

# T Southern TIDINGS

MARCH 2024

## A HEART FOR HEALING

Experiences and Lessons from AdventHealth Women Leaders

"WHERE JUMP SHOTS  
MEET JESUS" PROVIDES  
NEW STEPS TO CHRIST

SOUTHERN LAUNCHES  
ASPIRING TEACHERS' CLUBS AT  
ADVENTIST ACADEMIES

ON THEIR  
HEARTS AND IN  
THEIR PRAYERS



# The Fatal Trap of Deceit



**Ron C. Smith, D.Min., Ph.D.**  
President of the Southern  
Union Conference

“But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin,” Hebrews 3:13, KJV.

The chameleon is a harmless little reptile that some people find interesting because it can almost instantly change its color from gray to green, red, or blue. A young woman once captured a small salamander-like creature she thought was a chameleon. She enjoyed playing with it and, so as to display it for her friends, she put a tiny collar on it and pinned it by a little chain so it could crawl about on her shoulder. But, instead of being a chameleon as she thought, it was a poisonous kind of lizard that, despite its diminutive size, bit her one day, causing her death. What this girl did innocently, millions are doing every day. They are toying with a viper called sin. Sin does not always appear sinful because, in one respect, it is like the chameleon; it can change its colors to fit any environment and appear to be what it is not.

“Nothing is more treacherous than the deceitfulness of sin. It is the god of this world that deludes, blinds, and leads to destruction. He (Satan) disguises these temptations with a semblance of good; he mingles some little improvement with the folly and amusements, and deceived souls ... (engage) in them .... Satan’s hellish arts are masked. Beguiled souls take one step, then are prepared for the next. It is much more pleasant to follow the inclination of their hearts than to ... resist the first insinuation of the wily foe ... Satan watches to see his bait taken ... and to see souls walking in the very path he has prepared! .... He unites his sophistry and deceptive snares with their experience ... and thus wonderfully advances his cause,” *Testimonies*, Vol. 2, pp. 142, 143.

Sin allures because it appears wonderfully desirable and appealing. When Eve looked at what God had warned her not to eat, she viewed it as “good for food” and “pleasant to the eyes,” and “desired to make one wise” (Genesis 3:6). She was totally deceived in each respect. Yet, she stepped over the line that separates right from wrong, and by that fatal step flung open the flood-gates of evil.

When Samson succumbed to the wiles of temptation through the magnetizing beauty of a Philistine woman, he lost perspective for right and wrong. There are two things going on in this riveting context of the 16th chapter of the book of Judges. One is the science of sin. It dulls, stupefies, petrifies, and shackles your good sense. The other thing going on, though, is the grace of God that keeps giving us chance after chance to regain our focus on Him.

Today, as in the Garden, the most deceptive characteristic of sin is its almost irresistible fascination. But, when Christ dwells within, the mask of evil fades, and we see sin as it is. We must be ever wary lest we lose our souls through the deceitfulness of sin. -RCS 🕊

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SOUTHERN UNION CONFERENCE  
302 Research Drive  
Peachtree Corners, Georgia 30092  
Mail Address P.O. Box 923868  
Peachtree Corners, Georgia 30010-3868  
Telephone 770-408-1800  
www.southernunion.com



EDITOR Bryant Taylor, D.Min.  
MANAGING EDITOR Irisene Douce  
CIRCULATION Yaime Cordova  
ADVERTISING Yaime Cordova  
LAYOUT O'livia Woodard  
PRODUCTION College Press

## CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

ADVENTHEALTH  
Elizabeth Camps  
ADVENTHEALTH UNIVERSITY  
Jennifer Audette  
CAROLINA  
Rebecca Carpenter  
FLORIDA  
Gladys Neigel  
GEORGIA-CUMBERLAND  
Nathan Zinner  
GULF STATES  
Daniel Claudet  
KENTUCKY-TENNESSEE  
Paola Mora Zepeda  
OAKWOOD UNIVERSITY  
Norman Jones  
SOUTH ATLANTIC  
James Lamb, Ph.D.  
SOUTH CENTRAL  
Roger R. Wade  
SOUTHEASTERN  
Benia Dean  
SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY  
Rebecca Brooks

## CONFERENCE/ INSTITUTION DIRECTORY

CAROLINA 704-596-3200  
P.O. Box 44270, Charlotte, NC 28215  
FLORIDA 407-644-5000  
351 S. State Road 434, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714-3824  
GEORGIA-CUMBERLAND 706-629-7951  
P.O. Box 12000, Calhoun, GA 30703-7001  
GULF STATES 334-272-7493  
P.O. Box 240249, Montgomery, AL 36117  
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P.O. Box 1088, Goodlettsville, TN 37070-1088  
SOUTH ATLANTIC 404-792-0535  
P.O. Box 1688, Decatur, GA 30031-1688  
SOUTH CENTRAL 615-226-6500  
P.O. Box 24936, Nashville, TN 37202  
SOUTHEASTERN 352-735-3142  
P.O. Box 1016, Mt. Dora, FL 32756-0056  
ADVENTHEALTH 407-357-2083  
900 Hope Way, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714  
ADVENTHEALTH UNIVERSITY 800-500-7747  
671 Winyah Drive, Orlando, FL 32803  
OAKWOOD UNIVERSITY 256-726-7000  
7000 Adventist Blvd., Huntsville, AL 35896  
SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY  
800-SOUTHERN  
P.O. Box 370, Collegedale, TN 37315-0370

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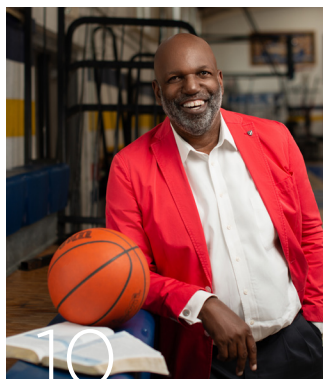
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COVER PHOTO: SPENCER FREEMAN,  
ADVENTHEALTH

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AdventHealth women leaders include Amanda Maggard (sitting, left), Sheila Rankin, Jessica Brazier, Oleseae Azevelo (standing, left), and Audrey Gregory, Ph.D.



# A HEART FOR HEALING

BY ELIZABETH CAMPS

## Experiences and Lessons from AdventHealth Women Leaders

At the core of AdventHealth's mission of Extending the Healing Ministry of Christ lies a special narrative — one that is told each day through women leaders who embody a love for others, a drive for excellence, and an unwavering faith. These leaders of diverse backgrounds and experiences lead committed and talented teams, navigating the intricate landscape of health care, and bringing care to millions of patients each year. They are passionate, they are smart, they are caring. They are also few.

Today, not enough women are in positions of leadership. In the health care industry, where female representation is

high at 75%, a recent study by McKinsey showed that executive women leaders only make up a fraction of the workforce, and much less for minorities and women of color.

How can we more broadly open the doors for more women to lead and mentor the new generation who will come after them?

It starts at the top.

Let's look at five women executive leaders at AdventHealth, who have worked diligently and intentionally to not only mentor and encourage other women into leadership, but to also be an example so that the next generation can step into leadership and make a difference.





Olesea Azevedo

PHOTO BY: SPENCER FREEMAN, ADVENTHEALTH

“

My hope for the next generation is to devote themselves to healing, compassion, and faith, blending the science of medicine and the art of grace and empathy. In this way, we can bring whole-person care to even more people.

*Olesea Azevedo*

”

### **Olesea Azevedo | Executive Vice President, Chief Administrative Officer**

Growing up in a small town in Moldova in eastern Europe, Olesea Azevedo was very close to her grandmother, who ran a flower business and managed to care for her family too. At the time, it was uncommon to see women working outside the home. Her grandmother's example would spark a desire to pursue a career where she could lead meaningful work and care for her family too.

Working part-time in a car parts packaging plant in high school, Azevedo's supervisor asked her one day to clean the restrooms as the cleaning crew was out sick. She remembers thinking this wasn't part of her job description. But after some

thought, she grabbed the cleaning supplies and scrubbed those bathrooms like they were her own home. "The next day, my supervisor told me, 'If you can clean bathrooms, you have enough humility to lead people,'" said Azevedo. "He promoted me to a leadership role, supervising a part of the operations team."

As her career progressed in Chicago, Illinois, from roles in marketing to human resources, requiring significant travel, she also experienced changes in her personal life — getting married, and then becoming a mother to two boys. Still wanting to live out her childhood dream to be a leader and care for her family, Azevedo joined health care to find fulfillment and balance, a crucial decision that would bring her to AdventHealth in 2016.

"It has been my greatest joy to be used as God's vessel to fulfill His mission at AdventHealth," said Azevedo, who leads the company's teams in human resources, consumer experience, brand, and corporate services. "Our teams' ultimate goal, whether for our 94,000 team members or the 7 million patients we serve, is ensuring each person experiences wholeness, caring for their body, mind, and spirit."

Reflecting on the future, Azevedo shared, "My hope for the next generation is to devote themselves to healing, compassion, and faith, blending the science of medicine and the art of grace and empathy. In this way, we can bring whole-person care to even more people."



**Jessica Brazier | Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer  
| Vice President of People Strategy and Sustainability**

Jessica Brazier's journey to her current role took an untraditional route, starting in journalism and bringing her to her current role in diversity, equity, and inclusion, and people strategy and sustainability for AdventHealth.

As a journalist, Brazier was passionate about storytelling. "I interviewed people and brought stories to light for the community that, in my mind, made a difference," said Brazier. In doing this work, she realized she had a deeper calling.

"Something activated within me," said

Brazier. "I realized I wanted to change the realities of these stories."

She decided to pursue public policy and management for her graduate studies, and consulting with the federal government, the White House, and nonprofit organizations. "I looked at people and strategies that could help make the world a better place, help people achieve their highest potential, and close the achievement gap," said Brazier.

This focus led her to health care. She realized that for a person to reach their highest potential, they needed to feel well physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Brazier shared an interaction she had with a team member who benefitted from AdventHealth's debt-free educa-

tion program, that shows what can happen when people are given the opportunity to reach their highest potential.

"One of our team members with a racially and ethnically diverse background reached out and explained how having this assistance has changed the trajectory for his family, his life, his future — it's increased his earning potential."

This is just one of the countless stories Brazier has received that often brings her to tears. "I am all about seeing people become the best versions of themselves. And, to know that we, through the collective power of a large organization like AdventHealth, can influence that for thousands of people makes every day worthwhile."

**Audrey Gregory, Ph.D. | Executive Vice President, Chief Executive Officer for AdventHealth in East Florida**

Growing up in Jamaica as the eldest sibling and eldest granddaughter, being a leader was a natural role for Audrey Gregory, Ph.D., and it extended beyond her family. In high school, she was appointed as head girl for her all-girls' high school.

Gregory entered health care as a registered nurse and naturally moved into leadership roles. She then moved into hospital operations and administration, leading now as executive vice president and chief executive officer for AdventHealth in east Florida. "My clinical experience influences how I lead and what I think is important as a health care leader."

For Gregory, leadership has also always been about service as reflected through her family. Her father worked for the government and was a church elder while her mother was a teacher. Others in the family served in the military or as police officers.

As a leader for many hospitals and facilities, Gregory knows the importance of ensuring every team member and every patient is seen and heard. "That is how we *really* deliver on our mission," she said.



Jessica Brazier

PHOTO BY: SPENCER FREEMAN, ADVENTHEALTH





Audrey Gregory, Ph.D.

PHOTO BY: SPENCER FREEMAN, ADVENTHEALTH

“

My clinical experience influences how I lead and what I think is important as a health care leader. That is how we really deliver on our mission.

*Audrey Gregory, Ph.D.*

”

She experienced this personally when a close family member had a stroke and was admitted to AdventHealth for care. “I watched how she was cared for in our system, and how we really went out of our way to extend the healing ministry of Christ,” said Gregory. “My role ensures that those who care for patients have the resources and equipment they need to do it, and that we’re growing in areas to allow those who have not yet met Jesus to meet Him through us.”

Gregory hopes to continue living out AdventHealth’s mission. “I hope I leave a God-fearing legacy for my children and for those with whom I come in contact. I hope to make a positive impact for women in health care that will encourage them to stay or start their journey in health care.”

### **Sheila Rankin | Chief Executive Officer at AdventHealth Kissimmee**

As a child, Sheila Rankin dreamed of becoming a doctor. She had a passion for helping people heal and making a positive impact in the world.

Following her dream, she enrolled in medical school in Colombia. But, she realized that she could have a more pow-

erful impact by following a different path. After moving to the U.S., Rankin pursued a business degree and found she could still be in health care in a new way.

Rankin’s first touchpoint with AdventHealth was as a financial planning analyst. Her natural talent for leading

allowed her to step into roles where she could lead teams to success. She used her financial expertise to help executives and operational leaders make decisions.

These experiences piqued Rankin’s interest in trying new things, and she felt God’s calling to use her talents in new



Sheila Rankin

PHOTO BY: SPENCER FREEMAN, ADVENTHEALTH



ways. Now leading AdventHealth Kissimmee, Rankin feels privileged to serve at a facility that has expanded its mission footprint in a county that is in the top 10 fastest growing counties in the U.S.

“After many of life’s twists and turns, God brought me back to the mission of health care,” said Rankin. “Caring for people is still one of my passions. Even though I’m not a doctor, I still have the privilege to make a positive impact on the world.”

Over time Rankin honed her leadership skills, learning the difference between being a boss and being a leader. “This responsibility is something I do not take lightly,” she said. “People come to us at their most vulnerable state every day, and we have the privilege and mission responsibility to care for them as Christ would.”

Reflecting on her journey, Rankin can think of several mentors and role models who helped her along the way, including her mother and many women executive leaders at AdventHealth.

Now Rankin aims to be an example to others. “My hope is to inspire other female leaders of all backgrounds to dream *big*,” she said. “I want to challenge other female leaders to constantly strive to become better versions of themselves. Together, we can make a positive difference in the communities in which we serve.”

### Amanda Maggard | Chief Executive Officer at AdventHealth Celebration

Amanda Maggard’s introduction to leadership came in her sophomore year of high school when she started a school newspaper.

“My English teacher partnered with me and encouraged me as I pulled a team together, crafted a vision for the paper, and made it a reality,” said Maggard. Four years later while attending Union College, she joined the school newspaper, *The Clocktower*, serving as its editor and selecting a talented team of writers and graphic designers to re-envision the paper.

“At the time, I had no idea that hospital executive leadership would be in my future,” shared Maggard. “But I felt a natural calling to dream big and lead people to make a vision a reality.”

Health care was a space Maggard was very familiar with as a child. Her mother and grandmother were nurses, and her father worked on the business side of

Adventist hospitals. “I grew up around hospital lobbies and cafeterias, volunteering once I was older,” said Maggard. “Health care was always very familiar.”

When she did enter the health care space as an intern at AdventHealth, the doors opened to a world of possibilities where she could put her talents and passion for leadership to use. She started



Amanda Maggard

PHOTO BY: SPENCER FREEMAN, ADVENTHEALTH

in marketing and fundraising, and then moved into patient experience.

At AdventHealth Winter Garden, she worked tirelessly with her team during a facility expansion project, acquiring permits and finalizing plans to finish the project on time. “It was such a wonderful experience to see the vision come to life,” said Maggard. “I drove home and thought, ‘Wow! All the challenges we face and look how God led and how it all turned out.’”

Maggard’s passion for bringing a vision

to reality continues to be a part of who she is today, now leading at AdventHealth Celebration. “I just want to help people,” she said. “I want people to have a better experience because of something small I did, to help my team grow and develop, to create a better experience for patients — that is the kind of legacy I want to leave.” ❶

**Elizabeth Camps** is the senior stakeholder communications specialist at AdventHealth.



# “WHERE JUMP SHOTS MEET JESUS” PROVIDES NEW STEPS TO CHRIST

BY LUCAS L. JOHNSON II

When Tim Allston thinks about basketball, it’s not just fast breaks, slam dunks, and alley-oops, but — through divine inspiration — an opportunity to draw people to Jesus Christ. He explains his unorthodox approach in his new book, *Where Jump Shots Meet Jesus*.

“My hope is that this book will make the Bible, and the teachings of Christ, more applicable in people’s lives,” Allston said in a recent interview. “For those who like sports, but don’t really know Christ, this is a way to get to know Him.”

A fourth-generation Seventh-day Adventist, Allston said there were three incidents over a period of time that helped inspire the book’s creation. The first was in December of 1989. While in a Huntsville, Alabama, barber shop, he picked up a copy of *Esquire* magazine and read an article that asked several famous individuals “the book to read” for the upcoming decade of 1990. The response that stuck with him was Oprah Winfrey’s, who said the Bible. “She said ‘every answer to every question that man could ever pose has already been answered [in the Bible],’” recalled Allston.





Then in 2019, he was listening to John Nixon Sr., D.Min., lecture to a group of theology majors, and heard the prominent Adventist pastor tell the future ministers, “Jesus Christ is in every single verse in the Bible; if you can’t find Him in that verse, don’t preach it.”

But, Allston said it was an encounter about two years ago at Synovus Bank in Huntsville that gave him the affirmation he needed. In a conversation with a bank assistant, he mentioned that he was

considering writing a book that intersects basketball and the Bible. The assistant then told him, “Tim, you do know that basketball originated in a YMCA (Young Men’s Christian Association) gymnasium.”

“I had forgotten that! I was blown away!” said Allston. “The fact that basketball was invented in a gymnasium for the Young Men’s Christian Association — that became all the alley-oop that I needed.”

Additionally, he reflected on what Winfrey said about the Bible, and Nixon’s statement on Christ being in every verse of the Bible. Allston then began to develop the foundation of the book, which includes parallels between principles winning NBA teams used to become dynasties — like the Boston Celtics, the Los Angeles Lakers, the Chicago Bulls, and the Golden State Warriors — and principles Christ used to lead his disciples.

For instance, Allston said just like Jesus taught his “disciple-players” about servant leadership, successful NBA teams teach their players to “serve your teammates rather than first being served; and by serving them first, they’ll score, and you’ll get the assist!”

Such comparisons Allston has branded as “NBA 2.0,” for New Bible Advocacy.

“I believe that Jesus can be found in winning NBA championship dynasties,” he said. “Because when you start to think about Jesus as the consummate leader, and the consummate manager, that leadership and that management mantra permeates every area of our lives.”

Allston said he’s hopeful the concept of overlapping winning NBA championship dynasties with biblical best practices, and player-coach Jesus Christ will help win souls for the Kingdom.

“For those in need of a spiritual assist, I’m offering an alley-oop — to Christ.”

To learn more about what Tim Allston is doing to win souls for Christ, visit [timallston.com](http://timallston.com). 🏀



#### Lucas L. Johnson II

*is a freelance writer who lives in Nashville, Tennessee.*



# SOUTHERN LAUNCHES ASPIRING TEACHERS' CLUBS AT ADVENTIST ACADEMIES

BY AMANDA BLAKE

To inspire the next generation of Seventh-day Adventist teachers, Southern Adventist University piloted the nation's first Aspiring Teachers' Club (ATC) for students at both Georgia-Cumberland Academy and Collegedale Academy in 2022. Since then, it has continued to grow into a valuable resource for high school students throughout the Southern Union Conference who are interested in a career in education.

Melanie DiBiase, Ed.D., associate professor of education at Southern, describes the purpose of the Union-wide ATC program as “pulling back the curtain on teaching,” empowering high school students to jumpstart their journeys as educators and learn about a misunderstood career.

“We all go through school, so everybody sees what a teacher does,” said DiBiase. “However, most kids don't fully understand the role and mission of an educator. They don't realize that teachers make thousands of tough decisions some days.”

As members of an ATC, academy students have opportunities to shadow and assist professional teachers, engage in pre-professional development club meetings, lead out in school worship and mini-lessons, assist in coaching sports teams, and attend University Education Department

events. They also tutor younger students at nearby Adventist elementary schools; meet with sponsors to discuss tenets of effective instruction, such as social-emotional learning and growth mindset; and interact with denominational conference leaders to learn about careers within the Adventist school system.

“Aspiring Teachers' Clubs allow kids to test-drive teaching and build relationships with valuable mentors early. It's a way to make them feel seen and wanted, to elevate the profession of teaching,” said DiBiase.

## Working as a Team

Piloting the ATC was a team effort between Southern's School of Education and Psychology, the University's administration, and the Southern Union. DiBiase shared, “The Southern Union Conference assisted the two initial clubs financially and through the expertise of Keith Hallum and Carla Thrower in the Union's Education Department last year. This year, Murray Cooper, who replaced Hallum as the director of education, found additional funding for each of the eight clubs in the Southern Union. In addition, Jason Merryman, Southern Adventist University's vice president for enrollment management, was instrumental in getting the clubs started in 2022, both



PHOTO BY: COURTESY OF SFFC FOUNDATION

**Aspiring Teacher's Club members have the opportunity to tutor younger students at Adventist elementary schools.**

financially and through his expertise, and he continues to find scholarship funding and support for local clubs this year.”

“This initiative is about teamwork,” said DiBiase. “People who work at all levels of education are coming together to promote a career in teaching. This is important since a student's experience in school each year heavily depends on their teachers. Our Adventist schools are one of our Church's largest ministries, and it is reliant on the quality of teachers we have working in our schools. The heart of the ATC initiative is helping young people discover their God-given purpose in education, and to begin supporting them



as they pursue a career in education even at the academy level. By providing early support to students interested in teaching, it gives them a solid foundation as they begin their journey in education.”

### Expanding Opportunities

In the spring of 2023, the SFFC Foundation approached Tammy Overstreet, Southern’s dean for the School of Education, Psychology, and Counseling, along with Leisa Standish, director for elementary education at the North American Division, about adding a scholarship component to the clubs. During the 2023-24 school year, the SFFC Foundation offered to fund up to eight tutoring scholarships to every academy in the North American Division. Southern also introduced a scholarship worth \$7,000 over four years to award to one high school senior from each club it supports.

These scholarship opportunities helped the ATC continue to grow, and Southern Adventist University, in conjunction with the Southern Union, currently supports clubs at six academies: Atlanta Adventist Academy, Bass Memorial Academy, Collegedale Academy, Georgia-Cumberland Academy, Highland Academy, and Madison Academy. Oakwood University also supports an ATC at its local academy.

As the scholarships presented new opportunities to expand the program, the North American Division began working with Southern and Oakwood to help develop a club model and resources for other clubs sponsored by other Adventist universities across the United States and Canada.

### Mentoring the Next Generation

DiBiase hopes the ATC will not only help high school students realize God’s calling for their lives, but also create a pipeline of quality Adventist educators who will bless young learners for years to come. “We want the students who enter our programs to be ready to embrace the rigors of college and the journey to becoming a teacher. We want to fill the Seventh-day



PHOTO BY: COURTESY OF SFFC FOUNDATION

Through tutoring and learning from mentors, students are able to explore various aspects of teaching, such as helping young learners discover the joy of reading.



PHOTO BY: PAMELA DAVENPORT

Some of the students in the Aspiring Teachers Club at Collegedale Academy meet for a group discussion during lunch, led by their teacher and club sponsor Brian Arner (left).

Adventist teacher pipeline with high-quality, enthusiastic educators who are ready to successfully enter the classroom on day one of their careers,” said DiBiase.

“One of our Church’s greatest ministries is our school system, and for children in our schools, one of the most important people in their lives is their teacher,” said DiBiase. “Every single year, our students deserve the very best. That’s true at each level of education, from college to kindergarten. That’s why we need to support teachers, even if they’re still in high school and considering a career in education. We need to help young peo-

ple build tools that transform them into teacher-disciples for Christ.”

Jordan Smith, high school senior and Collegedale Academy’s ATC president, said, “The Aspiring Teachers’ Club has connected me with teachers who care about my future and are willing to help me achieve my goals. My experience in this club has convinced me that I want to be a teacher just like my incredible mentors.” 📖

**Amanda Blake** is a senior journalism major at Southern Adventist University.



# ON THEIR HEARTS AND IN THEIR PRAYERS

BY DALE SLONGWHITE, DOUG HARDT, JANE QUEVEDO, AND LARYSA GEORGINOVA

For some, the war in Ukraine has been something happening to other people on the other side of the world. To the Markham Woods Church in Longwood, Florida, whose membership includes many Ukrainian families, war is on their hearts and in their prayers every moment of every day. In 2021, they adopted Ukraine as one of their countries of mission emphasis.

Three years before, in 2018, Larysa Georginova immigrated to the United

States from the Ukraine with her family and joined the Markham Woods Church. At the time, her mother, Valentina Mohylna, chose to remain in her hometown of Berdyansk on the coast of the Sea of Azov, 56 miles from Mariupol. Larysa kept in contact with her mother through occasional visits and through Skype.

Then the unthinkable happened. In February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine, destroying Mariupol and occupying cit-

ies and villages in the southeastern part of the country, including Berdyansk. While many residents abandoned their homes and businesses, Valentina, then 86 years old and living alone, could not imagine leaving the only place she called home.

Meanwhile, Doug Hardt, Markham Woods Church senior pastor, contacted Vladimir Tkachuk, the Euro-Asian Division treasurer who is Ukrainian. Hardt told him the Markham Woods Church



Markham Woods Church volunteers in Romania on the first trip soon after the war started. ADRA Romania helped the group get their 27 suitcases of medical supplies across the border.





Volunteers prayed with this soldier at a cathedral in Lviv, Ukraine. He was one of only three out of a group of 11 in his unit who survived the front lines — and he is the only one who is still able to walk at all.

would take up special offerings to buy buses and fuel for evacuees who lived on the front lines, and to bake four tons of loaves of bread daily for the people of Kyiv and eastern Ukraine.

The first Sabbath, the church raised \$50,000, more than double their goal. They put a tab on their church website where the community could contribute. Since the beginning of the war, the

Markham Woods Church and the surrounding community has raised more than \$350,000. Florida Conference administration also saw the great need in Ukraine and promoted this project in all of the churches and raised an additional \$700,000. The total sent to Ukraine has exceeded \$1 million.

Twice, Hardt visited Ukraine with churches from Florida to deliver funds for their summer camp and the medical clinic in Chernivtsi, to help children orphaned due to the war, and to bring medical supplies. A Ukrainian organization conducted a survey that asked individuals which government or non-governmental agency helped them on the front lines the most; 71% of respondents named the Seventh-day Adventist Church. At this time, 6,000 individuals are taking Bible studies, many of whom received aid from Florida Conference special offerings.

During this time, Larysa joined the prayer and quilt ministry of the Markham Woods Church. In 2015, five women with limited quilting experience came together weekly to sew quilts for individuals experiencing serious illness, death of a loved one, other trauma, and for baby dedications. Over



Olena Kotliarova is sharing ice cream with some of the 180 orphans who were living at the Adventist camp at the beginning of the war.



Larysa Georginova and her mother, Valentina Mohylna, met in Poland.



the years, the group has added quilts to cover incubators for premature babies in a local hospital and, most recently, comfort quilts for Ukrainian refugees. The ministry has grown to 16 women who have distributed more than 350 quilts, which take between 30 and 100 hours to construct.

Larysa asked the quilters to pray for her mother and gave them weekly updates. Early reports of “She’s okay” eventually changed to “It’s not good.” Yet, Larysa’s pleas for her mother to leave Ukraine were met with an unequivocal, “No, even if they fire or bomb, I will stay here at home.” When the occupying power stopped granting travel permission into Ukraine, Larysa’s personal visits ceased, and as living conditions deteriorated, she relied on the support and prayers of her quilting sisters and church members. Slowly, over time she began to see the Holy Spirit act on her mother’s heart. Finally, she heard the words she’d been waiting for: “Yes, I’m ready.”

Larysa embarked on a journey from Orlando to Warsaw on May 17, 2023, where she reunited with her mother,



Valentina Mohylina (front), originally from Ukraine; Sue Keller (left, rear), prayer quilt ministries leader; and Larysa Georginova, Valentina’s daughter



Valentina Mohylina is holding the quilt made for her by quilting women from Markham Woods Church.

who had traveled for two days from an occupied territory to Poland. Together they proceeded to Kyiv to arrange Valentina’s travel documents for the U.S. As they prayerfully waited for the documents, they lived in Bucha for three weeks in one of the buildings of the Adventist University, where Larysa had previously worked. Every night they heard air raid alarms, explosions, and rockets whistling overhead. As the process took some time, they returned to Poland, first in Podkowa Lesna near Warsaw and then in Warsaw itself, before finally flying to Orlando on July 12, 2023. During this entire process, the family of Olena, Valentina’s granddaughter, provided great assistance. But the most important leader was God!

Twelve days later, they met with the quilters of the Markham Woods Church who presented Valentina with a welcome quilt they had been working on

since Larysa left. Each of the 30 quilt blocks used fabric with the colors of the Ukrainian flag and the United States flag. No two quilt blocks were exactly alike.

Help is still needed in Ukraine. Twenty-seven churches have been destroyed or severely damaged. All of their schools have had to build bomb shelters or the government would shut them down. Almost 20% of the church membership has left the country.

God blessed the mustard seed of faith of the people in the Markham Woods Church. With the donated funds from the church and community, it is estimated tens of thousands of mothers and fathers and aunts and uncles and grandmothers and grandfathers and children of all ages have been helped in a land on the other side of the world, but not so far away — including one 4’11” 87-year-old grandmother who is learning to quilt. ❶



# AdventHealth University Welcomes Karen Benn Marshall, Ed.D., M.S., as Provost

AdventHealth University (AHU) has appointed Karen Benn Marshall, Ed.D., M.S., as its new provost. An experienced administrator and educator, Benn Marshall brings more than 30 years in academia, as well as a passion for academic excellence, institutional effectiveness, and strategic planning.

“AdventHealth University is thrilled to welcome Dr. Benn Marshall to our institution,” said C. Josef Ghosn, Ed.D., FACHE, president and CEO of AdventHealth University. “We are confident Dr. Benn Marshall will develop a strong academic vision for AdventHealth University, guiding us into a pivotal era of growth, integrity, collaboration, and innovation. We hope she is inspired by the dedication, talent, and passion of our faculty, staff, and students.”

Before coming to AHU, Benn Marshall served as vice president for enrollment services and retention and dean for the center for student success at Oakwood University in Huntsville, Ala., where she held a variety of leadership roles, including assistant provost for undergraduate education, vice president for academic administration, interim senior vice president, and dean of the school of nursing and health professions. She earned a doctorate in science education from Morgan State University in Baltimore, Md.; a master of science degree in biology from Alabama A&M University; and a bachelor’s degree in biology from Oakwood College (now Oakwood University).

“I am honored to serve in this leadership capacity at a faith-affirming institution,” said Benn Marshall. “I look

forward to working collaboratively with AHU faculty and staff to ensure we grow enrollment while continuing to provide a high-quality educational experience for our students.”

With campuses in Orlando, Fla., and Denver, Colo., AHU offers more than 20 undergraduate and graduate degrees

in health care, as well as more than 25 industry certifications in high-demand fields. To learn more, visit [AHU.edu](https://AHU.edu).

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BY JENNIFER AUDETTE, SOCIAL MEDIA  
AND COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER AT  
ADVENTHEALTH UNIVERSITY

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Karen Benn Marshall, Ed.D., M.S., was appointed the new provost at AdventHealth University.



# Churches Embrace Lifestyle Changes for Diabetes Prevention, Management

The Centers for Disease Control indicates that almost half of the U.S. population has diabetes or pre-diabetes. While that statistic is significant, roughly half of that group is unaware of their condition. Just a few years ago, it was uncommon for grade school children to be diagnosed with diabetes. However, today, there is growing concern as these children are increasingly affected.

The symptoms of diabetes can include fatigue, increased thirst, increased urination, or, more commonly, no symptoms at all. Consequently, individuals may remain unaware of their condition until visiting a doctor for another reason. The long-term effects of untreated diabetes can be severe, including heart disease, stroke, hypertension, blindness, kidney disease, nerve damage, amputations, depression, mobility issues, and dental problems.

For individuals who are prediabetic or diabetic, it is crucial not to ignore the condition due to uncertainty about what to do. Taking the initiative to understand and implement best practices for nutrition, exercise, sleep, and water intake can significantly impact one's health.

Over a six-week period spanning from October to December, Little Creek Fellowship and the Raleigh Church collaborated to host a Reversing Diabetes Seminar at the Raleigh Church. With an average attendance of 30 students and volunteers, participants engaged in the Grundy Reversing Diabetes Seminar, covering topics such as fiber, sugar (in its various forms), carbohydrates, fats, nutrition, inflammation, and epigenetics. The seminar composed of lectures, exercise sessions, Q&A discussions, and sampling healthy foods.

Participants learned strategies for making favorite foods healthier, the importance of reading food labels, grocery shopping tips, effective exercise meth-



PHOTO BY: PETRONELLA MHISHI

ods, hydration needs, and the significance of sleep for overall health. Other key lessons included the following.

- Diabetes or pre-diabetes does not develop overnight, and reversing or improving the condition may require time, although immediate benefits are often noticeable.
- Excess weight significantly increases the risk of diabetes.
- Changing nutritional or exercise habits can be challenging, but progress is achievable by aiming to improve each day.
- It is never too late to return to healthy habits.
- Consuming a variety of colorful foods daily is beneficial.

Type 2 diabetes is categorized as a lifestyle disease, one of more than 3,000 that can be avoided or mitigated by focusing on nutrition, exercise, sleep, and water intake. Major lifestyle diseases may include most cardiac diseases, Alzheimer's, cancer, and others. While some Adventists lead healthy lifestyles, there is room for improvement for most, leading to significant health benefits.

Several participants proved the effectiveness of the seminar by reducing their insulin levels within a few weeks, with some experiencing days without requir-

ing insulin. Others reported remarkable improvements in their test results after just a few weeks, to the astonishment of their doctors. Many noted feeling better within one to two weeks.

Feedback from participants:

"My family urged me to take action for a long time, but you provided the guidance I needed."

"My overall health has improved immensely."

"I am eager to apply what I've learned and attend again."

"I've learned to eat healthily according to God's intended design."

"I was ignorant, but now I am enlightened."

"Please continue these seminars."

"I've lost 23 pounds!"

"I've lost 10 pounds!"

The Reversing Diabetes Seminar is not exclusively for diabetics; it advocates for a lifestyle beneficial to all. It serves as a valuable tool for evangelism, fostering community engagement and strengthening relationships between church members and the wider community. ❶

BY MIKE SIMMERING, LITTLE CREEK HEALTH MINISTRIES LEADER, GRUNDY REVERSING DIABETES INSTRUCTOR

# Eight Hundred Pathfinders Unite for Carolina Camporee

Approximately 800 Pathfinders hailing from clubs across North and South Carolina converged at Noso-ca Pines Ranch Youth Camp for the highly-anticipated 2023 “TAG HIS NAME” Carolina Conference Pathfinder Camporee.

Renowned Chicago street artist and Adventist pastor Milton Coronado took the stage as the featured speaker during the event. Coronado, known for his captivating artwork and spiritual insight, shared compelling stories from his life. Drawing a parallel between street art and faith, Coronado urged the attentive Pathfinders to display God’s tag in their lives each day. He also imparted wisdom by teaching several sections of the Street Art honor.

Pathfinders were given the opportunity to sign up for various honors, including Basic Rescue, First Aid, Orienteering, Geocaching, Christian Storytelling, Music, Dutch Oven Cooking, Wild Edibles, Seeds, Trees, and more. The event featured a slew of engaging activities such as soccer, volleyball, and basketball tournaments, a “swamp” walk, camping skills relays, knot tying challenges, fire building competitions, archery, tomahawk throws, human foosball, Frisbee tic-tac-toe, and even canoeing (which resulted in a few soggy Pathfinders). The Pioneer Village, a favorite among many, offered participants a glimpse into the past with guides in period clothing and a range of activities encompassing cooking, crafts, and survival skills. Amidst these activities, attendees had the chance to reconnect with old friends from across the Conference and establish new friendships, some of which are destined to endure for years to come. As the saying goes, “Once a Pathfinder, always a Pathfinder.” The Sabbath morning parade served as a poignant reminder of their



PHOTO BY: ARDEN PATHFINDER CLUB



PHOTO BY: ARDEN PATHFINDER CLUB

shared commitment to Jesus and this global youth movement.

Youth and sponsors alike expressed gratitude for the nearly perfect tent camping weather that graced the event. Evenings after camporee worships saw individuals engaged in heartfelt conversations, singing songs, and perhaps even roasting veggie-dogs or s’mores around club campfires. A notable highlight was the cook-off challenge, expertly judged by Philip Thomas, Mount Pisgah Academy chef, and a panel of culinary experts,

which showcased the culinary prowess of club cooks. Pathfinders extended their thanks to their local sponsors and lauded the outstanding leadership of Hector Gonzalez, Conference Pathfinder director; Vanessa Arana; and the dedicated members of the Pathfinder Council who worked tirelessly to orchestrate an unforgettable camporee. ❶

BY CHRIS SMALL



# William A. Kirlew Junior Academy Serves as God's Mission School

**M**aranatha Child Development Center sits on the campus of Maranatha Church. Visionaries listened to the suggestion of Theslyn Brown, former director, to start a school to further facilitate the students, and Maranatha Elementary School was begun in the church.

A beautiful school building was later erected in 2005 to house students. The name was changed to William A. Kirlew Junior Academy (WAKJA) in honor of William A. Kirlew, D.Min., who is still active at 103 years old.

"The mission of William A. Kirlew Junior Academy is to provide a Seventh-day Adventist Christian education, K-8, in which students may develop and mature spiritually, intellectually, physically, and socially."

WAKJA continues to fulfill its mission. Faculty and students participate in chapel services on Mondays and an Adventist Youth service monthly on Friday. Every fall and spring, there is a Week of Prayer. This year, Karina Scarlett facilitated Week of Prayer for grades K-3. The students were deeply involved in the Word of God by engaging in activities relating to the theme, "Be Strong and Courageous with God." Grades 4-8 listened intently to Becki Rogers, an author from Idaho. She impacted students with many stories of her conversion from devil worship to accepting the True and Living God.

Before COVID-19, Briana Salmon, now in grade 8, led Laila Jean Francois, her kindergarten friend, to accept Jesus.

Both were baptized. Not ending there, Laila's mom, Sheilene Jean Francois, and twin brothers, Joshua and Elijah, were also baptized. Nellie Holland, a third-grader's parent, was convinced that Saturday is the true Sabbath and was baptized at Maranatha. Just recently, Glenda Quintero, Raheen Brown, Rodney Brown, and Maneo Lewis gave their young hearts to Jesus.

WAKJA's mission is to allow students and family members to come to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior. This decision will allow them to be prepared for Earth but more so, for the Kingdom of God. Then and only then will God's mission be fully accomplished. 📌

BY VALREY FRANCIS, ED.D.



Laila Jean Francois (left) and Briana Salmon attend WAKJA. Briana led Laila's parents to send her to WAKJA, and Laila and Briana were baptized together. Then Laila's mom and twin brothers were baptized.

# “The Calling” Documentary Highlights Ministry of William A. Kirlew, D.Min.

For the first time in Broward County, “The Calling,” a documentary of the ministry and legacy of William A. Kirlew, D.Min., pastor, was presented on screen, Saturday, December 9, 2023, for all to share in his journey of faith, sacrifice, and joy.

Kirlew’s impact has been far-reaching and merits celebration for the innumerable lives influenced for the Kingdom. If not for God’s calling, this part of the world could have looked much

different. In south Florida alone, Kirlew established 17 churches over a 21-year period, beginning with Maranatha in 1976, and including the event venue itself, Lauderhill, which he founded in 1982. William A. Kirlew Junior Academy also came into fruition.

Prior to 1976, Kirlew began serving in ministry in his home country of Jamaica, where he established churches, pastored up to 13 churches at a time, and baptized hundreds. He followed

God’s leading to serve in the United States, eventually settling in Florida.

“The Calling” brings out the details and facts of a life being well-lived. Kevin Campbell, director; John Mills, executive producer; Stephen Stewart, producer; and Garry Gordon, Lauderhill pastor/producer, strived to reflect the challenges and the conviction and trust in God Kirlew had to exhibit in order to overcome those challenges.

Kirlew was in attendance with Sylvia Joy Levy Kirlew, his wife of more than 65 years; Therese Kirlew, one of their six children; and a host of friends and supporters. The processional included an escort of Lauderhill Pioneer Pathfinders and Adventurers flanked by the Drum Corp. Songs of thanksgiving, prayer, and testimonies filled the program, which also included recognition by Lauderhill Church, the Florida Conference, and the city of Lauderhill. A Proclamation from Florida State Representative Congresswoman Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick was read, and Hazelle Rogers, commissioner, presented a Proclamation on behalf of Broward County. The final words were a covering prayer by Gervon Marsh, pastoral ministries field associate for Florida Conference.

The program ended, but the journey continues. At 103 years of age, Kirlew, although retired, is still active. Ministry for him is not merely a job, it is his calling — which he is doing with grace, in love, and with honor. ①



William and Sylvia Kirlew are surrounded by family and friends at the showing of “The Calling,” which was as much a time of praise to God as it was of recognition of humble service. Pictured are Sylvia and William Kirlew, D.Min. (seated); Gervon Marsh (standing, left), Florida Conference pastoral ministries field associate; Therese Kirlew, daughter; John Mills, executive producer; Eric Allen, Maranatha elder; and Garry Gordon (back), Lauderhill pastor.

PHOTO BY: KARL PINNOCK

BY SHELLY PINNOCK



# Lawrenceville Company Becomes 186th Church in Georgia-Cumberland Conference

Lawrenceville Company became a church in the city of Lawrenceville, Ga., on January 27, 2024. The Lawrenceville Company was formed in the fall of 2018 by the merging of the New Fellowship Mission Group and Questview Company. The church organization was a historic day for the members, pastoral staff, and lay leaders, who attribute the event to the fact that, “We have come this far by faith.”

While the journey to this milestone has taken several years, the church was blessed on February 4, 2023, to have Dennis Ross Jr., interim pastor, and his wife, Jacquelyn, join their church. Later that year, Ross helped the church take the last few steps to request and be approved for full church status. The Lord answered the members’ prayers for a leader who firmly believes and stands on the promises of Jesus Christ, and the Rosses have been a great addition and enhancement to the church family.

Lawrenceville has been known to the community as a small church with a big heart. Members generously welcome each other and visiting friends with open arms of love. Most times it seems a bit infectious that those who choose to make it a church home give their selfless efforts to serve and to minister to the community.

Aiding in this ministry to the community is the church’s diverse membership, with cultures from the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, Europe, and North and South America. Having such diversity, the members incorporate each others’ strengths in meeting the needs of the community.

Every fourth Sabbath is food distribution. In 2023, the church served almost 10,000 people. In January 2024, the



PHOTO BY: NATHAN ZINNER

Dennis Ross (right), Lawrenceville Church pastor, along with church clerks Kay Bailey Robinson (center), and Nicoleen Elam (left), received a plaque that recognizes the Lawrenceville Church as the 186th church in the Georgia-Cumberland Conference. The church was officially organized on January 27, 2024.

members facilitated a drive to feed 100 meals to the homeless and provide them with warm blankets, coats, and toiletries. The church has also visited a shelter and took personally-named gifts to each child and adult.

The members also serve the community by having Google classes, and character and motivational classes for the youth and community, family life and health ministry days, and back to school backpack drives.

The youth are active in worship services and programs, and the members

are committed to providing more ministries for children, youth, and adults, and expanding its reach into the communities.

With such an emphasis on ministry, the members are actively praying for a church facility they can call their own as they strive to meet urgent needs for their members as well as the community. As the church rejoices, they invite everyone to pray for them as they move forward by faith. 🙏

BY WENDY CELESTINE, LAWRENCEVILLE CHURCH COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

# The Great Controversy Shared Across Conference, Lives Changed

The Georgia-Cumberland Conference actively started participating in the General Conference's *The Great Controversy* Project in July 2023. Since then, hundreds of thousands of copies of Ellen White's book have been distributed to individuals in Georgia and Tennessee. A total of 134 churches and eight schools within the Conference participated, and ordered a collective 200,000 English and 100,000 Spanish copies of the book. The Conference also included custom pages in the newly printed books that included QR codes, guiding readers to listen to the audio version of the book and to sign up for Bible studies, with people continuing to request the Bible studies.

Many churches have incorporated these books into their community outreach and evangelism efforts. The Greeneville, Tenn., Church not only joined the initiative, but embraced it as part of their church's mission to serve their community.

"We ordered 25,000 copies of *The Great Controversy*," says Nate Nelson, Greeneville intern pastor. "We had an evangelism initiative to hand out these books within a year. At first we held back because Messiah's Mansion was coming through and we wanted every-



one who came through to receive a copy of the book." The members handed out around 3,500 copies to Messiah's Mansion attendees.

The Greeneville Church also has a community service center which has a food pantry and gives out meals to those in their community. The center also received copies of the book which they hand out to people who come through. The church plans to hand out more copies of *The Great Controversy* in 2024, and use the content of the book to help address the needs in their local area. The church also has a team of dedicated members and Bible workers who reach out to the Bible study leads from the Greeneville area.

Many churches have already been

blessed to see the impact the book has made on those who received a copy. Esteban López, personal ministries director at the Ooltewah, Tenn., Hispanic Church, received a follow-up visit by someone he gave a book to after a group from his church was handing them out in Chattanooga, Tenn.

"I gave a copy of *The Great Controversy* to the pastor of [another church]," said López. "After a week, he stopped by my office and told me he's using it on Sundays at his church as a textbook."

Gary Rustad, Georgia-Cumberland Conference president, describes the importance of this initiative by referencing Ellen White's own words, where she wrote in Letter 281, "*The Great Controversy* should be very widely circulated. It contains the story of the past, the present, and the future. In its outline of the closing scenes of Earth's history, it bears a powerful testimony in behalf of the truth. I am more anxious to see a wide circulation for this book than for any others I have written, for in *The Great Controversy*, the last message of warning to the world is given more distinctly than in any of my other books." ❶

BY RACHEL BEAVER

## MLK Day Outreach Brings History to Life

Georgia-Cumberland Academy (GCA), Coble Elementary School, and Calhoun Pathfinder Club partnered together in service to commemorate

the work of Martin Luther King Jr.

Joining forces, faculty, students, parents, and Pathfinders pooled resources to learn and serve in three cemeteries in

the area which had fallen into disrepair: Colbert Cemetery, Zuber Cemetery, and a small cemetery located on the campus of GCA. Zuber and Colbert cemeteries



contained the remains of individuals that were enslaved on nearby plantations, as well as those who lived during segregation who were not allowed to be interred in “white” cemeteries.

Mr. and Mrs. Boone, caretakers of the Zuber Cemetery, shared with volunteers that although there were 120 graves marked with stones or white crosses, they estimate 300 to 400 unidentified remains

dot the property. Ground erosion leaves the land with lumps outlining the final resting space of those too poor for any other marker, and students carefully cleared vines and leaves from rocks, chains, and glass jars marking remains of others. Students carefully traced the names and dates of individuals, noting that some came from times before the Civil War. Boone, a descendent of slaves from a nearby plantation, counted some of these individuals in his family lineage.

The Colbert Cemetery, located within the city of Calhoun, served families segregated by race. Here, too, students and families witnessed the scarred earth, recognizing that slavery and segregation aren’t just located in history books, but sadly mar the collective local history. Blowing leaves, picking up sticks, and clearing brush not only provided a moment of learning for all, but, prayerfully, also a moment to recommit to the dreams of equality and opportunity espoused by Martin Luther King Jr. and Jesus. ❶



Ciara Rickerson (left), Eden Henderson, and Kelly Herr pause while raking at Zuber Cemetery in Rome, Ga. Coble Elementary School, Georgia-Cumberland Academy, and the Calhoun Pathfinder Club partnered to clean up several cemeteries in the Calhoun area on MLK Jr. Day.

BY REBEKAH HELBLEY, JOHN L. COBLE  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

## Congressman, Mayor Recognize 101-year-old Knoxville Veteran for WWII Service

The Knoxville, Tenn., First Church hosted two special guests on Veterans Day to recognize 101-year-old member Milton Jones for his service to this country during World War II. Tim Burchett, United States congressman, and Glenn Jacobs, Knox County mayor, joined Jones’ family and his church family to commend the veteran for his wartime service in the U.S. Navy, and for his

work on the Manhattan Project in the race to develop an atomic weapon.

Burchett recently honored Jones on the House floor by entering remarks about his service into the Congressional Record. Burchett read those remarks to the congregation and presented Jones with an official copy. The representative said of Jones, “He has served his country and his family well, and the east Tennessee community is thankful for the impact

you’ve had, and we’ve been very fortunate to know you.” Burchett also brought Jones a flag that was flown over the U.S. Capitol building in his honor along with a certificate and a humorous warning, “If I see this thing on eBay, Milton, I’m going to call you back.”

Jacobs read a brief biography of Jones and offered sincere gratitude for his many contributions to Knox County and east Tennessee. The mayor said,

“Mr. Jones, on behalf of Knox County, we want to thank you for your service, not only during World War II, but also your continued service to our community.” The nearly 7-foot wrestler-turned-mayor may have dwarfed the centenarian in height, but not in ability. The mayor asked the honoree, “The other day you had your log splitter taken apart and were putting a new engine on it?” Jones nodded. Jacobs responded with a laugh, “I can’t do that *now*!”

Matt Durante, pastor, shared a fitting verse in honor of the veterans present, “There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friend,” John 15:13. He closed that portion of the service with a prayer of dedication for those who have served and for the elected officials.

All three local television news stations were on hand to capture the event, and featured Jones in their broadcasts. Jones said of the day, “It was unbelievable. I could never have thought I would be standing on a stage with our congressman and our big mayor.”

Jones will celebrate his 102nd birthday on March 20, 2024. 📍

BY HANNA JONES, KNOXVILLE  
FIRST MEMBER



PHOTO BY: HANNA JONES

Milton Jones holds up the flag flown over the U.S. Capitol in his honor. Jones, who is turning 102 on March 20, 2024, was honored on Veterans Day in 2023 for his service in WWII.

## Jenson Retires from ABC Ministry

After more than 25 years of ABC leadership, Russ Jenson is retiring. For the past 18 years, Jenson has served in the Georgia-Cumberland Conference, most recently as ABC manager, overseeing the Collegedale, Tenn., and Decatur, Ga., locations as well as the bookmobile. In addition to serving in ABC’s, Jenson has served ADRA in the Franco-Haitian Union Mission and as a pastor.

“We are especially grateful for the many contributions that the ministry team of Russ and Crystal Jenson have made to the Georgia-Cumberland Conference,”

says Kurt Allen, Georgia-Cumberland vice president for finance.

Growing up in a missionary family, ministry has always been important to Jenson. His time serving with ADRA also helped him learn and appreciate the business side of ministry, he said.

But, what brings Jenson the greatest joy is connecting with people, from those who come in stricken with grief from losing a family member, to people visiting Collegedale for any myriad of reasons, or those looking for something to grow their spiritual life.

Jenson recalls a time when a gentleman came into the store looking for books on prophecy. As Jenson talked with the man, he discovered the man had recently learned about the Sabbath and started visiting the Collegedale Church. Jenson was able to connect this man to a member of the church who led him through a full set of Bible studies.

Over the years, Jenson has also repeatedly seen the ABC serve as a bridge between people who grew up in Adventist homes or had other Adventist connections, but did not attend church.



“You invariably meet people either here at the ABC in Collegedale or out on the bookmobile, who do not darken the door of an Adventist church. But, they have an Adventist background and they’re still coming to buy their Big Franks. We have a unique place to minister,” exclaims Jensen.

While Jensen looks forward to having more time to conduct Bible studies along with his wife, Crystal, as well as visiting his daughter in Germany and brother in Brazil, the ministry of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference ABC will continue.

David Haluska has accepted the invitation to become the new manager, transitioning from this same role in the British Columbia Conference.

“David has a wealth of knowledge and experience in both publishing and ABC ministries,” said Allen. “He firmly believes in the sacred messages that are shared in our books.”

BY NATHAN ZINNER



PHOTO BY: CAMERON REEL

Russ Jensen, who most recently served as Georgia-Cumberland Conference ABC manager, retired after 43 years of ministry.

## Health Weekend Attendees Experience Answered Prayers and Mud Masks

The winds swirled with gusts up to 55 mph and the rains were just as unpredictable. Much prayer was ascending for the healthy living emphasis weekend at Jasper, Tenn., Church. As the Sabbath began on Friday evening, a noticeable calm appeared. People started arriving at 5:30 p.m. for the first presentation; however, there was no sign of the speaker. Two of the church members started praying at the entryway and, upon opening their eyes, saw Walt Cross get out of his car.

The blessing of how Cross linked healthful living to leading others to Jesus was beautifully presented. The preparation for the end times talks were timely also.

Sunday, during the final presentation, 43 people came to watch Cross demonstrate hands-on natural remedies, including a mud mask with sticky molasses; and a concoction he called “rocket fuel,” made from garlic, onions, lemon juice, and a few other ingredients. Those that tasted it say it shot their immune system into outer space! “Linda,” a local Lowe’s employee,



Barbara Thomas (left), and Holly Abrams experience mud masks during the Jasper, Tenn., Church’s health emphasis weekend with speaker Walt Cross. The weekend attracted several visitors who appreciated the relaxed style of presentations, and the way healthy living was linked with leading others to Jesus.

was invited to attend by a church member, and said she really enjoyed Cross’ relaxed style and knowledge. Some who were not Adventist family members also attended, and they were full of smiles as they departed with information on how to combat

health challenges using items from their kitchen pantry.

BY DIANE HOOKER, JASPER PERSONAL MINISTRIES CO-LEADER

# Panama City Church Hosts “Let Us Adore Him” Concert

Each year Panama City Church in Panama City, Fla., hosts a traditional Christmas concert as an outreach event for its community. This year’s theme was “Let Us Adore Him.”

The concert was held December 8, 2023, and attracted the community, family, and guests, along with church members, for a delightful concert of Christmas music provided by the adults and children in the church.

Andreea Rac, adult choir director, shared, “We were super excited tonight. We had a great, successful Christmas concert, and we were able to bring in our community; enjoy God’s holy presence together; and enjoy the music, fellowship, and refreshments with everybody. Praise the Lord for this event, and we praise the Lord because we’re able to

bring in new people every single year, and make new friends, and connect with new people.”

Annie Martin, children’s choir director, beamed as she spoke about the children’s enthusiasm while singing, saying, “We had an amazing time of music, fellowship, and fun singing about Jesus Christ and His birth. We have been practicing every week since October. It’s been fun. I love it! I was so proud of everybody, especially the kids. They did so good. They really did. They smiled and made me so happy!”

Sheila Martin, one of the choir members, shared the impact of the concert, expressing, “We invited friends and family to come. My boss of 43 years, who is Muslim, came tonight and sat with my mom, and I was so excited. He videoed

the concert and was very impressed. And I have a friend, who I have known from work, and she said she’s looking for a home church, so I mailed her an invitation and asked her to come. She and her husband came tonight, and I was so excited, and they plan to come back again.”

Understanding the power of the story of Jesus’ birth and of community events such as this, Eddy Nunez, pastor, smiled as he said, “We couldn’t be happier for the opportunity to have our community here in our church worshipping together. It was a night that we will remember for years to come. We are very excited for the opportunity to adore our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

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BY COMMUNICATION TEAM

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Panama City concert



# Elders, Deacons, Deaconesses Gather to Learn How to Build Bridges to Those in Need

Gulf States Conference hosted the annual elders, deacons, and deaconesses retreat from December 8 to 10, 2023, with the theme, “Evangelism: Life of the Church.” Josh Murillo, Conference ministerial director, explained the spiritual growth the attendees experienced during the weekend, saying, “Here we are at Camp Alamisco having a great time, enjoying cool, beautiful weather. We are happy to report we have over 100 people — elders, deacons, deaconesses — who registered to attend this training event that serves as an inspiration and provides the tools for them to serve at a local church.”

Murillo continued, “The guest speaker for the weekend, Richie Halversen, Southern Union church growth director, talked about rebuilding — rebuilding our churches and rebuilding our faith.”

“The first night Halversen talked about rebuilding during difficult times. He utilized the story of Nehemiah and the challenges he faced. He made a beautiful comparison between Nehemiah and Jesus. On the following day he focused on how Jesus built the church and repaired people’s hearts, and how we are called to do the same for guests who come to our churches, as well as for members. We are very excited to be part of this. This is such a blessing.”

The event was impactful for those who attended. Samuel Cardoso, local church pastor, expressed, “The blessing to be here is that the elders’ retreat gives us the possibility to re-evaluate our mindset, the way we do things, and the way we have done things in the past. [It gives us] the right approach for today — the reality that we have in the church.”



Similarly, local church member, William Mann, from Coleman, Ala., also shared the blessing of the event saying, “It’s been amazing. So far, we have been able to talk to other deacons and elders. The fellowship we have here is simply amazing. To meet people from so many different walks of life and aspects of life, and to all have the same goal — to all have the same light at the end of the tunnel that we’re looking to see — it’s spectacular to see. Helping with the prep and doing things and getting ready for the people — everyone is so humble, so forthcoming, and just here to help one another and to learn and to move forward with God.”

Understanding the importance of equipping local church leaders to minister to their local communities, Martin Fancher, Conference executive secretary, said, “What a privilege to be here at Camp Alamisco for the elders, deacons, and deaconesses’ leadership retreat. El-

der Richie Halversen has been bringing the fire. The Holy Spirit is obviously present as we look at the topic of going into our community — going into the areas in which we live, in which we work, and sharing and showing the love of Jesus in a tangible way, [answering the question] ‘How do we build bridges to those who need Jesus?’ That’s the goal, and I think we are succeeding this weekend in finding and learning new ways to be better leaders in God’s Church.

Brian Danese, Conference president, echoed Martin’s sentiments, “It’s been a great time here at the elders’ retreat. Richie has done a great job just talking about how to practically grow your church. I hope everyone will plan on joining us next year. The theme next year will be about how to manage conflict in your church.”

BY COMMUNICATION TEAM

# Digital Church Celebrates One Year of Worshipping Together

This past December, the Digital Church is celebrating one year of worshipping together. Founded with the purpose to share the everlasting Gospel in a new and expanding digital society, the Digital Church has hosted local meet-togethers throughout the Conference, provided an environment for young people to praise the Lord together, and created an online community. It has also provided the opportunity for various people in the Conference to tell God's story.

Brian Danese, president of the Gulf States Conference, expressed, "We're so thankful that the Digital Church celebrates one year of worshipping together. What an amazing time all across our Conference.

We've gotten reports of families gathering together on Friday evenings to worship [and] to be a part of it. The Digital Church has helped lead out in meet togethers throughout our Conference. What an amazing year it's been for the Digital Church. I know that God is going to continue to lead in 2024."

Marcelo Mansur, pastor of the Digital Church, continued the sentiment, saying, "2024 will be an exciting year, but every year is an exciting year when Jesus is ahead of you, because you know that when God is for you, who can be against you?"

Marcelo invited members of the Gulf States Conference, saying, "So, 2024 is a year for the Digital Church to really become your online community. Please

turn on your notifications so you'll know when Digital Church is coming on. Be a part of it."

There are many ways to become active in the Digital Church community. Mansur explains that you can, "Leave your comments, wherever you're watching from. Send us your questions. We would love to hear from you and to create a strong bond — a strong community in the year 2024.

Because we know that when we gather and pray together, there is power, and we cannot wait to see what the Lord will do through the Digital Church. So come along; we can't wait to see you there!" 📢

BY **COMMUNICATION TEAM**



Digital Church



# Breaking Chains: Member Shares Testimony of Callings, Recovery, Faith

Throughout his life, Kevin Elkins viewed drug use as the norm. He started smoking pot at the age of 9 and escalated to harder substances by the time he graduated from high school. For an extended period, he labeled himself as a functional drug user; outwardly, his struggles with drugs remained hidden from those around him.

Elkins thought he was living the best life, even when his drug use put him in life-threatening situations multiple times — including a time when he was left on life support for four days. Deep inside, however, he knew something was missing. He especially felt this eight years ago when his older brother passed away.

“My brother was my best friend,” said Elkins. “I remember being so lost after he was gone. I had a needle in my arm and a gun in my mouth. I was not excited to live anymore. This is when God started getting my attention.”

Elkins tried leaving the world of drugs behind, but as he did, his friends started offering him free drugs. Despite his efforts to quit, Elkins would often relapse into old habits. Then, he started having heart complications and was told by doctors that his life was at risk. This was the second time Elkins felt God trying to get his attention.

“I realized I did not want to die,” said Elkins. “More importantly, I realized God was telling me to go to Him first. If I went to Him, He would take care of the rest.”

So, Elkins got a Bible and started diving deep into its pages. Through his studies, he learned about Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross and God’s gift of salvation. He also learned about the Sabbath and began searching for churches that observed it, though with little success. On more than



Kevin Elkins shares his testimony with the Stanton Church. For many years, Elkins struggled with drug abuse but found a different life when he started studying the Bible.



Kevin Burk (left), pastor, and Kevin Elkins pose together for a photo. According to Burk, Elkins has become an integral part of the Stanton Church, and has opened doors to reach those struggling with substance abuse.

one occasion, local churches turned him away when their responses failed to satisfy his questions.

However, Elkins did not want to give up and, instead, asked his cousin to baptize him. In September of 2022, Elkins was baptized in a swimming hole behind his home in Kentucky.

“From that moment, God took away my drug addiction,” said Elkins. “Though I still faced temptations, I could no longer be around drugs or be associated with them. When God said He would take care of the rest, He did — He removed drugs from my life.”

During this time, Elkins also came across a sermon by Doug Batchelor, pastor, and signed up for Bible studies with Amazing Facts. He received a call on July 7, 2023, from Kevin Burk, pastor for the Winchester and Stanton churches in Kentucky.

“I had been contacted by Amazing Facts about this person in my area who had completed their Bible studies,” said

Burk. “When I finally got in touch with [Elkins] he was so excited. He kept on saying how he had discovered something so beautiful in the Adventist message that he just couldn’t stop talking about it.”

Since then, Elkins has been attending the Stanton, Ky., Church — a church plant that emerged just as he had begun praying for a church family. According to Burk, Elkins has become an integral member, actively participating in community service projects and facilitating ministry outreach to those dealing with substance abuse. Elkins continues his Bible study with the Stanton Church and plans to get rebaptized in March of 2024.

“I hated myself for a long time,” said Elkins. “But, now I roll out of bed every morning and I praise God for the joy he’s brought in my life and into my heart. I was dead inside, and He resurrected me.” 🕊

BY PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

# Memphis Churches Raise More than \$20,000 for MAA's Music Program

**T**en Memphis, Tenn., churches from Kentucky-Tennessee Conference and South Central Conference, alongside one Mississippi church from the Gulf States Conference, united in a fundraising concert at the Longview, Tenn., Church on January 6, 2024. The event aimed to support Memphis Adventist Academy (MAA), and successfully raised \$22,665 to enhance the school's music program.

The concert became a vibrant blend of musical diversity, with participating churches and MAA's choir contributing two songs each. The repertoire spanned English, Spanish, and Kinyarwanda, the native language of Rwanda.

"It is a beautiful thing, just working with all the churches," said Fabian Reid, MAA principal. "I can tell you, all the churches put their heart and soul into making [the concert] happen. They are united in ensuring the success of the school."

Beyond the musical display, the fundraising event had a profound purpose — to revamp the school's music program. The \$22,665 raised will be allocated toward acquiring new instruments and



The Longview Heights Church choir takes the stage. By the end of the concert, MAA raised \$22,665.



Concert attendees join in praise during the MAA concert. Eleven churches from the Kentucky-Tennessee, South Central, and Gulf States Conferences came to support the school's fundraiser.

providing well-deserved compensation for the music teacher. According to Reid, MAA wants to prepare the musicians of tomorrow who will praise God.

Benjamin Jones, South Central Conference president, said he is proud of all these churches for coming together to support their local academy. MAA is one of the few schools in the division jointly administered by two conferences.

"The single most important thing that we can do as collective churches is to save our children," said Jones. "The most effective, consistent evangelistic tool is Adventist education. This concert not only resonates across diverse cultures and churches, but also serves as a foundation for future collaborative endeavors."

Steve Haley, Kentucky-Tennessee Conference president, also emphasized the pivotal role that local churches play in sustaining their local educational Adventist institutions.

"Our school's existence is not possible without the support and investment of local churches," said Haley. "Our churches are the lifeblood for our schools .... The celebration of the MAA concert demonstrated that although each of us come from different backgrounds, when God's people come together in worship, and for the worthy purpose of supporting a common vision in mission and ministry, great things happen!" 🙏



A quintet from Aliento de Vida Church play a traditional Christian Spanish folkloric piece. During the concert, three languages were represented.



The MAA choir sings "Awesome God," led by their music teacher, Carlos Ortiz. The money raised during the concert will be used to support the school's music program.

BY PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA



# Atlanta Berean Church Celebrates 120 Years

**B**erean Church in Atlanta, Ga., celebrated the past, present, and future during its 120th anniversary observance and homecoming.

The theme, “Celebrating God’s Faithfulness,” permeated the day, featuring the return of past leadership, former members from throughout the decades, current members, and visitors, some of whom only had worshipped with Berean virtually.

About a thousand or so attendees continued across the street for an elegant lunch in the gym and hallways of Berean Christian Junior Academy and Greater Atlanta Adventist Academy, and were offered American or Caribbean menus.

More than 2,500 persons packed the sanctuary, balcony, fellowship hall, chapel, and other overflow areas to be able to experience Sabbath School and worship service in person, while several thousand more watched on the church’s YouTube channel.

The speaker for the day was Carlton P. Byrd, D.Min., president for the Southwest Region Conference. Byrd served as the senior pastor of Berean from 2006 to 2012. Recording artist Jonathan Nelson was the featured singer, assisted by Berean’s mass choir.

Former pastors William L. Winston (2000-2006, 2018), South Atlantic Conference president emeritus; Richard Long Sr. (1993-1998); and Linwood Stone (associate from 2006 to 2011) also returned as program participants.

Serving as the current pastoral staff are Sherwin Jack, D.Min., senior pastor; and associate pastors Gregory Saunders, Marvin G. Clarke Sr., and James Lamb, Ph.D.

Berean was organized into a company in 1903 in the Georgia Conference territory, and met in homes. William Henry Sebastian became the first pastor in 1906, the same year G.E. Peters organized the first mission



**Carlton P. Byrd, D.Min., president for the Southwest Region Conference and former Berean pastor, preached for the worship service.**

school for black students in Atlanta, which is now Berean Christian Junior Academy (the oldest African-American private school in Atlanta). The members and their visitors met in the pastor’s home until the first building was bought. Located on Greensferry Avenue, the building was dedicated on February 6, 1909, and named the Second Seventh-day Adventist Church. It was renamed Berean under the leadership of A.B. Storey, who pastored from 1934

to 1935. Other notable pastors of Berean are H.L. Cleveland, Dunbar Henri, Walter Pearson, and E.C. Ward.

Berean has been located on Greensferry Avenue (1909-1929), Ashby Street (1929-1961), Hightower Road (1962-2000), and Hamilton E. Holmes Drive (2001-present). 📍

BY LESSIE SCURRY



**More than 2,500 members, past and current, along with guests and friends, celebrated the occasion.**

# Charlotte Berean Church Celebrates 105 Years

Charlotte Berean Church in Charlotte, N.C., celebrated its 105 years of dedicated service to God and the surrounding community. David A. Smith, South Atlantic executive vice president and former pastor of Berean, was the featured speaker.

The celebration was focused on the theme, “Still Standing.”

Special recognition was given to the members of the technology team for their service, especially in navigating the church during the pandemic.

In honor of the past, recognition was also given to members 90 years and older. They were Trulla Kemp, Mary Martin, Janet Simpson, Mae Brown, Margaret Johnson, and David Carter.

The mission of Charlotte Berean is to make disciples of Christ throughout the Charlotte area. Looking to the future of Charlotte Berean, Kevin Rogers, current pastor, along with his members, has set soul-winning as a priority. Rogers has identified four areas to accomplish the church’s goals: receiving the Holy Spirit,



**Kevin Rogers, Berean pastor, presents Margaret Johnson a certificate for being one of the six members of Berean who are 90 years old and over.**

lifestyle evangelism, multi-generational ministry, and capital projects.

In 1918, William White, a colporteur, canvassed the Charlotte area. Supported by Carolina Conference, G. E. Peters, assisted by J. F. Crichlow, conducted a tent

effort on East Boundary Street, and 220 persons were baptized.

Crichlow remained the pastor, and under his leadership, property was purchased on the corner of Caldwell and Hill Street for the new church site. In the spring of 1920, Charlotte Berean Church members walked into their new home.

In February 1964, under the leadership of L. R. Hasting Sr., Charlotte Berean moved into its current location at 1801 Double Oaks Road.

Charlotte Berean is known as the “Mother Church,” for from this church, six other Adventist churches were formed.

In 1933, the church members established their school, Berean Junior Academy, which is still serving the community today.

Some of the notable pastors of the past are J. Malcolm Phipps, F.W. Parker, Ralph Franklin, R.C. Connor, Richard Long, Melvin Preston, D.M. Jones, and Godwin Mitchell. ❶

BY CHRISTINE FRASER



**Pictured are Charlotte Berean’s technology team: Scott Fraction (left), Andy Wallace, Jarius James, Chris Anderson, Phyllis Hayden, and Tony Anderson, with Kevin Rogers, Berean pastor.**



# Mt. Olive Hosts Weekend Filled with Community Service, Hope

On a picturesque Sabbath day, October 21, 2023, Mt. Olive Worship and Education Center celebrated Community Service Day, a cherished tradition that embodies the spirit of giving back to the community. The department is led by Olive Gray, community services director, who has held the role for more than 15 years.

The day commenced with a warm welcome from Carl E. Ware, Mt. Olive pastor, reaching both the sanctuary's attendees and a global audience through the church's digital platforms. At the time of writing this article, the community service event garnered more than 600 views on Mt. Olive's YouTube page.

The highlight of the day was the inspiring sermon delivered by Leacroft Green, M.D. His words resonated with the congregation, emphasizing the importance of compassion and unity. To the delight of the attendees, Green shared



The Hope Channel Network extended their outreach by donating toiletries and other items to those in need. Pictured are Ernestine and Mark Finley (left), Olive and Lenworth Gray, and Derek Morris.



Leacroft Green, M.D., was the guest speaker for the Community Services Sabbath celebration.

his melodious singing voice, filling the sanctuary with hymns of hope, praise, and gratitude.

The community service event did not conclude on Sabbath. On Sunday, a heartwarming collaboration took place between the Hope Channel Network and Gray, as well as Lenworth Gray, elder. The Hope Channel Network extended their outreach by donating toiletries and other items to those in need. The toiletries were not just physical items but symbols of care and solidarity. Gray noted, "Hope Channel had an upcoming event scheduled for that weekend in central Florida. They called Southeastern Conference to recommend a church for them to partner with, and Southeastern named Mt. Olive Church."

"Mr. Ronnie Mills contacted me stating they would like to partner with us in

our outreach. Their donated items will be distributed during our next distribution date," added Gray.

The weekend at Mt. Olive Worship and Education Center was more than just a gathering; it was a celebration of unity and service. Through the words of Leacroft Green, and the selfless efforts of the congregation, the community was reminded of the importance of giving back and the strength that lies within working together for a brighter future.

It was a weekend that left a lasting impression, where service and hope intersected, proving once again that the Mt. Olive community is a beacon of compassion and solidarity. 🕊️

BY CLAUDINE TOMLINSON-BURNEY

# Deacon on Wheels Works, Witnesses for the Lord

**K**eyroy Barnes is a deacon on wheels working for the Lord. He faithfully serves and functions as an ordained deacon at Mt. Sinai Church in Orlando, Fla. Through life-changing circumstances, Barnes has lived with limited mobility causing him to be in and out of a wheelchair for the past 27 years. During a conversation, Barnes shared that at the onset of his disability, he found it challenging to adapt to his new reality. Barnes said, “I worshiped from home and was absent from church because I did not want people to see me in a wheelchair.” A caring and concerned friend visited Barnes at his home several times and encouraged him to come back to church, and he did.

Upon returning to the church, Barnes was asked to serve as a deacon, and he accepted. Within and outside the church, Barnes dutifully carries out the responsibilities of a deacon. Barnes has not let his disability stop him from doing the work of the Lord. He is a greeter who welcomes worshippers at the door on Sabbath, participates in worship services by collecting the offering, serves communion, and more.

Barnes’ acts of service and ministry extend beyond the church walls. Remembering how he felt when visited at home, he sees the sick and shut-in, and encourages them through songs and Bible studies. Barnes’ involvement in the work of the Lord attests that there are numerous roles in ministry in which a person with a disability can be invited or volunteer to participate, which adds value to advancing and spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The church is an ideal environment and community for inclusion and spiritual support for individuals with disabilities. The mission of North American



**Keyroy Barnes is an ordained deacon at Mt. Sinai Church in Orlando, Fla.**

Division (NAD) Disabilities Ministries, also adopted by local churches, is to ensure accessibility, accommodation, and encouragement for persons with disabilities, and to educate church members on ways to involve individuals in programs to meet their spiritual needs. Barnes has been instrumental in increasing awareness about being actively involved in church activities and suggesting how to enhance access and accommodations

for people with disabilities. The World Church realizes the importance of disabilities ministries, and urges congregations to have a disabilities ministries coordinator leader who promotes and facilitates a warm, welcoming, and inclusive worship experience for all. ①

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BY JENNIFER R. SANKEY, PH.D.

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# Southern's Chemistry Department Collaborates with McKee Foods

In late September of the 2023-24 school year, McKee Foods Corporation contacted Southern Adventist University's Chemistry Department for a potential collaboration. Southern's chemistry lab has some equipment and instrumentation that McKee Foods does not have, according to Bruce Schilling, Ph.D., chemistry professor. "We had them come over and tour the Chemistry Department, and some of us went over there and toured the analysis laboratories at McKee Foods," said Schilling.

Jared Freeman, an analytical chemist at McKee Foods and alum of Southern, said the equipment at Southern can help them troubleshoot and find issues. "The instrumentation that Southern has is incredibly helpful for troubleshooting; that's the big thing," he said. "We have an issue, we don't know why, and we can take it over here [Southern]."

Brent Hamstra, Ph.D., professor and chair of Southern's Chemistry Department, feels that this collaboration with

McKee Foods is a great opportunity for students to see how chemistry works in the real world. Hamstra shares that chemistry students sometimes have a hard time realizing that a chemistry degree is beneficial for a lot of jobs; going into medicine is not the only option. Hamstra believes that students hearing about chemists from McKee Foods using Southern's instrumentation for real-life problems will help open their eyes to more options.

For a number of years, McKee Foods has offered an internship to a chemistry major each year. Jared Freeman was the first chemistry major from Southern to intern at McKee Foods before he graduated in 2023, and Nathan Dickerhoff, senior chemistry major, is currently interning at McKee Foods. Hamstra shares that the interns have had great opportunities to see how chemistry can be applied off-campus and used to solve problems outside of the classroom. This also gives students the awareness that there are jobs

available after graduation, which is important to the students, said Hamstra.

McKee Foods has visited Southern's chemistry lab several times to test and receive data, shares Freeman. He says that since Southern has several professors with doctoral degrees, there is a lot of knowledge combined when McKee Foods chemists come to the Southern chemistry lab.

Southern's Chemistry Department and McKee Foods have talked about the potential for students to take a field trip to the McKee Foods labs next year to learn more about how chemists work in the field. Both Southern's Chemistry Department and McKee Foods have expressed that they want to continue the collaboration in the future because it is a benefit to both sides. "We want to benefit the department because they have been a big benefit to us," said Freeman. ❶

BY ALEXIS DEWEY, JUNIOR MASS COMMUNICATION MAJOR



PHOTO BY: ELIAS ZABALA

Chemists from McKee Foods visit a lab in Southern's Chemistry Department where they can use equipment to troubleshoot.



PHOTO BY: ELIAS ZABALA

Jared Freeman (right), an analytical chemist for McKee Foods, speaks to students at Southern's Chemistry Department convocation in January, along with Chris Johnson (left), leader of the analytical chemistry lab at McKee Foods.



**ASHLOCK, JAMES W. (Jim)**, 91, born Oct. 9, 1931, in Poona, India, to Frank and Marcella Ashlock, died July 25, 2023, in Collegedale, TN. He grew up in Assam, India, to the age of 15, and became fluent in the Khasi language. Then the family returned to America, where he married Betty Lou Pruitt. Very soon after starting college, he was drafted and sent to Korea where he spent two years in the U.S. Army as a medic. Upon returning to the U.S., he attended and graduated from Pacific Union College. He obtained a doctoral degree in education administration at Oregon State University. Jim and Betty returned to India. They spent many years there while Jim taught at Spicer College. When they returned to the U.S., he taught high school in Sacramento, CA. He had a hobby of restoring (and building) cars and was very able in building beautiful wood objects as well. When Pacific Press Publishing moved from California to Idaho, the head of the press, Gene Stiles, called him to assist in making that happen. After several heavy winters in Idaho, he was happy to move back South as director of Alumni at Southern Missionary College (now Southern Adventist University), where he worked for 10 years. He retired in Collegedale, TN. He is survived by his wife, Ruth Howard Brass, whom he married upon the death of his first wife; three sons: Bill (Jane), Richard (Marina), and Howard (Patsy); four grandchildren; and many friends.

**AULT, GARY M.**, 82, born May 21, 1940, in Council Bluffs, Iowa, passed away from Alzheimer's on December 31, 2022. He had two brothers; one older, Norman, and one younger, Dar-rell, he was the last of his family to pass away. His father, being a plumber, had a hard time in the winter, so the family moved to California in 1950. The family joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1958, and moved to LaSierra, CA, where Gary worked at Loma Linda Foods. There is where he met his wife, Carolyn Kamberg. Two years later they were married in the LaSierra College Church on June 26, 1960. They had three children: Jeanie Tiffany, Karen Seiden, and Richard Ault; seven grandchildren; and 11 great-grandchildren. After he worked with students to help them pay for their school cost: Harris Pine Mills, Monterey Bay Academy wood mill and laundry assistant manager; San Pasqual Academy laundry manager; and book bindery at Pacific Union College and Shenandoah Academy. Then he went to Nosoca Pines Ranch to be a ranger. He found Morganton, NC. He moved there in 1988 to work for Brackett Brothers Lumber as the wood treatment operator for 10-12 years. In his retirement years he ran the community thrift shop, also an elder, greeter, and family ministries. Gary and Carolyn were married 62 years and lived in Morganton, NC, for 34 years.



**GROVE, HOMER NELSON**, 93, born February 17, 1930, passed December 13, 2023. Homer dedicated his life and career to healthcare administration for 47 years, from 1955 to 2002, with Florida Hospital (now AdventHealth). Starting as an orderly on floors, promoted to director of nursing, he had an RN and BSNE degree, the director of public relations and promoted to assistant administrator working 25 years with Don Welch growing Florida Hospital adding services, heliport, and expanding to include other locations. The first was Florida Hospital North (now Altamonte AdventHealth) and was elected to supervise the building and establishment. Next to join was Apopka Florida Hospital where he served as administrator in the beginning. This was the start of Adventist Health Systems (Sunbelt). He served as administrator (CEO) of Madison, TN, Hospital, and was called back to Orlando to start the first hospital (developing with IBM) Computer Science Department, incorporating employee salaries, and printing the first checks (prior to this Florida Hospital paid their employees in cash every two weeks). It is still growing yearly. He was asked to relieve the CEO of Hong Kong hospitals for three months and to elevate the community to better understand what an SDA hospital provided. He got a short spot on the morning TV news broadcast to do this every day. To reach the community he wrote his daily speech then had the bilingual director of nursing translate to Mandarin and phonetically teach him daily to present in language the area could understand. It changed the image of the hospital in a positive way and brought doctors to staff. The two hospitals in Hong Kong have grown and serve the medical and spiritual knowledge to thousands of the area even though the free Chinese hospitals are all around. Homer served as a board member to many institutions, some of which were Florida Hospital, Adventist Health Systems, Southern Union, SMC (now known as Southern Adventist University) and many more. The community support for Florida Hospital led him to accept membership in Orlando City Council. He was a friend and counselor to his fellow workers and spread his help and support with a positive attitude to all he met at work and with those who knew him personally. His friend and former president of AdventHealth that Homer had the privilege of working with sent this note read at the graveside: "He was a blessing to many people and had a positive impact on AdventHealth. His personality was a real asset to bring the mission to life. AdventHealth wouldn't be what it is today without Homer's early contributions. Thankfully, we know we will see him again in the world made new." He is survived by his wife, Connie, whom he met at Kingsway College in Canada and was married to for 68 1/2 years; his 103-year-sister, Helen Maneval; many loved nieces; and nephews.

**JENNINGS, PASTOR PERRY LEE**, 85, born August 23, 1938, to Benjamin F. Jennings and Erma L. (Wright) Jennings in Fort Worth, TX, died November 9, 2023. At seven, Perry and his mother moved to Los Angeles, CA, and later to Berkeley, CA, where he attended Golden Gate Academy and later graduated from Berkeley High School. His early years were filled with instability due to his parents divorcing and remarrying, and many other changes and challenges in his living situations. He learned to be good with his hands by doing odd handyman jobs and learned auto mechanics while working at a used car lot. He joined the United States Air Force in 1957, where he served as a radar and electronics technician. He was stationed in Japan and at Mount Tamalpais, just north of San Francisco, CA. He was an avid exercise enthusiast in the early 1960s, and often spent time testing his physical abilities and working out. Most notably was his love of electronics, and it wasn't uncommon to see him, in later years, with a camera around his neck, ready to capture life's moments. In 1960, he moved to Sacramento, CA, where he met Betty Jean Austin, while he was visiting some friends at Capitol City Church. While he "tried" to impress her with his muscles, she told him that she would only date a college-educated man. This prompted Perry to enroll in Sacramento City College, where he focused on physical therapy. They were married on October 7, 1962. Perry became very active in serving at Capitol City Church. He was a deacon, a Missionary Volunteer





leader, a colporteur, and even led Bible studies. In 1965, while attending a constituency meeting at Pacific Union College, he felt the call to ministry. While ministry was not an ideal originally shared by his wife, she knew she would follow him anywhere. Following his conviction, Perry attended PUC the next year, and later attended Oakwood College (now Oakwood University) where in his senior year, he was elected to serve as class president. After earning his Bachelor of Arts degree in theology from Oakwood, he went on to attend Andrews University. He later attended Ashland Theological Seminary in Ashland, Ohio, and graduated with a Master's degree in pastoral counseling. He also studied clinical pastoral education (CPE) at Cleveland Clinic in Cleveland, OH. Perry pastored various Seventh-day Adventist congregations during his career. During his last year at Oakwood College, he accepted the call as interim pastor for South Central Conference, in the Greenville/Greenwood district in Mississippi. Upon graduation from Oakwood, he accepted the call to be a full-time pastor in the Central States Conference. While there, he pastored in Kinlock and Kirkwood, MO, Bethel Church in Kansas City, KS, and Sharon Church in Omaha, NE. He also felt a deep calling for evangelism, and through evangelistic efforts, God grew the churches in his districts. This allowed him to form additional churches within the cities. While in Central States Conference, he formed Maranatha Church in Kansas City, KS, and Bethesda Church in Omaha, NE. In 1978, he accepted a call to the Washington Conference to pastor Spruce Street Church (now Emerald City Community Church) in Seattle, WA. Again, being blessed through evangelism, he formed another church in the area, Maranatha Church in Seattle, WA. On December 31, 1979, he accepted the call to pastor in the Allegheny West Conference. In the Allegheny West Conference, he pastored in the Danville/South Boston, VA, district; the Hillcrest/Uniontown, PA, district; Maranatha Church in Cincinnati, OH (also formed Emmanuel Church in Cincinnati); Bethel Church in Cleveland, OH (also formed Maranatha Church in Cleveland); Temple Emmanuel Church in Youngstown, OH; Parkwood Church in Toledo, OH; Berea Church in Charleston, WV; Shiloh Church in Huntington, WV; and Beckley Church in Beckley, WV. While in the Allegheny West Conference, Perry also joined the Civil Air Patrol, an auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, as a volunteer chaplain. He became a pilot and joined in on search and rescue missions. He was a member for more than 40 years and earned the rank of captain. In his passion for evangelism, Perry led evangelistic crusades across the United States and in Alaska, South Africa, Panama, and India. He worked with the international ministry, Amazing Facts, and held evangelistic meetings in Poland and Indonesia. He was among the top evangelists in the Adventist church, and he mentored several young men in ministry. After retirement, he served as an interim pastor at churches in North Carolina and South Carolina, and at New Jerusalem Church in Douglasville, GA. He also served as a chaplain at Well-Star Douglasville Medical Center and the Adventist Health System in Smyrna, Georgia. He had a passion for reading and had a personal library of more than 5,000 books. He enjoyed walking in the rain. He loved meeting people. Perry and Betty had five children: Kevin, Leonard, Andre, Kimi, and Christopher. He was also a son, brother, and "Uncle Perry" to many, whether they were related was of no consequence to him, "Uncle Perry" was always ready and available to give wise counsel and a book recommendation to all who sought a deeper understanding of some of life's most challenging concepts. From him comes a continued legacy in the form of grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He leaves his wife of 61 years, Betty Jean (Austin) Jennings; his children: Kevin (Belinda), Leonard, Kimi, and Christopher (Takia); his grandchildren: Kevin II (Leah), Pierre (Jasamine), Kiara (Cornell), Hannah (Patrick), Larry, Jordan, Sydney, Kamari, Luciano, Aniya, Darryn, Drew, Zoe, and Grace; six great-grandchildren; his siblings: Marchelle Hill and Peter (Yvette) Wilson; nieces; nephews; cousins; extended family; and friends. He was preceded in death by his grandparents, parents, and his son, Andre Jennings. The joy of the Lord meant everything to Perry. We will only know his joy again when Jesus returns, and one more time, Perry joyfully says, "That's heavy!"



**PETERSON, BEULAH ALTIZER**, 90, born September 2, 1933, in Jewell Ridge, VA, died October 30, 2023, in Kennewick, WA. Beulah served the Inter-American Division of the Seventh-day Adventists Church as undertreasurer for many years in Miami, FL. She was active at the Miami Temple Church and was known for her warm hospitality for many traveling through Miami. She is survived by two sons: Robert and Richard; and two granddaughters: Chloe and Amanda. She is predeceased by her husband, Duane, in 2002; and her son, Randall, in 1993.

**POWELL, FLOYD H.**, 87, born Sept. 30, 1935, to Jim and Effie (Craig) Powell in Gillette, FL, the youngest of their four children, died Aug. 16, 2023, in Chuckey, TN, surrounded by loving family members. He was drafted into the U.S. Army and proudly served as a non-combatant (conscientious objector) and served a second tour of active duty. Floyd spent his entire full-time ministry in Florida Conference: pastoring at Orlando Central, Hol-lywood, Tampa Southside, and Winter Garden churches. He joined the Trust Department, and with his strong work ethic, vision, and passion to serve, he eventually directed the department. He worked to develop a very successful team that trained and mentored the Trust Department leaders from all over the U.S. He retired in 2001, after spending more than 30 successful and fruitful years in ministry. He then spent time with his children and their families, and shepherded more than a dozen churches for short term needs or longer transitions.

He is survived by his wife, Norma Jean Armstrong; one son, Kevin (Shelly) of Amity, AR; two daughters: Lorie (Mike) Saladino of Chuckey, TN, and Cathy (Mark) Gillis of Hot Springs, NC; one sister, Rosemary Gilmore of Sarasota, FL; 11 grandchildren; numerous nieces; and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents; and two older brothers: Wesley (Myrtle) and Bill (Delilah). His family looks forward to the resurrection when Jesus returns and the blessed hope of being reunited with him again.





**SAULS, RICHARD LYNN**, 90, a resident of The Gables of Fitchburg, born January 11, 1933, in a peanut-farm cottage 30 miles from Plains, GA, and lived in various places in the South until he graduated from Fayetteville, NC, High School, passed October 13, 2023. He earned a B.A. in religion from Southern Missionary College (now Southern Adventist University), an M.A. in English from Vanderbilt University, a Ph.D. in English from the University of Iowa, and completed post graduate work in journalism at Boston University. Lynn was a member of the College Church in South Lancaster, MA, has been an active member of the Adventist Church since his senior year in high school, has served as elder, has spoken in many churches, and with the help from his wife, Helen, his best critic, has written many published articles, devotions, and poems, receiving several top awards from the Associated Church Press. He had a 43-year career in education, first serving as an elementary and secondary teacher, and principal before teaching literature, journalism, and creative writing at several colleges and universities, including 17 years at Atlantic Union College in South Lancaster, MA, and at his alma mater Southern Adventist University. Lynn enjoyed watching beavers on Long Pond in Royalston, MA, swimming in the Gulf of Mexico at Naples, FL, and reading books and traveling with his wife, Helen. He has enjoyed time with his family, associating with former colleagues and students, and lately with friends at the Gables of Fitchburg. He is survived by his son, Dr. Raymond (Cherri) Sauls of Ashby, MA; three grandchildren: Stephanie (Edward) Butler of Barnard, VT; Elizabeth Sauls of Ashby; and Jillian (Jason) Wailgum of Geneva, FL; and three great-grandchildren: Rayanne MacMillan of Ashby, and siblings Henry Butler and Simone Butler of Barnard, VT. Lynn was predeceased by his wife, Helen (Braat); his parents, Edgar Earl and Mary Craig Sauls; his stepfather, Samuel Christian; and his brothers: William Steven and Eddy Francis Sauls. Recently, Lynn said the five best things that happened to him are 1) Giving his heart to Jesus when he was 12 years old; 2) Accepting the Adventist message when he was 17; 3) Attending Southern Missionary College; 4) Enjoying a 67-year marriage with his wife, Helen; and 5) Seeing their son grow up to make them proud.

**VOORHEIS, ALICE ROBERTSON**, 97, of Ooltewah, TN, born Alice Genevieve Smith, in Brooklyn, NY, on September 11, 2026, passed Saturday, January 6, 2024. Alice earned a Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education from Southern Missionary College (now Southern Adventist University) and a Master's degree in educational leadership with an emphasis in the teaching of reading from Andrews University. She taught in several elementary schools in the Carolinas before becoming dean of girls at Mount Pisgah Academy in Candler, NC, she then served as associate superintendent of education for the Carolina Conference. She retired as superintendent of education and director of communication for the Gulf-States Conference in 1991. Being dedicated to education, she was a life-long learner with a passion for knowledge and the value that it brings to life. Alice was a member of the Collegedale Church. For the last 30 years, she was an active volunteer with Adventist Heritage Ministries for which she served as its president for more than nine years. She traveled the United States promoting the importance of preserving historic properties and the history of the founding and early development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Her deep passion was for people to meet Jesus, and she lived her life with a continuing desire to bring honor and glory to Him. Alice was a loving mother who cherished her family, and who's arms and heart made room for countless young people and others, freely sharing her home, her resources, and her love. Alice was a devoted grama, grandma, and great-grandma, always making the extra effort to be with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren as often as possible wherever they were living throughout the years. She is survived by her son, Pastor Philip (Kathie) Robertson; daughter, Janita (Pastor Dwight) Herod; step-daughter, Sharon A. (Sam) Kerr; step-son, Byron (Melodie) Voorheis; daughter-in-law, Judy Robertson; six grandchildren: Kent (Wendy) Robertson, Stephen (Jess) Robertson, Sebrina (Scott) MacDonald, Jodi (David) Steele, Courtney Herod, and step-grandson, Sam (Kim) Kerr; and nine great-grandchildren: Allison and Brandon Cammilleri, Seth and Caleb Robertson, Zach, Ryan, and Emma Robertson, William Steele, and Jackson Kerr; several precious nieces; and nephews. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her first husband, O.L. (Leroy) Robertson; second husband, Arl V. Voorheis; her son, Willis Robertson; three sisters: Joan Smith, Frances Ryder, and Dorothy Erland; and two brothers: William Fields and Henry Smith. A Celebration of Life service was held Sunday, January 14, 2024, at 11 a.m., at Heritage Funeral Home with Pastor Philip Robertson and Pastor Dwight Herod officiating. Interment followed at Collegedale Memorial Park.



**BRIDGETT, NOEL WILLIAM**, 89, born November 21, 1933, in Content Retreat, St. Mary, Jamaica, died October 29, 2023, in Altamonte Springs, FL. Noel was one of five children born to the late George and Mary Bridgett. Noel was a dedicated elder and co-founder of the North Orlando Church, Orlando, FL. His early education began at the Retreat Primary School in St. Mary, Jamaica, where he developed an aptitude for mathematics. Noel eventually left St. Mary and traveled to Kingston, Jamaica, where he worked and continued his studies, eventually earning his Fellows of the Institute in Bookkeeping Diploma from the College of Arts, Science, and Technology, now the University of Technology. Noel's love for accounting eventually led him to Atlantic Union College in Massa-

chusetts, where he earned his Bachelor's degree in accounting and business. Noel's extensive employment history began in Jamaica from the mid-1950s to late 1960s, where he served as the chief cashier for Long Pond Sugar Estate and as an accountant for several companies that included the Jamaican Omni Bus Service and the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation. He then migrated to New York where he was employed as an accountant for Beth Israel Hospital-Bernstein Institute and Controller for the Arthur C. Logan Memorial Hospital. It was during his time in New York that he met and wed his wife of 51 years, Rachel R. Reid Bridgett (now deceased). In 1978, Noel and Rachel relocated to Orlando, FL, and shortly thereafter, he was hired by Dr. Mark Cox as the administrator/director of

Guardian Care Nursing and Rehabilitation, Inc., where he served in that role until his retirement in 2002. Noel also took on the task of writing grants that raised more than five million dollars for the nursing home, and contributed to the renovation of the south wing and the addition of a north wing, that increased the bed count from 65 to 120 beds. Noel is also credited as one of the co-founders of the North Orlando, FL, Church, where he served as the treasurer for approximately 30 years. Upon his retirement, Noel dedicated most of his time to supporting the church and other non-profit organizations. All who have met or known Noel credited him for his compassion and kindness; a man of integrity, and one who lived his life emulating the character of Christ. Whenever there



was a need, he filled it, often giving more than he received. Though short in stature, he never backed down from the most daunting challenges, often quoting his favorite text: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," Philippians 4:13. Noel is survived by his brothers, Leslie and Trevor; nieces; nephews; cousins; and more friends than can be counted. He was preceded in death by his wife, Rachel; his parents; his sisters: Tatlyn and Daisy; and many other relatives and friends. The Memorial Service was held at Forest Lake Church in Apopka, FL, and was officiated by Pastors Olinto Groce, Roy R. Brown, and Dr. Arlene Thomson.

**CARTER, LINDA J.**, 77, of Remlap, AL, born in Hackleburg, AL, on July 31, 1946, to Felix Cantrell and Arleva (Cochran) Cantrell, died Sept. 4, 2023, at her residence. As a teenager, she met the love of her life, Paul, and they married in 1967. They soon moved to Birmingham, AL, and had two sons. Linda, growing up on a farm learned to work hard and held several jobs. She was an Avon lady, and through that she met a lady who introduced her to the Sabbath. She joined the Worldwide Church of God in 1972 and remained a member for 25 years. She worked as a manager at the Social Security Administration until her retirement in 2010. In 1995, Linda met Ray Elsberry, a member of the Roebuck Church, and eventually joined the church in 1997, after attending evangelistic meetings. Linda loved her church and was a most faithful member, becoming a women's ministries leader, head deaconess, kindergarten teacher, Bible worker, Pathfinder leader, praise leader, and a member of the executive committee for 10 years. She had a card ministry and sent cards to anyone needing encouragement and wrote beautiful personal messages on each one. She was a member of the Alabama Civic Chorale and Riverchase Community Gospel Choir. Linda loved to travel, sing, and lead people to Jesus. She gave Bible studies to many people. She leaves to cherish her memories, her husband, James Paul Carter; two sons: James Darryl (Charlotte) Carter, and Jason Carter; one brother, Connie (Ann) Cantrell; a host of nieces; nephews; and friends. A family graveside service was held at Union Hill Cemetery with Pastor Eddie Hernandez officiating, and Marion County Funeral Home assisting the family. A Memorial Service was held at the Roebuck Church on October 22, 2023.

**CLARKE, MURIEL PATRICIA**, 67, born January 7, 1956, in Westmoreland, Jamaica, to Joshua and Inez Williams, died May 1, 2023, in her home in Ocoee, FL, surrounded by the love and comfort of her loving

family. As the fourth of seven children, she relished her childhood in the verdant landscape of Westmoreland alongside of her four late brothers and two sisters. Muriel became a baptized member of the Savanna-la-mar Seventh-day Adventist Church. There she served in various roles including, Sabbath School superintendent, secretary, and church clerk. Muriel's journey in education began at Unity Primary School in Westmoreland, followed by Mannings High School. After high school, she chose to devote herself to the noble profession of nursing and was among the first batch of nurses trained at Cornwall Regional Hospital in Montego Bay, Jamaica, in 1975, where she distinguished herself with honors. Her thirst for knowledge led her to the University Hospital of the West Indies, where she obtained her certification as a midwife. After dedicating more than a decade of service in Jamaica, Muriel relocated to the United States in 1986, becoming a staff member of the Kings County Hospital, in Brooklyn, NY. It was here where destiny led her to reconnect with an old friend from Montego Bay. Their friendship blossomed into love, culminating in their marriage in April 1987. This divinely inspired union gave birth to two wonderful daughters. Longing for a more tropical and family-oriented environment, the couple, with the assistance of realtor and friend, Everard Daley, relocated to Orlando, FL. Upon their arrival in Orlando, Muriel found a spiritual home in the North Orlando Church, where she served as a deaconess and Sabbath School teacher. Muriel quickly secured employment at Orlando Health, and after serving in various departments, she found her true passion in dialysis. In February 2021, Muriel encountered significant medical challenges. Her faith, unyielding as ever, coupled with the ceaseless love and care from her children, helped her overcome this difficult period. After her recovery, she embraced life with renewed vigor. The year 2022 was a testament to her resilience, filled with precious moments and memorable travels with her family to Cuba, Canada, Jamaica, the Panama Canal, and Aruba. Muriel was not just a dedicated wife, mother, and nurse, she was an avid cook, a firm disciplinarian, an advocate, a stalwart of her church, and a cherished friend. Muriel's life may have ended, but her legacy lives on in the hearts and minds of those she touched. Let us remember Muriel not only for the life she lived but for the lives she touched with her unending kindness and faith. Muriel is survived by her loving, dedicated husband, Paul; her two daughters: Paula (Alex) and Tasheen (John); her cherished granddaughter, Jaidyn; her sisters: Millicent and Angela; numerous

nieces; nephews; uncles; aunts; cousins; and friends who were as close as family, and the North Orlando Church family. The funeral service was held May 21, 2023, at the North Orlando Church, and was officiated by Pastor Carl E. Ware Sr., Pastor Olinto L. Groce, Dr. Gregory A. Carroll, Pastor Roy R. Brown, and Dr. Leacroft Green. Interment is at the Orlando Memorial Gardens in Apopka, FL.

**FAGAN, LUCILLE ADELLA**, 99, born April 11, 1924, in Kingston, Jamaica, West Indies, died March 22, 2023, in New York. She was born to the late proud parents of Charles Williams and Lydia Gooden Williams, and was a loving mother, grandmother, sister, aunt, and friend. Lucille received her elementary education in Kingston and went on to attend Xavier College/High School. The family moved to Whitfieldtown, where Lucille spent her formative years. In 1966, Lucille made the courageous decision to move to New York, where she enrolled at New York Technical Community College and received her Associate's degree. She went on to attend York College and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in social work at the age of 60, a testament of her dedication and hard work. Lucille married Stanley Simeon Fagan in 1953, and together they had two children, Robert Anthony Fagan, and Audrey Fagan-Parker. Lucille worked tirelessly as a social worker, helping those in need and making a positive impact on the lives of many. She was a devoted member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and she attended the North Orlando, FL, Church regularly, where she served as deaconess. She had a passion for sewing and crocheting and spent many hours creating beautiful works of art that she shared with her loved ones. Lucille is survived by her daughter, Audrey Fagan-Parker; son-in-law, Hugh Parker; and two grandchildren: Safiya Parker-Norman and Jumani Parker; five great-grandchildren: Joshua, Rose, Abigail, Lance, and Luke; her sister, Hyacinthe Whonder; several nieces; nephews; cousins; and friends who will miss her dearly. She is predeceased by her husband, Stanley Fagan; son, Robert Anthony Fagan; four sisters: Aunt Gloria, Aunt Sylvia, Aunt Claris, and Aunt Joyce; and her brother, Uncle Gladston. Lucille was a kind, loving person who touched the lives of many. Her legacy of hard work, dedication, and compassion will live on through the countless lives she touched. She will be missed by all who knew her. The service was held at the North Orlando Church and was officiated by Elder Everard Daley. Interment at Woodlawn Funeral Home & Memorial Park, Gotha, FL.



## CHARITABLE GIVING

Claude Thomas, Jr. came to Oakwood College (now University) in 1967 as the Dean of Men. He and his dear wife, Jocelyn Reid Thomas, lovingly served the university with sterling dedication in various capacities until his retirement in 2002. They made an impact in the lives of many students by helping them achieve major goals in life and encouraging them to depart to serve the denomination and humanity on many levels. Additionally, Claude and Jo conducted many marriage and family seminars for churches and conferences over 30+ years and published a book, "Becoming a Professional Lover," that has blessed many couples. Claude designated Oakwood as a beneficiary in his will because of his desire to support and sustain the mission of Oakwood University. During his life he supported Oakwood with a life of committed service. His desire to continue his support was thoughtfully expressed in his will. We are grateful for his kind remembrance of the students at Oakwood University.

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**LAURELBROOK COTTAGES:** These cottages are perfect for Adventist couples seeking a quiet setting within a small, friendly Adventist community. Located next to Laurelbrook Nursing Home and 200 yards from the Laurelbrook SDA Church. Services such as lawn care, meals, and transportation available. Two bedroom, 1½ bath (One with 2 full baths), living room, dining room/kitchen, and 1 car garage. Handicap accessible. Contact Brian at (423) 775-0771 or [nhadministrator@laurelbrook.org](mailto:nhadministrator@laurelbrook.org) for leasing information. [3-4]

**BEAUTIFUL 3/2/3 HOME,** steps away to SDA Church. On .93 acres, large garden area, potential mother in law area above detached 2 story garage/ work shop on dead end street! 30 Min to SAU! Deana Luedtke 423-400-2282 Search 1000's of listings at [WWW.ChattanoogaSearch.Com](http://WWW.ChattanoogaSearch.Com). [3]

## POSITIONS AVAILABLE

**ANDREWS UNIVERSITY** is seeking qualified Seventh-day Adventists who may fill open roles in fulfilling our mission to Seek Knowledge, Affirm Faith, and Change the World. If this is of interest to you, please check out our current openings at: [andrews.edu/jobs](http://andrews.edu/jobs) [C]

**UNION COLLEGE,** Lincoln NE, is searching for candidates for Director of Integrated Marketing Communications. Responsible for managing and facilitating the work of IMC which includes managing projects and communications functions while participating in the production work. Will also work with VP for Enrollment Management to develop marketing and PR goals and strategy. View the job description and instructions for application at [ucollege.edu/employment](http://ucollege.edu/employment). [3-4]

**SOUTH CENTRAL CONFERENCE,** Nashville, TN is seeking applicants for the position of K-12 teachers and K-12 Principals for the upcoming school year 2024-2025. Ideal applicants have at least a bachelor's degree in education or a related field. We need talented and passionate

individuals to join us in shaping the future of education. Don't miss this opportunity! Submit your letter of interest and resume to [HR@scc-sda.org](mailto:HR@scc-sda.org) by the deadline of April 30, 2024. For more information, please visit [www.iamssouthcentral.org](http://www.iamssouthcentral.org). Act now and be part of something great! For a full job description and desired qualifications please visit <https://iamssouthcentral.org/human-resource/>. For more information email [hr@scc-sda.org](mailto:hr@scc-sda.org). [3-4]

**UNION COLLEGE** (soon to be Union Adventist University) Lincoln NE, seeks candidate for full-time, exempt position: Enrollment Counselor to work specifically with Hispanic/Latino prospects and their families to recruit students to Union College. Provide translation support for parents, visit and speak for church services, attend camp meetings and youth rallies, and help organize and participate in college recruitment tours. Bachelor's degree required and must be fluent in Spanish. See full job description and instructions for application at [ucollege.edu/employment](http://ucollege.edu/employment). [3]

**UNION COLLEGE** (soon to be Union Adventist University) Lincoln NE, seeks candidate for full-time, exempt position: Financial Aid Advisor/ Loan Processor to provide operational and customer support. Process federal aid and loans, provide financial counseling to students and families, assist with development, documentation, and implementation of workflow process in addition to other duties. Bachelor's degree or equivalent experience required. See full job description and instructions for application at [ucollege.edu/employment](http://ucollege.edu/employment). [3].

**IT IS WRITTEN** seeks qualified Seventh-day Adventist candidates for full-time Planned Giving and Trust Services (PGTS) positions--Director of PGTS at the It Is Written headquarters located in Collegedale, TN; and a PGTS Trust Officer for the Central USA states. For more information, go to: [itiswritten.com/employment](http://itiswritten.com/employment). [3-4]

**SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY** seeks a full-time Associate Vice President for Academic Administration and Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies. Candidate should have a PhD with a minimum of five years of successful full-time graduate teaching experience at the higher education level. Applicant will assume a leadership role in all aspects of graduate education and provide academic, administrative, and strategic direction to Graduate Studies, Online Campus, and the Adult Degree Completion (ADC) Program. For more details, visit [southern.edu/jobs](http://southern.edu/jobs). [3]

**SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY** seeks a full-time Engineer teaching faculty member for School of Engineering and Physics in the areas of mechanical, electrical, and computer engineering. The ideal candidate will be proficient in developing and teaching undergraduate engineering courses, including both lecture and laboratory components. Master's degree in mechanical, electrical, or computer engineering or related area required. Doctorate preferred. Prior higher education teaching experience and/or relevant industry experience preferred. For a full job description and desired qualifications please visit [www.southern.edu/jobs](http://www.southern.edu/jobs). [3]

**SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY** seeks a full-time faculty in the area of Counseling for School of Education/Psychology. A doctoral degree in counselor education from a CACREP-accredited program is required. Doctoral degrees in clinical or counseling psychology from APA-accredited program could be considered if applicant has been employed as full-time faculty member in a counselor education program for a minimum of one full academic year before July 1, 2013. For a full job description and desired qualifications please visit [www.southern.edu/jobs](http://www.southern.edu/jobs). [3]

**SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY** seeks a full-time program director to launch a new Doctor of Physical Therapy degree program. The ideal candidate will be proficient in managing the CAPTE accreditation process, new program development, and teaching graduate physical therapy courses as well as clinical practice. In addition, the successful candidate will be committed to mentoring advisees, nurturing student learning both in and out of the classroom, and disciplining students in Jesus Christ. For a full job description and desired qualifications please visit [www.southern.edu/jobs](http://www.southern.edu/jobs). [3]

**SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY** seeks a full-time teaching faculty member for the Department of Biology/Allied Health, beginning fall 2024. PhD in Biology who will teach upper and lower division courses and labs. Candidate should be committed to involvement with undergraduate students in the classroom as well as guiding independent student research projects. Additionally, candidate should be a practicing Seventh-day Adventist believing the Biblical record of the creation of life on earth in six literal days. For more details, visit [southern.edu/jobs](http://southern.edu/jobs). [3]

**SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY** seeks full-time teaching faculty in the School of Business. Candidates should have a graduate degree (minimum). Doctorate in business-related field preferred. Ideal candidates will have successful, professional experience in for-profit companies/organizations. Candidates will bring relevancy to courses through connecting theories, current events, and real-world experience. Candidates will facilitate learning in alignment with a Christian biblical worldview and Seventh-day Adventist beliefs and values. Ideal candidates will be committed to student learning, engagement, and spiritual well-being. For more information, please visit our job board at [sau.catsone.com/careers](http://sau.catsone.com/careers). [3]

**SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY** School of Religion seeks full-time faculty member to begin fall semester of 2024. Must be active member of Seventh-day Adventist Church in regular standing and should have Ph.D. (or be near completion) in New Testament. Positive experience in pastoral ministry and teaching is helpful. Must demonstrate contagious love for Jesus, strong commitment to authority of Scripture, and deep passion for Adventist message and mission. Good people skills and ability to engage students in a positive, faith-building manner in the classroom are essential. To apply, please visit our job board at [sau.catsone.com/careers](http://sau.catsone.com/careers). [3]

**SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY** School of Nursing seeks a full-time faculty to join a mission-focused team. Teaching responsibilities will

be primarily at the undergraduate level. An earned doctorate is preferred. Requisite qualities include current RN adult health or ICU clinical experience, successful teaching experience, interest in research, flexibility, and commitment to Adventist nursing education. The candidate must be a member in good and regular standing in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. To apply, please visit our job board at [sau.catsone.com/careers](http://sau.catsone.com/careers). [3]

**SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY** seeks a full-time teaching faculty member in information technology. Subject areas include computer networking, systems administration, cybersecurity, and web development. The ideal candidate will be proficient in developing and teaching undergraduate IT courses, including both lecture and laboratory components. In addition, the successful candidate will be committed to mentoring advisees, nurturing student learning both in and out of the classroom, and disciplining students in Jesus Christ. [3]

**SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY** seeks qualified candidates for the following staff Salaried positions— DHSI Community Outreach Coordinator (reopened), Customer Service and Print Project Manager. For more information go to [sau.catsone.com/careers](http://sau.catsone.com/careers) [3]

**SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY** seeks qualified candidates for the following staff Hourly positions— Closing Shift Supervisor - Village Market, Office Manager - School of Engineering and Physics, Carpentry Technician, S.A.L.T. Outreach Coordinator for School of Religion, Alarm Technician, Landscape Supervisor. For more information please visit [sau.catsone.com/careers](http://sau.catsone.com/careers). [3]

## MISCELLANEOUS

**RELOCATING?** Apex Moving + Storage has a national account with the General Conference for your moving needs. Take advantage of a volume rated discount. Be assured you are moving with the best! Call Marcy Dante' at 800-766-1902; or visit us at: [www.apexmoving.com/adventist](http://www.apexmoving.com/adventist). [C]

**TEACH SERVICES HELPING AUTHORS:** Publish your book, including editing, design, marketing, and worldwide distribution. Visit [www.TEACHServices.com](http://www.TEACHServices.com) to submit your manuscript for a free evaluation or call 800-367-1844. Shop for NEW/USED ADVENTIST BOOKS at [www.TEACHServices.com](http://www.TEACHServices.com) or at your local ABC. [C]

**SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY** offers master's degrees in business, computer science, counseling, education, nursing religion and social work. Flexibility is provided through some online and many on campus programs. Financial aid is available. For more information, call 423-236-2585 or visit [www.southern.edu/graduatestudies](http://www.southern.edu/graduatestudies). [C]

**NC & SC Allstate Insurance Agency.** SDA owned and operated. Call today for a free quote for auto, home, renters, boat, motorcycle or life insurance. Agent is UCSDA church Treasurer & Elder. Exclusive Agent, Brian King 704-844-2572 or [jbrianking@allstate.com](mailto:jbrianking@allstate.com) or visit us at [www.allstate.com/jbrianking](http://www.allstate.com/jbrianking). [C]



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**WILDWOOD LIFESTYLE CENTER** Residential Program. Suffering with a physical or mental health issue? Come away and receive healing from the Great Physician, regaining your health through natural remedies. Join our residential programs, and learn principles of healthful living by calling 706-820-1493 or visit [wildwoodhealth.com](http://wildwoodhealth.com) [C]

**COME AND BE A PART** of the Medical Seminar "Natural Approaches to Type 2 Diabetes." Acquire 20 CME credits of knowledge about cutting-edge natural methods for effectively handling Type 2 Diabetes. March 6-9, 2024. Register Today! [wildwoodseminars.com](http://wildwoodseminars.com) [3-4]

**FREE SHARING CARDS** LifeTalk Radio has beautiful FREE sharing cards for all occasions with encouraging messages like "God Loves You" and "You Matter to God" plus Scripture cards. Share hope and love with others. Order cards at: [LifeTalk.net/sharing-cards](http://LifeTalk.net/sharing-cards). [3]

## SOUTHERN UNION/CONFERENCE JOB OPPORTUNITIES





GEORGIA-CUMBERLAND

**Adventurer Bible Game, Conference Level** – March 2.  
**Regenerate Youth and Young Adult Festival** – March 2. Church at Liberty Square, Cartersville, GA.  
**Hispanic Women’s Retreat** – March 8-10. Cohutta Springs Conference Center.  
**Adventurer Family Fun Week-end** – March 22-24. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp.  
**“Even If” Women’s Retreat** – April 12-14. Cohutta Springs Conference Center.  
**Pathfinder Camporee** – April 25-28. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp.  
**Collegedale Camp Meeting** – May 29-June 1. Southern Adventist University.  
**Junior 1 Camp** – June 9-16. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp.  
**Junior 2 Camp** – June 16-23. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp.  
**Adventure Camp** – June 23-28. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp.  
**Tween Camp** – June 30-July 7. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp.  
**Teen Camp** – July 7-14. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp.  
**Family Camp** – July 16-21. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp.  
Please check our website for the latest information, [www.gccsda.com](http://www.gccsda.com).

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY

**Excavation Expert** – March 21. Collegedale Church, 11 a.m. Archaeologist Steven Ortiz, Ph.D., of Lipscomb University in Nashville, TN, will speak for the Hasel Lectureship Convocation. Visit [southern.edu/southernevents](http://southern.edu/southernevents) for streaming options and additional information on this free event.  
**Assyrian Archaeology** – March 25. Lynn Wood Hall Chapel, 7 p.m. Constance Gane, Ph.D., will

present “The Assyrian War Machine: Expansion and Conquest” as part of the free lecture series highlighting ancient Near East history. Visit [southern.edu/southernevents](http://southern.edu/southernevents) for streaming options and additional information.  
**Illuminate Arts & Faith Conference** – April 4-5. Join Illuminate’s inaugural gathering open to those who value the intersections of art and faith as experienced through presentations, performances, workshops, and conversations. Visit [southern.edu/illuminate](http://southern.edu/illuminate) for schedule, locations, and registration information.  
**Gym-Masters Home Shows** – April 6, 7. Iles P.E. Center, 9 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. Promoting teamwork and trust, both performances of the University’s acrobatic and gymnastic team are themed “Soar,” based on Isaiah 40:31. Contact the School of Health and Kinesiology at 423-236-2673 for

more about the free event.  
**Choirs Perform** – April 7. Collegedale Church, 4 p.m. Choral ensembles from the School of Music will join together in concert under the direction of Gennevie Brown-Kibble. For streaming options and additional information, visit [southern.edu/musicevents](http://southern.edu/musicevents).

SOUTHERN UNION

**Improving Health Conference – April 10-13.** Uchee Pines Institute, Seale, AL. Speaker: Dwayne Lemon. Through hands-on classes, lectures, and a focus on biblical spirituality, attendees will be instructed in healthy lifestyles behaviors and given tools that they can use to prevent and/or treat various ailments with simple, natural means in their own homes. For details: visit [ucleepines.org/events/improving-health-conference](http://ucleepines.org/events/improving-health-conference) or call 334-855-4764.

	SUNSET					
	MAR 1	MAR 8	MAR 15	MAR 22	MAR 29	APR 5
ATLANTA, GA	6:35	6:41	7:46	7:52	7:57	8:02
CHARLESTON, SC	6:18	6:23	7:29	7:34	7:39	7:44
CHARLOTTE, NC	6:20	6:26	7:32	7:38	7:43	7:49
COLLEGEDALE, TN	6:37	6:43	7:49	7:55	8:00	8:06
HUNTSVILLE, AL	5:43	5:49	6:55	7:01	7:06	7:12
JACKSON, MS	5:59	6:05	7:10	7:15	7:20	7:24
LOUISVILLE, KY	6:38	6:45	7:51	7:58	8:05	8:11
MEMPHIS, TN	5:57	6:03	7:09	7:15	7:20	7:26
MIAMI, FL	6:23	6:27	7:31	7:34	7:37	7:40
MONTGOMERY, AL	5:44	5:49	6:54	6:59	7:04	7:09
NASHVILLE, TN	5:43	5:50	6:56	7:02	7:08	7:14
ORLANDO, FL	6:26	6:31	7:35	7:39	7:43	7:47
TAMPA, FL	6:31	6:35	7:39	7:43	7:47	7:51
WILMINGTON, NC	6:09	6:15	7:21	7:26	7:31	7:37



ABC TELEVISION EASTER SPECIAL



SOUTHWEST REGION  
CONFERENCE  
OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

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GRAMMY AWARD WINNING MUSICAL ARTIST

*Jairome Jorge*

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*Southwestern Adventist University Singers and Orchestra*

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