Ministry, 12/6/2018
Mount Dora, Fla.

Judith Minter '52 Johnston
Education, 11/17/2018
Oklahoma City, Okla.

Dr. Carl McKenna '52
Medicine, 4/14/2018
Columbus, Ohio

Jane Kunkle '52 Rulong
Ministry, 11/12/2018
Johnstown, Pa.

Dorothy "Dot" Neuroth '52 Sheppard
Church Music Director 7/3/2018
Livonia, Mich.

Paul Speakman '52
Athletic Coach/Education,
10/22/2018,
Breckenridge, Minn.

Rev. Richard Wright '52
Ministry, 12/4/2018
Rivesville, W.Va.

Edythe Temple '53 Housworth
Education/Music, 11/7/2018
West Chester, Pa.

Charles Morrow '53
Finance, 11/7/2018
Medford, N.J.

Rev. Milton Vahey '54
Ministry, 10/30/2018
Acton, Mass.

Ruthann Williams '55 Bennett
Education, 12/31/2018
Westerville, Ohio

Rev. Harold "Wendell" Brittain '56,
Ministry/Music, 11/16/2018
Weaverville, N.C.

Shirley Brog '56 Grout Morrison
Athletic Coach/Education, 10/6/2018
Arkansas City, Kan.

Philip Wendell '58
City Commissioner/Music Education
11/17/2018, Sun City, Ariz.

Dr. Nelson Wolfe '58
Dentistry, 11/13/2018
Collinsville, Okla.

Charles Harris '59
Business, 11/17/2018
Frost, Texas

Rev. William Berry '60
USN(Ret) '60, Military/Ministry
1/22/2019, Augusta, Ga.

Lillian Henry '60
Education, 9/23/2018, Lutz, Fla.

Peggy Cormany '61 Jones
Administrative Assistant/Ministry
12/5/2018, Chatham, Va.

Donald Rutledge '62
Construction and Demolition
10/9/2018, Jackson, Miss.

Rev. J. Royle Bailard '63
Education/Ministry/Sports Announcer
11/5/2018, Alto, Mich.

Robert "Bob" Sparks '63
Public Service/Retail, 11/20/2018
Mansfield, Ohio

Rev. Richard Doughty '64
Education/Farmer/Ministry,
12/25/2018, Crossville, Tenn.

John Falkenberg Jr. '65
Accounting, 11/10/2018
Vermilion, Ohio

George Starsmeare Jr. '67
Sales/Veteran, 11/28/2018
Ball Ground, Ga.

Betty Bell '68
Education, 11/17/2018
Glendale, Ariz.

Keith Valade '68
Social Work, 9/23/2018
Savannah, Ga.

Retha "Suzanne" Austin '69 Jones
Assistant Librarian/Executive Assistant
8/14/2018, Sebring, Fla.

John Shepard Jr. '69
Education, 6/20/2018
Middletown, Ohio

David Cattran '71
Education, 1/29/2019
Lancaster, Ohio

Judith Petruna '75 Patton
Social Work, 10/9/2018
Caro, Mich.

Daniel Kinnell '76
Education/Musician, 12/17/2018
Wilmore, Ky.

Rev. William "Billy" Gillespie Jr. '77
Ministry, 11/21/2018
Kingsport, Tenn.

Rev. Steve Rascoe '77
Ministry, 11/17/2018
Panama City, Fla.

Cheryl Dehn '78 Lady
Executive Assistant, 11/27/2018
Spokane, Wash.

Rev. Barry Dickens '79
Ministry, 12/25/2018
Albuquerque, N.M.

Rev. Richard Piscatelli '80
Ministry/Veteran, 12/7/2018
Chatham, Ill.

Rev. Timothy Hampton '81
Ministry, 10/24/2018
Shelbyville, Ind.

Dr. Charles Record '82
Medicine, 12/01/2018,
Kernersville, N.C.

friends

Dean Boss
12/20/2018, Spring Arbor, Mich.

William Brenner
11/25/2018, Tewksbury, Mass.

S. Dean Dadisman
6/30/2018, West Columbia, S.C.

David Driskill
1/3/2019, Springfield, Ohio

Mary Broome Finklea
12/20/2018, Pelion, S.C.

Judy Kay George
10/20/2017, Orlando, Fla.

Gayle Lawrence
12/4/2018, Wilmore, Ky.

Dennis Layman
1/14/2019, Owensboro, Ky.

Margie Adair Mason
1/2/2019, Lexington, Ky.

Charles McNitt
7/16/2018, Cartersville, Ga.

Michael Montgomery
12/14/2018, Wilmore, Ky.

Hazel Pielemeier
11/6/2018, Loogootee, Ind.

Maj. Dan Proctor
6/21/2018, Naples, Fla.

Dr. Sion "Leo" Record Jr.
6/11/2018, Kernersville, N.C.

Marietta Phillips Record
2/07/2019, Kernersville, N.C.

Rev. Minoru Tsukamoto
12/17/2018, Watertown, S.D.

Sharon Chandler Willette
11/27/2018, Mapleton, Maine

June Stall Wolfley
12/30/2018, Newport News, Va.

To report a listing for In Memoriam, please contact Kim Spillman in the Office of Advancement at: kimberly.spillman@asbury.edu or (859) 858-3511, x2173.

Upcoming Events



Highbridge Film Festival (April 27)



"The Supper at Emmaus" — Jacopo Tintoretto

"Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him." (Luke 24:30-31, NLT)

March 18–22
March 19
March 23
 March 28–29

Spring Break – No Classes
Lexington, Ky. Ignited Regional Event
Washington D.C. Ignited Regional Event
 Admissions Spring Preview #2

April 6
 April 8–10
 April 11–12
 April 19
 April 21
 April 25
 April 26–27
 April 27

Columbus, Ohio Regional Event
 Board of Trustees Spring Meeting
 SEARCH Symposium
 Good Friday – Offices Closed
 Easter
 Sounds of Stage and Screen Concert
 Media Communications Visit Weekend
 Highbridge Film Festival

May 3
 May 10
 May 11
 May 27

Last Day of Classes
 Baccalaureate
 Commencement
 Memorial Day – Offices Closed

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 Classes ending in **4s** and **9s**.

July 4–12 Taylor County (Ga.), AU Day is July 10
 July 11–21 Indian Springs (Ga.), AU Day is July 13
 July 18–28 Hollow Rock (Ohio), AU Day is July 26
 July 26–Aug. 2 Beulah (Ill.), AU Day is July 31

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Transformed Together

To Know and to Be Known

"Then He [Jesus] asked them, 'But who do you say I am?'"

Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.'

Jesus replied, 'You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being.'" (Matthew 16:15-17, NLT)

"Who are you, Lord, and who am I?"

This poignant prayer surely has been on the hearts and lips of Christians throughout the centuries. Can any questions be more relevant to our lives than these — who is God, and who are we in relation to Him?

Following Peter's declaration of faith in Matthew 16, Jesus told Peter the truth about himself: "And I tell you, you are Peter, the rock on which I will build My church." These are some of the most personal and enduring words Jesus can speak to us — "I know who you are and who I plan for you to become." As the Easter season approaches and we celebrate the risen Christ, our Redeemer and Lord, we rest in the truth that we know Jesus and He knows us.

Early one morning, many years ago, seated in my chair (my mercy seat!) where I began the day with Jesus, I read this passage and the Holy Spirit spoke my name: "And I tell you Sandy, you are My beloved and I have Kingdom plans for you."

Interestingly, in that moment, I had no need to ask what those plans were. I was flooded with the truth that He is the Christ, the Messiah, and He has called me by name. Knowing His identity allowed me to recognize my own identity in Him.

Many times since that early morning, I have had an exchange with Jesus, saying these words to Him: "You are the Messiah, Son of the living God." Then He says to me, "And I tell you, you are Sandy, My beloved." This Kingdom identity reveals a truth that has stayed with me through joys and sorrows, through each season — we cannot know ourselves without knowing who He is.

In our current age, questions of identity are beset with division, discord and confusion. This very well may be one the greatest travesties of the 21st century — the engineering of political, social and relational identities based on cultural divides that push us apart from one another.

The Gospel of Christ, however, offers a better way — membership in the family of God, knowledge of who God is, knowledge of who we are in Christ. He knows us; He knows who we are; He knows who He has created us to be, and the God-ordained destiny we are to fulfill.

This Easter as you reflect upon Jesus' death, burial and resurrection, do not miss His voice. He is calling you by name.

Who does He say you are?

I am a child of God. (John 1:12)

I am a joint heir with Christ. (Romans 8:17)

I am called. (I Corinthians 7:17)

I am accepted. (Ephesians 1:3-8)

I am forgiven. (I John 2:12)

I am loved. (John 3:16) ■

Dr. Sandra C. Gray
 President, Asbury University





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