

THE MAGAZINE OF YOUNG HARRIS COLLEGE | SUMMER 2016

ECHOES

8 LEGACIES OF FAITH
22 THEREFORE, GO
36 DISCUSSING OUR DIFFERENCES
40 A TIMELESS TRADITION

IMPACTING
Humanity
Connecting the head,
heart and hand for
grace filled lives



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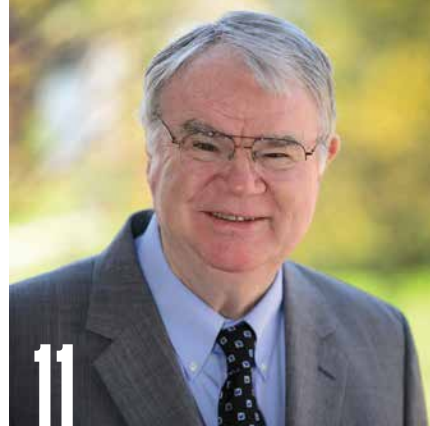
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ON THE COVER

PHOTO BY MELISSA MITCHELL

The oldest structure on the Young Harris College campus, the Susan B. Harris Chapel was built in 1892 as a memorial to the wife of Young L. G. Harris and is closely associated with traditions of the College. Students ring the Chapel's bell, which came from England, to welcome the start of the academic year and during Alumni Weekend as a memorial to deceased alumni.



Diversity that Unites

Young Harris College has a rich history grounded in The United Methodist Church, dating back to its founding by Methodist circuit-riding minister Artemas Lester. Members of YHC's Inter-Religious Council recently posed questions to President Cathy Cox to learn more about that history and how her own experiences have impacted her views on religious diversity today.

Q: Why is religious diversity important for a liberal arts education?

A: The United Methodist Church has a long-standing commitment to higher education and the broad, holistic form of a liberal arts education—dating back to our Wesleyan founding and traditions, in which one's spirituality was believed to be enhanced or strengthened by the gaining of further understanding of religious texts and other disciplines. We also believe a liberal arts education better prepares students today for success in an increasingly changing, global world. Having a campus in which students get to know and befriend fellow students who practice various religious beliefs is a strong component of a broad liberal arts education, and provides one of the greatest learning experiences we can offer.

Q: What was your experience with religious life in college?

A: I was very involved in the Wesley Foundation as a student at the University of Georgia. It not only provided me with a great group of friends on a large, impersonal campus—but the continuing connection to The United Methodist Church was an important guidepost and means of keeping me grounded during those early-adult years when I was trying to make weighty decisions about my life.

Q: When was your first encounter with diversity outside your personal religious tradition? Did this experience create doubts and/or reassurances?

A: I grew up in very conventional Baptist and United Methodist traditions, but because my mom was the organist for the local Jewish temple, I also had frequent opportunities to worship and celebrate holidays with our local Jewish community. When I became a statewide elected official, I had numerous opportunities to visit and worship in all kinds of different faith and racial communities—from Protestant Evangelical to Lutheran, Catholic, Hindu, Ismaili Muslim, non-denominational mega-church, and more. All these experiences profoundly affected my views, as I witnessed first-hand the sincerity of beliefs, the impact of music in worship, and the expressions of love and humanity, woven throughout each of these faith communities. I gained a glimpse at just how large our God really is, how widespread His love is, and how—at the end of the day—we are all, each and every one of us, children of a loving, all-powerful God.

Q: YHC is known for matriculating many, many students who have gone on to be ministers. How does this reputation impact our campus community?

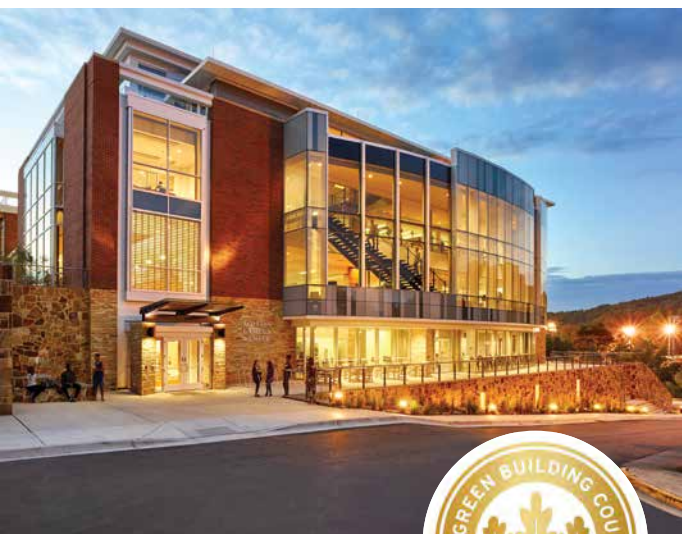
A: I hope we will always be a “bench,” or positive training ground, for future ministers—of The United Methodist Church and of other denominations. It's a definite part of our heritage, and I see it as an important role we can and should play in our affiliation with the Church. Having those “future ministers” among our student body provides a very special and influential kind of Christian leadership among our students, and naturally when those students go out into active ministry, they will be great representatives of YHC, great leaders in the faith, and, hopefully, send more students back to us.

Q: How does YHC's affiliation with The United Methodist Church benefit students?

A: First and foremost, students who are members of a United Methodist church can qualify for tremendous matching scholarships in the UMC's “Dollars for Scholars” program. YHC has been one of the top three colleges in the country in recent years for students who have tapped into this generous source of scholarship funding. The Church appoints our campus chaplain, who provides the primary religious life leadership for students and our campus at large. We also get a limited amount of financial support from the Church, which enables us to provide additional religious life programming and other means of student support.

ARTWORK BY KHALID JOHNSON, '19

ROLLINS CAMPUS CENTER Earns LEED Gold Certification



This spring, YHC's Rollins Campus Center was awarded Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certification by the Green Building Certification Institute, making it the first building on the YHC campus to achieve gold certified status and the fifth LEED-certified.

"I am proud to work for an institution whose leadership is dedicated to providing facilities that are not only state of the art, but also consciously driven for the purpose of minimizing the environmental footprint these facilities leave behind," said Director of Facility Planning and Operations Chadley Gray. "I feel blessed to be able to lead the operational duties of the Rollins Campus Center. This is an amazing achievement for YHC's ongoing efforts to be a leader in providing facilities that are guided by the LEED principles of the U.S. Green Building Council."

PSYCHOLOGY MAJORS Win First Place

In April, five student groups comprised of senior psychology majors from YHC presented research posters at the 15th Annual Georgia Undergraduate Research in Psychology Conference at Kennesaw State University. One of the posters, "Memory Complexity: The Effects of Modality on Creating False Memories" by Nicole Wasko of Blairsville, Morgan Clark of McCayesville, Brandi Davis of Villa Rica, Victoria Thomas of Madison, and Assistant Professor of Psychology Dr. Amy Boggan, took home a first place finish for overall poster presentation.

Hank Aaron Delivers

2016 COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS TO GRADUATES

In May, baseball legend Henry "Hank" Aaron delivered the Commencement address to YHC graduates, sharing with them an important message of inspiration, determination and values.

"Ultimately, every individual has one set of values, and we need to live our values consistently in every part of our life," said Aaron, who served on the College's Board of Trustees from 2000-2008. "None of us can know the challenges we will be faced with or the battles we will be called upon to fight, but I promise you this: at some point you will come face to face with a situation that feels bigger than anything else in your life."

Aaron has a longstanding friendship with YHC alumnus former U.S. Senator and Georgia Governor Zell Miller, '51. When the College decided to construct a baseball stadium to be named in honor of Gov. Miller, who both played and coached baseball at YHC before entering public service, Aaron not only gave generously to the project, but also assisted with raising the funds. In 2014, Aaron received YHC's Nancy Louise Haynes Stephens Sanderson Robertson Outstanding Friend Award for his generous contributions and friendship to the College.

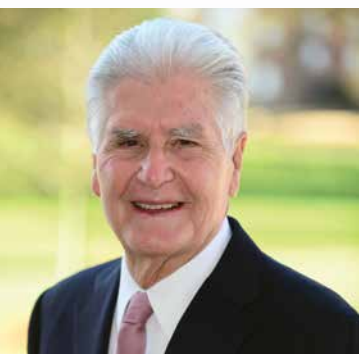
"You will face your own time of choice, a time that makes you leave your comfort zone—this is what growth is all about," Aaron continued. "Each of you can take the field knowing that in life, like baseball, there will be some runs and some hits and also some errors, and at the end of the day the one thing you can control is your own best effort."

YHC President Cathy Cox presented Aaron with an honorary doctor of humane letters degree. Aaron, nicknamed "Hammerin' Hank," is widely regarded as one of the greatest hitters in the history of baseball. He spent 21 years as an outfielder for the Milwaukee and Atlanta Braves and two final years as a designated hitter for the Milwaukee Brewers, setting several records and winning a number of honors along the way.

[Look for full coverage of Commencement 2016 in the Fall/Winter 2016 issue of Echoes.]

Prior to the ceremony, Commencement speaker Henry "Hank" Aaron met with President Cathy Cox and graduates including (L to R) Christian Hambrick, Jacquelin Solis, Stephanie Mills, Breann Lindsey, Shaw Carter, and Wade Orr.





BOARD OF TRUSTEES Welcomes New Members

During the annual fall and spring meetings of the Board of Trustees, YHC welcomed five new members to the distinguished group of leaders.

A YHC alumnus and native of Oglethorpe County, **Eustace "Mac" McCannon, '60**, served as a certified public accountant in Georgia and South Carolina for 28 years before retiring in 1995. He currently resides in Greensboro, Ga., and is an avid cyclist, tennis player, and golfer.

A native of Murray County, **Mickey Dunn** serves as the president and CEO of ML Industries, Inc., North America's largest privately owned independent airbag manufacturer. Dunn was recently inducted into the Murray County High School Hall of Fame as well as Southern Polytechnic State University's Athletics Hall of Fame in 2014. Dunn calls both Aspen, Colo., and McAllen, Texas, his current home.

Mary Broadrick's connections to YHC are deep. She is the daughter of the late George Broadrick, '41, former YHC trustee and alumnus, who served as president of First Citizens Bank in North Carolina. Broadrick, who retired as benefits coordinator for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, is active in her community.

A native of Young Harris, **Carol A. Chastain, '84**, serves as senior vice president and chief compliance officer for United Community Banks. Following her graduation from YHC, she earned an accounting degree from the University of North Georgia. Chastain is active in YHC's alumni association, serving as president of the Alumni Board of Directors from 2009 to 2011.

David J. Lance serves as president and CEO of Greater Community Bank based in Rome and Calhoun. He is the son of the late Bert Lance, a longtime member of YHC's Board of Trustees, and the grandson of T. Jack Lance, who served as president of YHC from 1930 to 1942.



YHC STUDENTS Stand Out at Writing Festival

Senior creative writing major Sarah Boudreau of Cumming, senior creative writing major Morgan Bilicki of Blairsville, recent religious studies graduate Jami Padgett, '16, of Ellijay, and recent business and public policy graduate Erik Hallin, '16, of Hagfors, Sweden, were selected as finalists in the 45th Annual Agnes Scott Writers' Festival Contest, representing each category in the competition.

"Being named a finalist in this contest is a major accomplishment," said Director of the Creative Writing Program and Assistant Professor of English and Creative Writing Chelsea Rathburn. "All of the entries are read anonymously without being separated by level. This means that our students are competing against submissions from M.F.A. and Ph.D. programs, and they beat out these graduate students to become finalists."

This is the second year in a row that YHC students have been selected as finalists in the contest. Last year, YHC had the second-highest number of finalists of any college in the competition—no small accomplishment for a major that was in its very first year.

"It's notable that we have two non-majors as finalists this year," said Rathburn. "This is proof of the power of a liberal arts education: students from across the College are interested in studying the craft of poets, fiction writers, and essayists—and thanks to our flexible core curriculum, they're able to pursue those interests and become successful writers."

BIOLOGY MAJORS

Take Home Top Honors

Three YHC students recently received top honors at the Georgia Academy of Science annual meeting held at Gordon State College in April.

"Every one of our students did very well and were terrific models of student-researchers at YHC," said Dean of the Division of Mathematics and Science and Associate Professor of Biology Dr. Linda Jones, who serves as councilor-at-large for the organization.

Andrew Lyons, '16, of Township of Washington, N.J., won the Best Undergraduate Presentation Award in Biology, Christian Hambrick, '16, of LaFayette, won the Best Undergraduate Presentation Award in Biomedical Sciences, and Kristina Kauffman, '16, of East Ellijay, won one of three Best Poster Awards—all recent biology graduates.

YHC faculty members serving as officers for GAS include Chair of the Biology Department and Professor of Biology Dr. Paul Arnold, president-elect, Assistant Professor of Biology Dr. Johnathan Davis, chair of the biological sciences section, Assistant Professor of Chemistry Dr. Charlie Swor, councilor for the chemistry section, Assistant Professor of Biology Dr. Jennifer Schroeder, co-chair for the biomedical sciences section, and Assistant Professor of Biology Dr. Andrea Kwiatkowski, secretary for the biomedical sciences section.



YHC Students Impress at History Conference

Four Young Harris College students were selected to present at the conference "Aftermath: European Reactions to War, Genocide and Catastrophe in the 20th Century" hosted by the History Graduate Student Association at Clemson University in February.

Recent art graduate Jacob Bennett, '16, of Ellijay, recent English graduate Georgia Googer, '16, of Cumming, senior history major Jason Edwards of Young Harris, and senior business and public policy major Faith Bridges of Carnesville, each researched and wrote a component of the paper titled "Expression of the Spanish Civil War in Art and Film: Guernica and For Whom the Bell Tolls."

"These four YHC students presented one of the finest programs of Clemson's graduate conference, despite being the only undergraduates whose proposal was accepted," said Associate Professor of History Dr. Thomas Stearns. "With clarity, skill, and polish that far surpassed those of other presenters, they and their project were the hit of the conference! I was so impressed with their hard work, dedication, and professionalism."

All four students were enrolled in Dr. Stearns' "Filmmakers and World Cinema" course last fall. Each student focused on a different aspect of an encompassing cultural and historical theme.

YHC Names Jimmy Owen Vice President for Advancement

James P. "Jimmy" Owen has been selected as YHC's new vice president for advancement.

"Jimmy's experience in higher education and the public sector will be a tremendous asset to YHC," said President Cox. "I'm confident that he will take our advancement efforts to the next level."

With more than 20 years of experience in both for-profit and nonprofit work, Owen joins YHC's leadership with an impressive background in development. Most recently, Owen served as director of development at Emory University's Woodruff Health Sciences Center. Prior to that, he served as director of annual giving at The University of the South in Sewanee, Tenn.

"I'm deeply honored and grateful to be at Young Harris and build upon the great success over the past eight years of President Cox and our esteemed advancement team," said Owen, whose wife, Kell, is a member of YHC's Class of 1993. "Our family's love for YHC runs deep, and this opportunity is especially meaningful for us."

Prior to delving into the world of development, Owen served as vice president of Covenant Real Estate Management Company, Inc., in Atlanta, and owned The Colony Company, Inc., a real estate company in Fairhope, Ala. Owen earned his bachelor of science in business management from Auburn University.

"YHC has such passionate and generous alumni and friends of the College," said Owen. "We have much to look forward to in the months and years to come."



Legacies of Faith

BY JUDY LUNSFORD

Young Harris College has a distinguished and enduring legacy of alumni entering the ministry. The Reverend Dr. Don Harp, '61, and the Reverend David Haygood, '60, epitomize that legacy, both having served The United Methodist Church for more than 40 years. While their ministries have taken them on different paths, they both took their first steps in preparing for the pulpit at Young Harris College and continue to give back to the institution through their gifts and service today.

Rev. Dr. Don Harp, '61

Dr. Harp grew up on his family's farm in Fayette County, only 200 yards from Inman United Methodist Church, which his ancestors helped establish in the 1800s.

"Attending church was a must every Sunday, no excuse was given—you went," he recalled. "My mother played the piano there for 60 years, and my grandmother, uncles, aunts, and cousins were members."

As important as church was, Dr. Harp never considered the ministry as a teenager; baseball had his focus. After finishing Fayette County High School, he had the opportunity to play baseball with the Atlanta Crackers, a minor league team, but his father discouraged it. Instead, the 18-year-old enrolled at the University of Georgia with plans to play baseball there.

"UGA was so different from the little country school I went to that I stayed for one week of orientation and two weeks of classes and then came back home," he said. "I farmed with my father for three years. Then, a young minister came along and began challenging me to do something with my life."

Dr. Harp decided to answer the call to ministry and, on the recommendation of his minister, chose to attend YHC. "Back then, a lot of ministerial students attended Young Harris," said Dr. Harp. "The College gave a scholarship of \$15 per quarter to ministerial students."

Although he was 21 years old when he began his studies during the spring quarter of 1959, Dr. Harp quickly acclimated to campus life. He became involved in the Young Harris Debating Society, served as president of the student body and was selected for membership in the Spat Club.

"At YHC, we knew just about everyone in a very short time," he explained. "We ate together, went to church together. Chapel was

full for Vespers every night. You couldn't date off campus, and very few people had cars. We played ping-pong in the student center. Everyone was just grouped together."

Dr. Harp became best known on campus for his athletic abilities. He ran track and played baseball. Having earned a reputation as an excellent catcher and tremendous hitter for the Mountain Lions, he served as the team captain his second year. He also established a lasting friendship with his baseball coach that has spanned more than half a century—Lifetime Trustee and former U.S. Senator and Georgia Governor Zell Miller, '51.

"Zell would tell us, 'From Young Harris you can go anywhere in the world,' and that's true," said Dr. Harp. "On baseball trips, Zell would tell us that he was going to be governor of Georgia one day. We would say, 'Oh, yeah, you really are!' And, sure enough, he became governor of Georgia."

Years later, Dr. Harp gave the prayer during Gov. Miller's inaugurations as both Lt. Governor and Governor. During Gov. Miller's last year as a U.S. Senator, Dr. Harp was invited to Washington, D.C., to open a session of the Senate with a devotional and prayer.

In Dr. Harp's second year at YHC, the pastor at First Methodist Church of Union County invited him to speak at one of his circuit churches twice a month. "I would use the College's station wagon to drive over to Shady Grove, which was part of the Blairsville circuit. Folks would take me home to eat with them some Sundays, which was a chance

to get away from college food. That was actually the beginning of my preaching."

The YHC Ministerial Association weekly meetings provided Dr. Harp with opportunities to hone his preaching skills. "Someone would preach a sermon and the other students would discuss what was good about it and what was bad," explained Dr. Harp.

Then, a young minister came along and began challenging me to do something with my life.

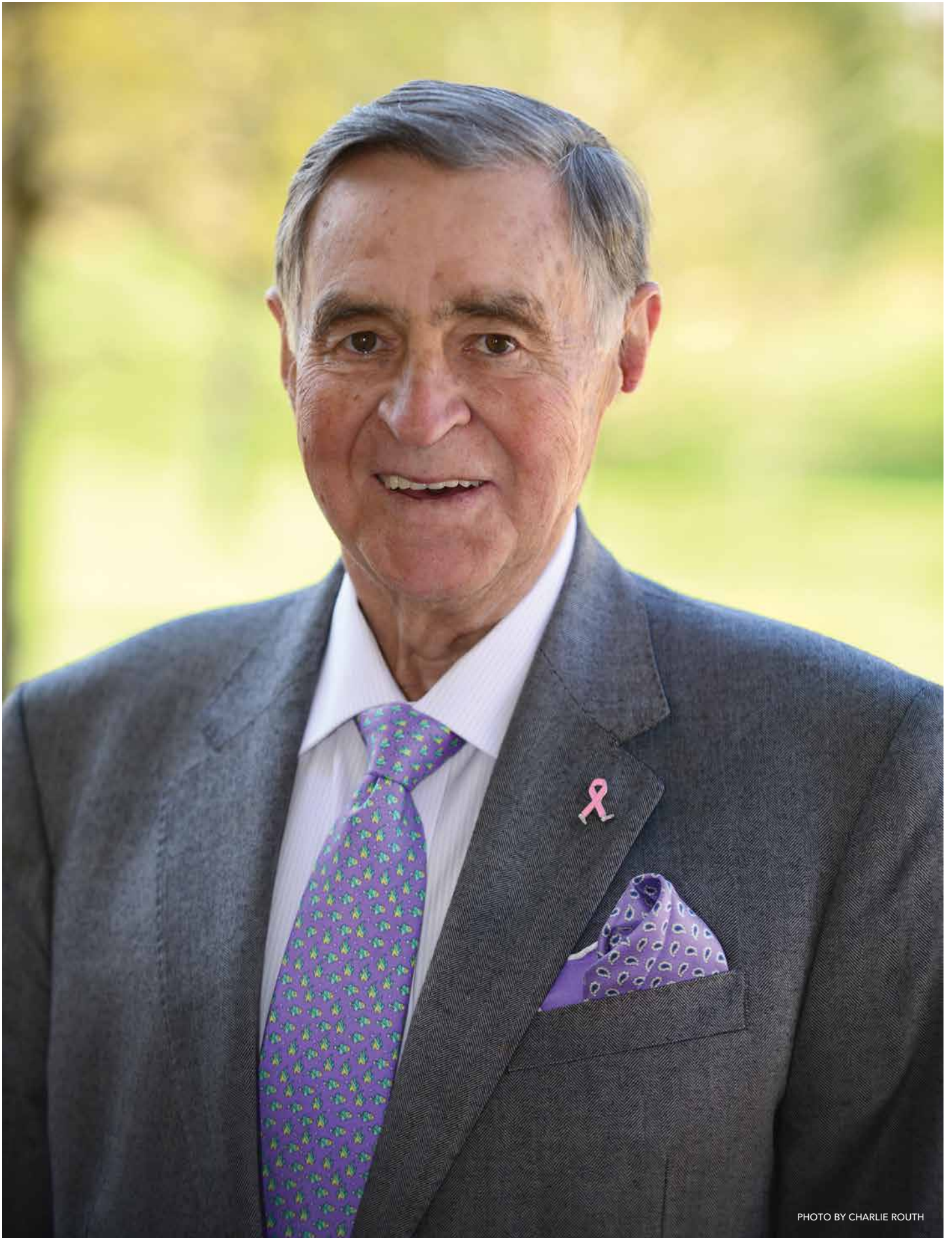


PHOTO BY CHARLIE ROUTH

"Vespers also gave us preaching opportunities. The service was held every night, and many of us who were studying to be ministers preached during these Vespers services."

After he completed his studies at YHC, Dr. Harp attended Huntingdon College in Alabama on a baseball scholarship. Once again, he excelled at the sport and was selected as an All-American for the 1963 baseball season. His performance at home plate resulted in the then-Houston Colts drafting Dr. Harp. He decided, though, to pass on the professional opportunity and chose instead to begin his studies at Emory's Candler School of Theology in Atlanta.

"I was 25 years old at that time, and I had just finished Huntingdon," recalled Dr. Harp, whose outstanding baseball records have earned him induction into the halls of fame at his high school, YHC and Huntingdon. "I was smart enough to realize that my future in baseball would have been very limited. It also would have delayed my entrance into seminary. Looking back, I certainly made the right decision."

It was at Huntingdon that he met his future wife, Mary Ellen Dendy. They graduated in May of 1963 and married in June. Dr. Harp began classes for his master of divinity degree that fall. At Emory, he received a student appointment, preaching at five rural churches in Butts County.

After Emory, Dr. Harp moved with his wife and young son, Allen, to Carrollton, where he was pastor of St. Andrew UMC. Dr. Harp also served as campus minister of the Wesley Foundation at West Georgia College—now the University of West Georgia. During his five years in Carrollton, he was active at the college and in the community.

In addition to his work at the church, Dr. Harp coached West Georgia's golf team and became a close friend with the college's basketball coach, Roger Kaiser, a former NBA player and two-time All-American at Georgia Tech. In Carrollton, he ran for public office, served as mayor pro tem and police commissioner, and was a member of the City Council. He also wrote a column for the local newspaper, which he continued to do at most of his churches. During this time, his family also grew with the birth of their daughter, Robin.

Between 1972 and 1988, Dr. Harp pastored the

congregations at Northwoods UMC in Doraville, Sam Jones Memorial in Cartersville, and First United Methodist in Gainesville. While in Cartersville, he earned his doctorate from McCormick Theological Seminary at the University of Chicago.

In 1998, he became senior pastor of Peachtree Road United Methodist in Atlanta, arriving during a time of transition for the church. "Peachtree Road had always been a very important church, but it suffered when so many people moved out of metropolitan Atlanta to the Alpharetta and Roswell areas," he said. "In the 1990s and the turn of the Millennium, the Buckhead area began to change in the age demographic. Lots of young adults began to move into the area. We found a niche with young families, and the church began to grow."

He contributes the church's growth to its outreach activities, such as building Habitat for Humanity houses and starting a mission program for adults and youth. "The young families were looking for something that brought meaning to their lives." When Dr. Harp retired as senior pastor at Peachtree Road in 2008, the membership had grown from 3,600 to 7,000. He continues to serve the church today as minister emeritus.

While Dr. Harp is hesitant to guess at his legacy in the church, the impact he has made is evident. In fact, the church recently dedicated the Don and Mary Ellen Harp Student Center named in the couple's honor.

"As a pastor, I was able to develop relationships with my congregations," he said. "People say my preaching was good, but I was basically a storyteller. I talked about how to deal with things in life, but I knew all their names and their kids' names."

"I also was able to attract wonderful people to work with me—never for me, instead with me," he added. "I always wanted to create a place that they would want to come to work."

He believes this is what President Cathy Cox has created at YHC. "I think many of the people there could make more money somewhere else, but they find working at Young Harris meaningful, they find it rewarding, they find it a place of joy," he explained. "Cathy is a work-with-me, not a work-for-me type of person."

LEFT TO RIGHT Dr. Harp mingled with members of Peachtree Road United Methodist Church prior to the dedication of the new Don and Mary Ellen Harp Student Center. ■ During his time at YHC, Dr. Harp was involved in many aspects of student life, including the Spat Club, Young Harris Debating Society and athletics. ■ Dr. Harp posed with wife, Mary Ellen, during the Fall 2016 meeting of the YHC Board of Trustees.



Dr. Harp has been on the YHC Board of Trustees since 1989 and has chaired the Trusteeship Committee and served on the Development and Executive Committees. He championed the College's transition to a four-year institution in 2008.

"It had to change because there is no longer a place for a liberal arts junior college," he said. "You can have a two-year technical school, but transferring credits from a two-year school to a liberal arts college doesn't always match up."

Serving on the Board of Trustees has given Dr. Harp the opportunity to see first-hand the transition of YHC. "You cannot tie the transformation of this College to anyone else but Cathy Cox. Others have played big parts, but she has been the leader. She is not a minor, but a major miracle and she has done a yeoman's task of making Young Harris a vibrant four-year school."

Rev. David Haygood, '60

Rev. Haygood tells people that he grew up in the shadow of the church. When he was 2, his family moved from Thomaston to Statesboro, where his father worked for a national furniture company. The family's home was across the street from the First Methodist Church. It was there that he began a relationship with The United Methodist Church that would span the rest of his life.

When Rev. Haygood was 5, the family moved to Eastman and was active in the church. Rev. Haygood grew up going to youth camp at Epworth-by-the-Sea in St. Simons and Dooly Campground near Vienna, and at the age of 15 during a worship service at Dooly Campground, he received his calling.

"I felt God speak to me, asking me to go into the ministry," he recalled. "I said, 'Well, okay.' Then I started thinking about it—I had to go back home and tell my family and friends that I am going to be a preacher. I thought, 'Am I really sure of that?'"

That was just the question his mother asked when he announced the decision to his family. "I was entering my junior year of high school at that point. This meant seven more years of schooling after high school," he said. "I thought and prayed about it, and then I said, 'Yes.'"

He looked at three Methodist colleges: Emory at Oxford, LaGrange, and Young Harris. "My daddy was a frugal man," he said. "Emory at Oxford cost about \$1,050 a year. LaGrange was \$900 a year, and Young Harris was \$750 a year. So, my dad encouraged me to look at Young Harris," he joked.

In fall of 1958, his parents took him to YHC. "That was the beginning of two of the happiest years of my life," said Rev. Haygood. "I was from the flatlands of Middle Georgia, and when I saw those mountains again, I thought this is

like heaven."

Rev. Haygood entered college life with enthusiasm. He became president of the freshman class, joined the Ministerial Association and the Young Harris Debating Society, and was tapped for the Spat Club, a 13-member honorary service organization. A gifted singer, he joined the College Choir and was selected for the Ensemble.

In May of his freshman year, he volunteered to be a debater in the annual champion debate between the Young Harris Debating Society and the Phi Chi Debating Society. The topic was "Our educational system is adequate for our American life."

"We won it on simple logic," he said. "We talked about Sputnik and about the Russians and their educational system, but I think we won the debate due mainly in part to my debating partner, late emeritus trustee Marion Edwards, '59, who did our rebuttal for us. It was a high point of my freshman year."

While a freshman, he became friends with sophomore Ed Nelson, '59. "Ed would jokingly say, 'I'm going to be the next Billy Graham,' and I would laugh," said Rev. Haygood. Their classmates suggested that they form a team and conduct youth revivals over the summer. "Well, Ed became excited about that," he said. "Then, he persuaded me to join him."

One after another, their friends offered to have them at their church and 10 weeks of summer youth-sponsored revivals were scheduled across Georgia. They faced, however, an obstacle: neither one had a car. When Rev. Haygood asked how they were going to get around, Nelson replied, "God will work it out."

Just before the first revival, Nelson arrived at Rev. Haygood's home in Eastman in a 1953 Ford that his father had bought for them. They were on their way, traveling from Jesup to Atlanta to Pelham and hitting many points in between.

"Ed did most of the preaching, and I led the singing and sang solos," recalled Rev. Haygood. "We also taught courses and did some recreation with the kids. In 1959, the churches were very responsive, and adults and youths packed them. It was a great summer."

Rev. Haygood entered his second year at YHC as student body president. He continued his busy schedule of activities and classes. One day, President Dr. Charles Clegg joined him on a walk across the campus. "He came up and put his arm around my shoulders and said, 'David, you have been really involved in activities here

and you have enjoyed yourself, but now, when you go on, you buckle down and you make As.' At Young Harris, I was flying by with As, Bs and some Cs. One of the best things Dr. Clegg did was help me to see that."

With graduation approaching, Rev. Haygood and 19 of his friends decided to continue their studies at LaGrange College. During this time, Rev. Dr. Bevel Jones, an emeritus trustee

I felt God speak to me,
asking me to go into
the ministry. I said,
'Well, okay.'



PHOTO BY CHARLIE ROUTH

of the College and then-pastor of First Methodist Church in LaGrange, spoke at Young Harris. Afterwards, Dr. Jones asked Rev. Haygood if he would be interested in serving as his assistant when he enrolled at LaGrange, adding that it would include a full scholarship.

Rev. Haygood's acceptance provided him experience in the church and a generous scholarship. It also introduced him to Harriette Kuhr, a fellow LaGrange student who was working with the church's music program.

After graduating from LaGrange in 1962, Rev. Haygood enrolled in Emory's Candler School of Theology, and was elected president of the first-year class. He auditioned and was selected for the Candler Choraliers, which provided him a full-tuition scholarship for his second and third years of theology studies. While at Emory, he served as assistant pastor of prospects and visitation at North Decatur Methodist Church. Then, prior to his last year of seminary, he and Harriette married.

While Rev. Haygood was completing his studies at Emory, Ed Nelson, his old friend from YHC, wrote him about an opportunity for postgraduate study at New College at The University of Edinburgh, Scotland. He and Harriette decided to go, providing Rev. Haygood the opportunity to study the New Testament with noted author and preacher Dr. James Stewart.

When they returned to the United States a year later, they moved to Columbus, where Rev. Haygood had been invited to serve as associate pastor at St. Luke United Methodist Church. With 2,500 members, St. Luke was the largest church in the South Georgia Conference of the UMC.

Over the next three and a half decades, Rev. Haygood's ministry would include pastorates and administrative leadership roles all over the South Georgia Conference. In 1970, he was appointed to a three-church circuit in Montgomery County in Middle Georgia. His son, Thad, was born during this time. Four years later, he became pastor of Wrightsville UMC and, in 1976, moved to St. Andrew UMC in Columbus.

In 1981, he and his family moved to St. Simons Island, where Rev. Haygood served on the Conference Council on

Ministries as an associate director, working with all of the churches and colleges in the South Georgia Conference. One of his responsibilities was staffing the camps, including Epworth-by-the-Sea that he had attended as a youth.

In 1987, he returned to the pulpit as pastor of First United Methodist Church in Thomasville, and in 1991, he began a six-year stint as superintendent for the Savannah District, which included 50 churches across five counties.

In 1997, he became senior pastor of Wesley Monumental UMC in Savannah, where he remained until his retirement in 2003. He and Harriette moved to Newnan to be near his sister and her family, and planned to travel. "Plus, we wanted to get above the gnat line," he laughed. A year into retirement, Rev. Haygood was asked to return to Savannah to serve as interim district supervisor for 10 months.

"I hope and pray that God has used us to make disciples in the churches where we have served," said Rev. Haygood. "I am grateful that our ministry has influenced some young people to go into the ministry." Their son, Thad, who graduated from YHC in 1992, has been in the ministry of the South Georgia Conference for nearly 20 years.

Rev. Haygood has remained close to YHC, serving on the Board of Trustees since 1985, and appreciates the opportunity to give back to the College.

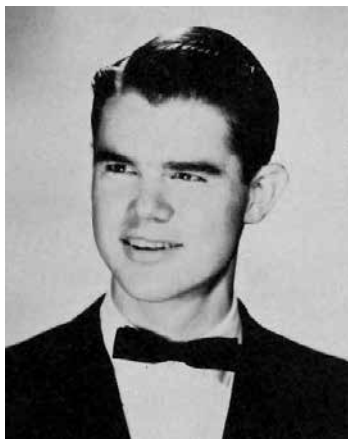
"Those two years at Young Harris were very meaningful and influenced my life in many positive ways," said Rev. Haygood. "It is great to serve on the Board with colleagues—some were classmates of mine and good friends.

"As trustees, we have seen the transformation of the College and have marveled at Cathy Cox and her service as president," he said. "How in the world does she do all that she does?"

"There is a special spirit at Young Harris," he added. "It is very hard to define, but there is a spirit among the students. When I attended, professors were very interested in each student. They knew us, and we knew them. There was a feeling of family."

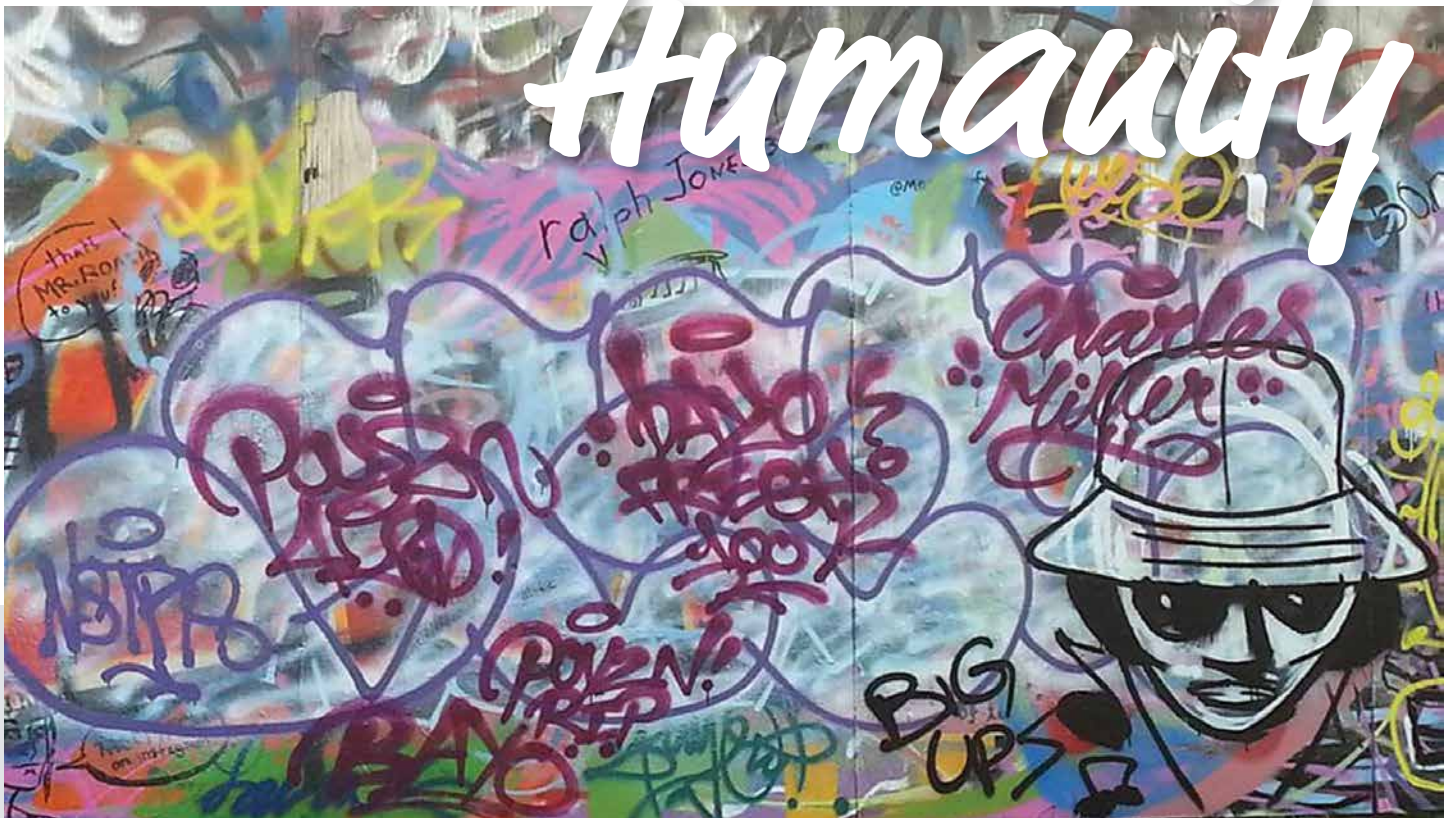
"We had feared that when we became a four-year institution that we might lose some of that," he shared. "But, I think the spirit of Young Harris is as prevalent now as it was back then." ■

LEFT TO RIGHT Rev. Haygood and his wife, Harriette, met as students while completing their undergraduate education. ■ As a YHC student, Rev. Haygood joined the College Choir, Ministerial Association, and Young Harris Debating Society, and served as president of his class. ■ Rev. Haygood welcomed guests to YHC's *Investing in the Future* Capital Campaign celebration in 2015. ■ Fellow YHC Trustee Wyck Knox joined Rev. Haygood following a meeting of the Board of Trustees.



IMPACTING»

Humanity



Throughout the years, Young Harris College has offered students opportunities to grow academically, professionally, socially, athletically and spiritually. For the five alumni featured in the pages ahead, the latter is perhaps most significant. True to its mission to integrate mind, body and spirit, the educational foundation laid by YHC has paved the way for these men and women to truly impact the world.

BY KELLY L. CRAWFORD

Rev. Gary Dittman, '82, believes to live a good life is to serve others and to treat one another as equal—something he has done his entire life. The Bradenton, Fla., native arrived at Young Harris College by way of exploration, but ended up learning invaluable lessons about humanity through his experiences in the Enchanted Valley.

While at YHC, Rev. Dittman met his wife, Karen, '82, in an astronomy class taught by former Professor of Astronomy Jimmy Westlake—a chance meeting that would determine the course of their lives together.

"Plotting stars in the middle of the night was a great way to fall in love," said Rev. Dittman, who arranged to bring Karen back to YHC for Alumni Weekend a year after their graduation. "I had made arrangements with Jimmy to have the Planetarium unlocked. I brought up the stars and proposed to Karen, leaving the engagement ring on the chair where she sat during all those astronomy classes."

Karen said yes and they have been happily married since the summer of 1984.

Besides finding the love of his life, some of Rev. Dittman's fondest memories of his time at the College involved hikes to Bell Mountain, hanging out at Cupid Falls, trips to Pizza Hut in Murphy, N.C., walking to Gibson's and spending time at the much-loved Little Store.

He was involved in the Wesley Fellowship, Spat Club and drama department—an organization that introduced him to "some of the most wonderful, loving, socially engaged people" he has ever known.

But, it was during Rev. Dittman's involvement with the Spat Club that he saw first-hand the impact of racism.

"I was aware of racism and prejudice, but never experienced them quite as vividly as when a black Spat brother and I went to Hungry Hermits," he recalled. "Someone in the restaurant went out, got a gun and put it on their table. We did not wait for the pizza."

This pivotal incident set off a fire within Rev. Dittman's soul to educate others and eliminate racism.

After graduating from YHC, Rev. Dittman went on to attend LaGrange College and Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC). While in Chicago, Rev. Dittman began to recognize

more fully the racial disparities that are far too present in communities.

"There was a newspaper article in 1984 that told the stories of the nearly 100 young people who had been murdered that year. It was heart wrenching," said Rev. Dittman, who went on to complete an internship in inner-city Milwaukee under Mick Roshke and Joe Ellwanger. "Joe had organized with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in Birmingham, and was present when the 16th Street Baptist Church was bombed."

After graduating from LSTC in 1988, he accepted a position in Lincolnton, N.C., at Emmanuel Lutheran Church. In this small town, Rev. Dittman's church led the community in peace and justice efforts—a push started years prior by Pastor J. Schoneberg Stetzer.

"In the 1960s, he preached an anti-segregation sermon that split the church and led to a KKK cross burning on the parsonage lawn," Rev. Dittman explained. "This event defined the work of the congregation."

It was also during this time that Karen went back to school to become a neonatal nurse practitioner and accepted a position at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Md. After praying for discernment for six months, the couple felt Rev. Dittman's time in Lincolnton had come to an end. He headed to Baltimore, as well, and accepted the pastoral position at Amazing Grace Lutheran Church—a 20-year-old consolidation of three historic Lutheran churches in East Baltimore.

"Amazing Grace is in a community where neighbors face challenges of poverty, violence, stress, unemployment and access to healthy food," he said. "Working in a disinvested-in community that has been underserved has taught me much about the wounds of racism in our country and our need to move toward healing."

Although East Baltimore wasn't the epicenter for the uprisings in April 2015, Rev. Dittman noted that "the community was impacted by protests and frustrations of fractured relationships with police and a general lack of trust in the city."

Rev. Dittman's church acted though, immediately creating a safe

place for people to pray and process. Amazing Grace also offered summits for the youth of the city to talk about their feelings. "We broke bread together, feeding over 250 people alone the day after all the fires," he added.

Since then, Amazing Grace's wellness center—The Center for Grace-Full Living—has collaborated with members of the community and additional organizations to provide opportunities for work, recreation, and healing activities including yoga, budget-friendly cooking classes, art, afterschool programs, and community gardens that provide food to nearly 5,000 people over the course of the year.

Rev. Dittman often reflects on how his time at YHC played a role in his "drive and desire to walk toward a more just and beautiful world." His answer comes from a montage of events and experiences—from lively late night conversations by the Spat Fountain to political arguments in the dining hall.

"In part, I was given the space and freedom to figure myself out at Young Harris College—a safe and supportive place," he said. "In contrast, I've watched some of the brightest kids I have ever met struggle just to feed their younger sisters and brothers in Baltimore."

As Rev. Dittman works to heal the wounds of racism so all children can share opportunities like those afforded to him, he knows all too well that many simply try to survive to the next day.

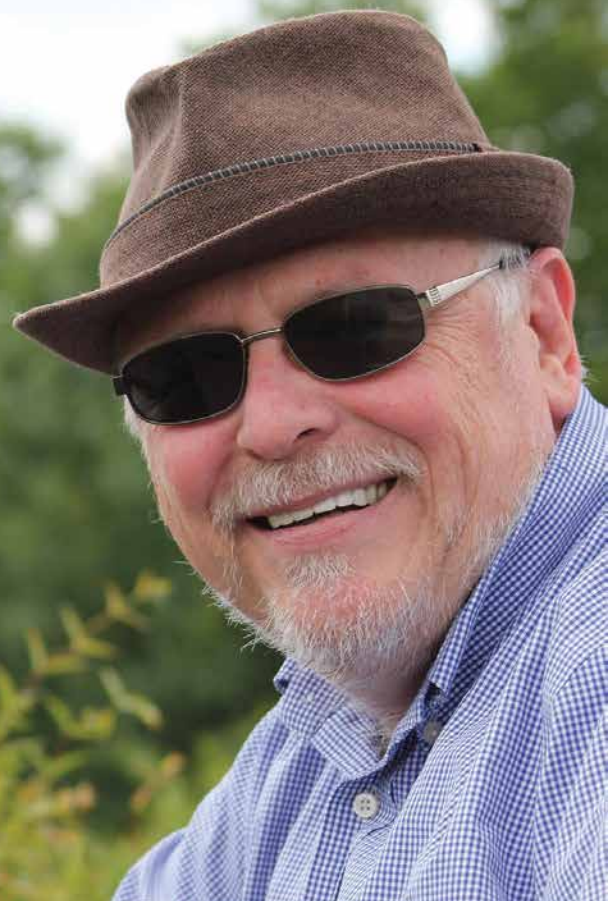
"I want all young people to know the dignity of being greeted personally by a professor walking across campus or arguing over something political at the Little Store," he said. "Somehow, my experience at YHC makes me eager to find ways for all young people in our world to have such a beautiful growing-up time."



Learn more about Amazing Grace's work in the community.



➤ *Rev. Gary Dittman, '82*
**PASTOR, AMAZING GRACE
LUTHERAN CHURCH
BALTIMORE, MD.**



» *Alyssa Lowery, '14*

STUDENT, PH.D. PROGRAM IN PHILOSOPHY,
VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

NASHVILLE, TENN.



BY KYLE HUNEYCUIT, '13

When Alyssa Lowery, '14, first came to Young Harris College, she had a plan for her life—she was going to be an actress. Fast-forward several years, and you won't find Lowery on a stage or TV screen, but she still has an avid audience—undergraduate students. As a graduate student in the doctorate of philosophy program at Vanderbilt University, Lowery engages with people every day, not through this year's blockbuster film, but through the teaching of young minds.

"Ever since I saw the Lord of the Rings when I was 13 years old, I was convinced I needed to be involved somehow in making films," Lowery explained. "I loved the possibility of reaching so many people with regard to key themes in our lives. Clearly, my goals have changed, but I realized I could investigate those same themes, but with a rigor and clarity not always available through film format."

What happened to make Lowery's career goals shift so dramatically? It began during a course on world religions during her freshman year at YHC. "I enrolled on a whim, mostly to fulfill a requirement," Lowery admitted. "But I quickly became fascinated with the possibility of studying those traditions that guide the lives of so many people, including myself. I grew up as a conservative Southern Baptist, and I was blown away by the diversity of traditions that flourished regionally and internationally."

Lowery was sold. She decided to major in religious studies at YHC, but didn't stop there. She also decided to minor in philosophy and history. She credits her two minors with helping her better understand religious studies and how to approach the world as a whole—and vice versa.

"Now that I am working on my Ph.D. in philosophy, my work in religious studies and history continues to be beneficial. Both fields serve to stretch my mind, which is so often fixated on philosophical ideas, and recognize the complex histories and circumstances which ought to be informing philosophical study."

Throughout Lowery's four years at YHC, she determined her new career goals and became equipped to accomplish them, but her experience in the Enchanted Valley also affected her on a much more personal level.

"I've often told people that I 'became a self' at Young Harris," Lowery said. "I grew up in the normative sense, yes, but I also radically changed how I think and about what."

Lowery says she owes that transformation to the people at YHC who helped and influenced her—a network of support and an environment where she was able to challenge herself, build things for others, and cultivate great friendships. "It's that sense of the possibility of change, of renewal, that I think I carry with me the most. I grew into someone I respected."

Among those individuals were Lowery's professors at YHC. "Dr. Ruth Looper showed me that there was no reason not to have fun in the college classroom, Dr. Eric Dickman taught me, sentence by sentence, how to write with precision and sophistication—a skill I cannot repay, and Dr. Jennifer Hughes revealed there was no limit to the magic that can happen in a classroom full of engaged students, where even "Moby Dick" can make you cry."

While Lowery notes that it's been more difficult to build community at Vanderbilt University than it was in cozy Young Harris, she is happy to say she has learned from some great faculty who, like those at YHC, are thrilled about their subject matter and excited to help her flourish in the field.

"I will always be a big fan of how small the YHC community is," Lowery said. "By my senior year, I couldn't walk across campus without some affirming interaction. I loved living in a town where all the essentials were within a 15-minute drive."

Lowery attests that if she had to choose one year at YHC to relive, it would be her senior year. "I couldn't miss the chance to have one more seminar with my friends, to share one more meal in the dining hall at 1 a.m., or power through one more all-night writing session in the library, stealing seven-minute naps by the religion and philosophy sections. It's such a bittersweet truth that we very often can't understand how precious some things are to us until we no longer have them."

Lowery hopes that YHC continues to preserve the many qualities that make it special, the qualities that make it feel like "home" and the qualities that helped shape her to be who she is today.

"I hope that YHC never loses its sense of ambition. I've always appreciated that for a small school, Young Harris is always looking for opportunities for its students. I have so many memories that were formative in shaping my future."





Rev. Dr. John Ed Mathison, '58

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
JOHN ED MATHISON
LEADERSHIP MINISTRIES
MONTGOMERY, ALA.**

PHOTO BY LEE WERLING

BY KRYSTIN DEAN

For the Reverend Dr. John Ed Mathison, '58, following in the footsteps of family has led to an extraordinary life devoted to ministry for more than half a century. He comes from generations of preachers and began to formally pursue his passion at age 16.

Though Young Harris College has a long-standing tradition of preparing graduates for lives of ministry, Dr. Mathison felt called to attend YHC for a very different reason: athletics. While watching the Mountain Lions take on Auburn University in Montgomery, Ala., he met legendary YHC coach Luke Rushton, '42. He decided to visit campus and "fell in love" with the College.

"Basketball was played at such a high level that I knew YHC was where I wanted to go," he said. "Coach Rushton was a huge influence in my life. He demanded a lot on the court. He had also been a tennis pro and really helped me develop as a tennis player."

Dr. Mathison played on the state championship basketball team at YHC. He was undefeated in collegiate tennis for four years, and was consistently ranked No. 1 in his age division in Alabama.

He recalled seeing two of his tougher professors in the stands at his first basketball game at YHC. "Neither of them knew I played basketball," he said. "Both of them expressed shock when they saw me on the team. It was good to be known first as a student, then secondly as an athlete."

Dr. Mathison went on to earn a bachelor's degree from Huntingdon College, where he was the basketball team's captain and leading scorer. He also received a bachelor of divinity degree and doctor of ministry degree from the Candler School of Theology at Emory University, a master's degree from Princeton University, and three honorary doctorates.

YHC laid the framework for Dr. Mathison's academic success by creating a close-knit yet challenging learning environment. Many professors made an impression on him—especially former President Dr. Ray Farley.

"Everybody was afraid of his pop quizzes," Dr. Mathison recalled. "I can still hear him standing beside his desk and hitting his hand on it using his ring to make a loud noise. If he didn't get your attention immediately, you were in trouble!"

Outside of the classroom, Dr. Mathison enjoyed working with YHC's Ministerial Association and getting acquainted with people

across Georgia he would later work with for years through The United Methodist Church. He was also highly involved with the Vespers Services held each evening after supper.

"One of the great influences Young Harris had on me was the importance of preaching," said Dr. Mathison. "I had a lot of opportunities to do that at Vespers. I also got to hear other young people my age speak. Preaching has always been a major emphasis in my ministry."

Dr. Mathison's younger brother, the Reverend Dr. George Mathison, '63, followed the same path to YHC and a vocation in the church. He recently retired as senior minister at Auburn UMC and preached at YHC's Alumni Weekend service this April.

Dr. Mathison ministered at three churches in Alabama from 1964 to 1972 before serving as senior minister of Frazer Memorial UMC in Montgomery for 36 years. Under his leadership, Frazer grew from 400 members to more than 8,800 and had the largest Sunday school attendance for United Methodist churches in the country.

In June of 2008, he hit the UMC's mandatory retirement age of 70. Just one month later, he worked with a board of directors to establish John Ed Mathison Leadership Ministries as a nonprofit to help train a new generation of clergy and laity for meaningful ministry. Through his role as executive director, Dr. Mathison has trained around 9,000 pastors during the past eight years.

"Young Harris provided me with a great foundation to do ministry," he said. "I learned a lot about the importance of networking and forming relationships that would be mutually beneficial in the future. YHC taught me how to think critically and do a lot of practical things in life such as time management, conflict management and more. Every day I put into practice things I learned during my time at YHC."

Dr. Mathison is the author of five books and numerous articles. He also serves on the planning committee for the Billion Soul Initiative, which aims to start 5 million churches and reach 1 billion new Christians by 2020, and has made five trips to India to train thousands of pastors for the cause.

His free time is devoted to his wife, Lynn, four children and 10 grandchildren. His family knows the word "retirement" isn't really in his vocabulary—something he learned from his late father, the Reverend Marion "Si" Mathison, who preached every Sunday until the age of 95. Instead, Dr. Mathison remains committed to what he calls "the Cause of causes," creating a lasting legacy all his own.

BY KRYSTIN DEAN

Author, scientist, preacher, professor—these are some of the many hats worn by Paul Wallace, Ph.D., '88, who has pursued a remarkable path to help bridge the gap between science and faith through his teaching, writing and ministry.

The Atlanta native felt the pull to the mountains after he heard about the experiences his older brother, Dan Wallace, '85, had at Young Harris College. "Like him, I wasn't set on any particular major or career when I left high school. Frankly, I was a little lost on this planet," explained Dr. Wallace, whose younger sister, Kristen Wallace Pierce, '90, also attended YHC.

One thing Dr. Wallace immediately found at the College was an appreciation for his new secluded surroundings. "I didn't have regular exposure to the night sky growing up, so I would take long walks and memorize star names and constellations," he said. "Those walks always made me happy."

While Dr. Wallace cherished these moments of solitude, he also enjoyed being surrounded by crowds of students—which happened often, since he played in a rock band at YHC called Uncle Fester's Sound Corral.

"We would set up our amps and drums in the lower level of Sharp Hall, or a classroom, or the corner of Clegg, and just play all night," he said. "We were pretty loud, but the campus security guy didn't really care so long as he couldn't hear us over in Peel Hall where I lived."

While exploring the Enchanted Valley and playing music at YHC's Spring Fest evoke fond memories for Dr. Wallace, he unequivocally counts the time he spent in the classroom as his favorite part about the College.

"I had struggled in high school and never experienced academic success until I came to Young Harris," he explained. "The thrill of learning things alongside teachers who cared about me and saw something good in me was something I had never known before."

When asked how YHC shaped his career path, it's fitting that Dr. Wallace cited three diverse courses: literature with the late Bettie Sellers, which he called "a life-changing adventure in reading and writing," Dr. John Kay's "mind-blowing" world religions class, and a physics course with Dr. Hartmut Ramm that taught him "how to think clearly about simple things."

Dr. Ramm's course ultimately led the self-proclaimed "science nerd since childhood" to pursue a bachelor's degree in physics from Furman University and a doctor of philosophy in nuclear physics from Duke University. Dr. Wallace also spent three summers in Greenbelt, Md., as a faculty fellow at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center.

Dr. Wallace worked as a professor of physics and astronomy at Berry College in Rome, Ga., for a decade before returning to his hometown to attend the Candler School of Theology at Emory University, where he earned a master of divinity with a concentration in historical theology in 2011.

In 2014, Dr. Wallace was ordained into the gospel ministry by First Baptist Church in Decatur, where he currently resides with his wife, Elizabeth. The pair has three children and celebrated their 25th anniversary this summer.

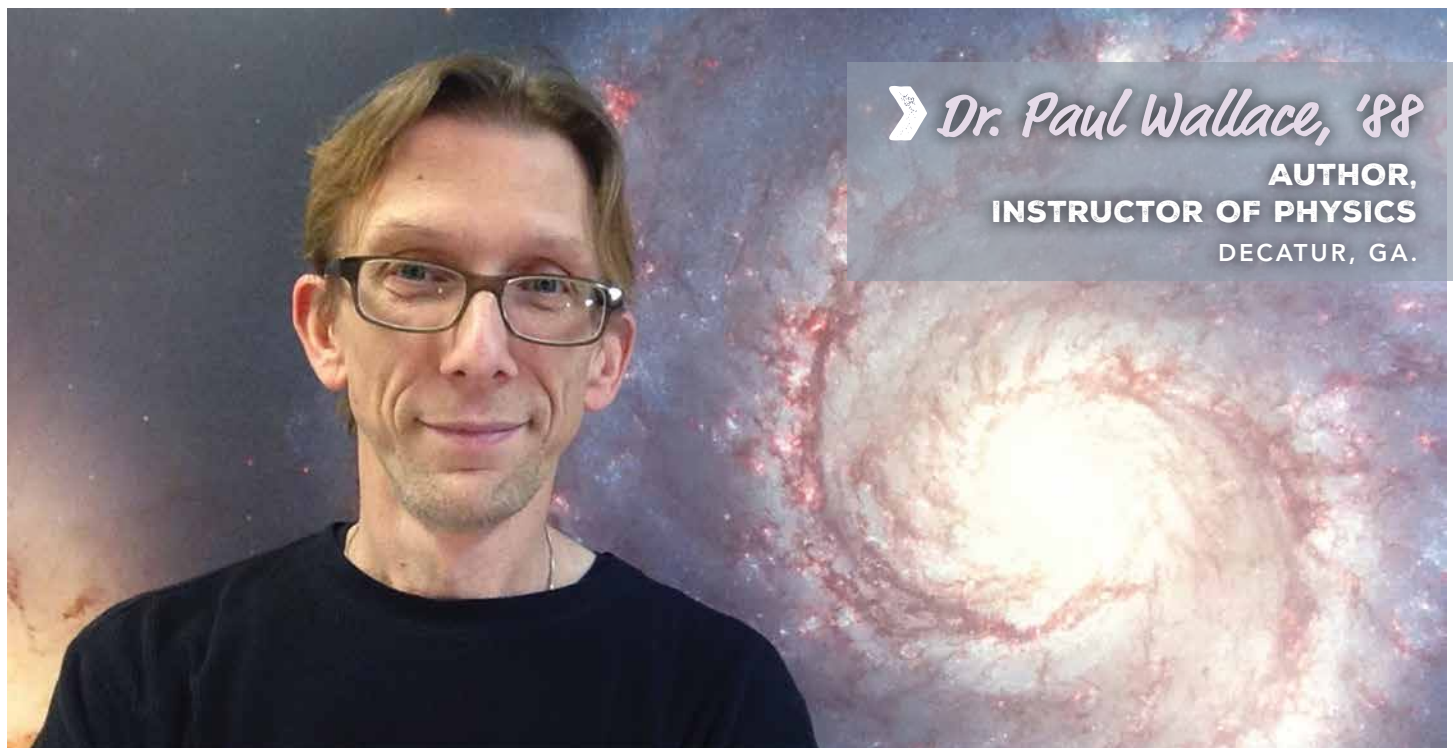
He called his decision to leave a tenured faculty position for seminary "a complex one" that was ultimately motivated by his desire to write and connect with others—a passion Dr. Wallace realized during his days at YHC when he was torn between pursuing English or physics.

"I loved the beauty of words but I chose physics because it made so much sense to me. It fit the way I thought," he explained. "Learning it was like putting on a shoe that was brand new but felt old and comfortable and worn in all the right places."

Educating others has remained an important aspect of Dr. Wallace's identity, and he currently teaches physics and astronomy at Agnes Scott College. "When I arrived at YHC, I was inspired by my professors, and I wanted to do for others what they did for me," he said. "That's why I'm a professor."

In 2010, Dr. Wallace founded psnt.net, a science and religion website that "takes science as embedded within Christianity." He frequently contributes to publications like the Huffington Post and recently published his first book, "Stars Beneath Us: Finding God in the Evolving Cosmos," which weaves together faith and science while calling into perspective the scale of the cosmos and our place within it.

"Science is so often painted as the enemy of religion today. Christianity is an unbelievably rich and deep tradition, and its best and truest expressions can thrive in such an age," he said. "Science and the cosmos it has revealed is not a threat to true Christianity; it is instead a lovely portal into the faith. But this is not obvious to many, and my mission is to make it so."



» *Dr. Paul Wallace, '88*
**AUTHOR,
 INSTRUCTOR OF PHYSICS**
 DECATUR, GA.

▶ *Rev. Catherine Boothe, '99*

**ASSOCIATE PASTOR,
NORTHSIDE CHURCH
ATLANTA, GA.**



BY MADDY ELLEDGE, '16

The Reverend Catherine Boothe, '99, laughs that she first learned about Young Harris College when a "friendly and cute" counselor mentioned the College to her while working one summer at Camp Glisson, a United Methodist camp and retreat center in Dahlonega. But, what ultimately drew her to the Enchanted Valley was her love of the area.

"I already loved the North Georgia mountains and realized Young Harris College offered the perfect combination of mountain beauty, southern hospitality, financial scholarships, academic rigor, and leadership potential," said Rev. Boothe.

Rev. Boothe spent her two years at YHC active in various aspects of student life. From Sigma Beta Sigma sorority to Wesley Fellowship, Rev. Boothe particularly enjoyed the community she found at the College. It is that same sense of community that was instilled in her while attending YHC that she credits for shaping her life of ministry.

"YHC cultivated a conviction and commitment to community," said Rev. Boothe. "I learned the value of authenticity and vulnerability, and I learned that strength is only powerful when coupled with humility and expressed within a caring community."

For the past 10 years, Rev. Boothe has served as the associate pastor at Northside Church: A United Methodist Congregation. She began as the children's pastor and has since carried out many roles.

"I am a teacher, an event planner, a recruiter, a nonprofit administrator, an advocate, a caregiver and a preacher," explained Rev. Boothe, who also earned degrees from Valdosta State University and Candler School of Theology at Emory University. Regardless of her role at Northside, she feels privileged to have had the opportunity to equip and empower the congregation with the motto "know the love of God, grow as a disciple, and go into the world to serve others."

Like most, Rev. Boothe's ministry is not contained within the walls of a church building. "YHC instilled within me a commitment and conviction to share life's mountains and valleys with another person," said Rev. Boothe. She believes that she is able to empower people to identify, celebrate, and implement their God-given gifts. "I'm allowed to carry the light of Christ into the darkness of disappointment, depression, divorce, disease, and death," said Rev. Boothe. "I am not the agent of hope, healing, or humor, yet, I'm blessed to be a friend and fellow traveler on the journey of life who can gently and confidently direct others to the source of all love, laughter, and life."

One of the most influential people in Rev. Boothe's decision to pursue a life of ministry was retired YHC campus minister Rev. Fred Whitley, '66, fondly known as "Rev." According to Rev. Boothe, "Rev." had a profound and large impact on her entire life: academically, professionally and spiritually. But, the most important thing "Rev." did was share his love, his life and his laughter with his students.

"He invited me to find the humor and wit of God and his often misfit followers," shared Rev. Boothe. "He let us be adventurous, playful, and creative while pushing us to use our gifts and talents to inspire, motivate, and lead."

Much like today's YHC students, Rev. Boothe had a set schedule for her days. "Weekday evenings had a routine that was rarely interrupted—an early dinner in the Grace Rollins Dining Hall, to religious life in the Hesed House and Chapel, to Sigma Beta Sigma sisterhood celebrations, to a bit of studying in varying common rooms, to the late night reality that studying should either cease or transition to the Waffle House in Hayesville, N.C."

Rev. Boothe noted that one thing she treasures most about her time at YHC is the lifelong friendships she made. "The friendships developed in the midst of the beautifully mundane moments filled my memories from YHC," said Rev. Boothe. She also learned how to take herself less seriously and enjoy the moment. "We rode 'Rev.'s' miniature trains with Wesley Fellowship, ran the front stone wall with Baptist Student Union, partook in friendly water balloon fights amongst the Greeks, and learned to be a better version of ourselves," she reflected.

She often relates the wisdom taken from YHC to Psalm 121:1, "I lift my eyes up to the mountains—where does my help come from?" Rev. Boothe explained that being a YHC student helped her to focus more on God and to be more compassionate with others.

"Young Harris College and the Enchanted Valley taught me to slow down and disconnect from technology and connect with others, to enjoy the sunset and an occasional sunrise, to treasure the unknown hidden in the fog, to trust the bedrock of God's love, to study the words of old, to explore rarely traveled paths, to always have a friend, and laugh with the excitement of Cupid Falls."



PHOTO BY ELISABETH SHABI



PHOTO BY SAMUEL PHAM, '19

BY LEANN WALDROUP

In Anticipation

Like most Young Harris College students, senior religious studies major Lathem Postell spent the last few weeks of the spring semester looking forward to summer. His plans, though, included more than a week-long vacation at a tropical location. Postell was embarking on a historic trip to Portland, Ore., to serve the North Georgia Conference of The United Methodist Church as a lay delegate at General Conference.

"I first attended Annual Conference five years ago when they voted for delegates to attend General Conference," explained Postell, who noted that particular Annual Conference made a lasting impression on him. "I wanted to do everything I could to play a role in ensuring the lasting preservation and vitality of The United Methodist Church. Because of this, I decided to throw my name in the hat as someone willing to be a delegate."

Prior to embarking on his journey to Portland, Postell reflected on the monumental importance of the 2016 General Conference,

the top policy-making body of The United Methodist Church that convenes every four years to revise church laws and adopt resolutions on current moral, social, public policy, and economic issues.

"The major issue facing the General Conference this year is the topic of human sexuality," said Postell, who served as the youngest delegate from the North Georgia Conference and the second youngest overall. "While this is an important issue that will no doubt be at the forefront of the Conference, there are many other topics that will shape the UMC for years to come including guaranteed appointment and Plan UMC Revised."

Postell admitted that he was humbled to be a young adult delegate to General Conference, a role he takes very seriously. "As someone who hopes to one day be an ordained elder within the Church, I am excited to be a part of the one body that speaks for the entire United Methodist Church as a whole," said Postell, who plans to attend the Candler School of Theology at Emory University following graduation from YHC.

“As a delegate, I hope to be able to do my part to ensure that The United Methodist Church is around for years to come so that people are able to become disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

In Reflection

After 10 days of deliberations, committee meetings and worship, Postell returned to his home in Cartersville with a greater understanding of the “good of The United Methodist Church.”

“I had the opportunity to hear reports from many of the organizations and committees that are making a real impact around the world,” said Postell. “Also, spending two weeks with many of the leaders within the North Georgia Annual Conference allowed me to see our leaders in action. I’m confident that our conference will continue to be one of the best within our denomination.”

In addition to the learning opportunities offered by attendance at General Conference, Postell also participated in once-in-a-lifetime worship experiences alongside UMC brothers and sisters from across the globe.

“I had the opportunity to attend the African delegation’s worship service led by many of the delegation’s leaders,” he said. “The worship service was a spirit-filled time that allowed many of us to experience a little aspect of the worship that the African delegates are a part of every Sunday.”

RIGHT Postell served communion to a fellow delegate during The United Methodist Church’s General Conference. ■ Postell (third from right, back row) was the youngest General Conference delegate from the North Georgia Conference.

During General Conference, Postell was selected to serve on the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters—an elected position he gratefully accepted.

“I’ll work with other committee members over this next quadrennium to look at creating a Global Book of Discipline while tackling various other issues,” Postell explained. “Being a part of this committee will also give me the opportunity to travel all over the world as we meet in both Africa and the Philippines.”

Just a few short weeks after returning home from Portland, Postell again returned to the Young Harris College campus—a place that has allowed him to grow in his faith and gain a fuller understanding of what it means to be a member of The United Methodist Church.

“YHC has provided me an environment in which my faith has been cultivated and has allowed me to explore who I truly am,” said Postell.

He will certainly stand on the tenets of his faith as he prepares for life outside the Enchanted Valley with a goal of making disciples and helping steer the direction of The United Methodist Church on local, conference, and world-wide levels.

The question remains, though, for members of the Church: Where does the UMC go from here?

“While this may seem like a tough question, I have a simple answer,” he stated. “The United Methodist Church must move forward by staying focused on our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”



Hear more about Postell’s experience at General Conference.



PHOTO BY UNITED METHODIST NEWS SERVICE



BEYOND COMFORT ZONES

BY JORDAN HARRIS | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JARED ROACH, '17

"Well, maybe you need to get out of your comfort zone..."

Little did senior communication studies major Megan Watson, of Forsyth, know how that one sentence from her friend, senior religious studies major Jared Roach, of Johnson City, Tenn., could change the course of her life and her deepen her relationship with God.



Never had I thought about how my comfort zone was keeping me from being truly reliant on God. I had never really thought that being uncomfortable was important for my spiritual development.



Watson spent two months in Africa earlier this year as a spring intern with the global discipleship organization Choose to Invest—a time that allowed her to venture out of her comfort zone and broaden her faith.

Watson was inspired by Roach's words and previous journey to Africa in 2014, and while she felt like God was calling her to work in Africa, she just didn't think it would become a reality.

"Never had I thought about how my comfort zone was keeping me from being truly reliant on God," Watson admitted. "I had never really thought that being uncomfortable was important for my spiritual development. But, as soon as Jared said that to me, I knew that going to Africa with Choose to Invest was what I needed to do so that I could learn how to be fully reliant on God."



LEFT Watson traveled to Africa in Spring 2016 with Choose to Invest, a global discipleship organization. **ABOVE** As part of her internship, Watson served alongside native leaders, encouraging them that teaching in local schools is necessary work.



BELOW Choose to Invest empowers indigenous leaders to enable long-term sustainability for African communities.



During her internship with Choose to Invest, Watson worked in the yard of the organization's residential compound, cleaned, organized, and inventoried household items and supplies the ministry used.

"My team's job was to do whatever needed to be done to keep Choose to Invest's ministry sustainable," she explained. "But a majority of what we did was to be alongside the native leaders as they taught about the love and salvation found in Jesus Christ. We encouraged them, reminding them that teaching in their communities' schools is valid and a good and necessary work."

Founded in 2008 after seven years of developing the idea of a holistic discipleship, Choose to Invest utilizes the concept of servant leadership to raise up indigenous leaders for long-term sustainability.

The group has worked in 13 African communities alongside 133 college students—including several current and former YHC students: Roach, Watson, senior religious studies major Madi Kent, of St. Petersburg, Fla., junior communication studies major Jam Kimble of McDonough, Sara Beth Tankersley, '15, of Athens, and Stephanie Kennedy, '15, of Atlanta. Sophomore outdoor leadership major Paxton Spessard, of Cumming, continued this new YHC tradition as he made the journey to Africa over the summer.

I have never met such genuinely honest, kind, joyful, intentional, loving people in my life. These people love Jesus with a passion that is undeniable. They are so willing to learn more and more about Him. The amount of joy that these people have just pours out of them. It is absolutely incredible.

The biggest lesson Watson learned during her seven weeks in Africa was about humility.

“There were countless times when the Lord would use experiences to show me that I need to come to Him, that I needed to let Him use me, that I need to come humbly before the King,” she said.

One of these experiences was documented on Watson’s blog. She recounts a rather difficult morning where nothing was going right—she woke up late, frazzled and had to travel most of that day with her eight other companions. After a series of frustrating events, Watson fell hard on muddy road.

“In that moment though, that moment of deep embarrassment and honestly some pain, I didn’t cry or even realize that I was semi-hurt and possibly muddy,” said Watson. “The only thing that I could get out of my mouth was a huge eyes-closed, head-back cackle! I literally just laughed and laughed hard at myself and the situation I found myself in.”

Later that evening, the leaders in the group named Watson “Ndanu,” which means the laughing one or the one who laughs.

“The leaders saw the joy of the Lord in me. It definitely was not my own—because to be honest your girl was struggling—but the joy of the Lord was inside me. So, even though life is hard... sometimes you oversleep, you get your favorite shirt dirty, you fall on a muddy in road in rural Africa... we can find the joy of the Lord. We can be the laughing ones,” she said.

The people of Africa were Watson’s favorite part of her experience and she continuously felt inspired by them and their faith.

“I have never met such genuinely honest, kind, joyful, intentional, loving people in my life,” she shared. “These people love Jesus with a passion that is undeniable. They are so willing to learn more and more about Him. The amount of joy that these people have just pours out of them. It is absolutely incredible.”



BEAUTIFUL DANGER

Even though Watson worked the majority of her time in Africa, the leaders of Choose to Invest thought it was important for her team to experience the culture of Africa as well as the people and places. One of those experiences included a safari. Watson recounts this incredible experience where she got a bit too up close and personal with a group of elephants.

“The safari was an absolutely amazing experience! Towards the beginning, we were driving along and to the distant left, we saw a group of about seven elephants—one of those being a baby. Then, all of a sudden that group of elephants starts crossing the path we were trying to take. As all of the elephants crossed only yards away from our van, one of them decided to take a closer look—standing around 10 feet from the side of the van. Of course, I didn’t register that there was any danger, not until the driver told all of us to get down, sit on the floor and not make a sound. Apparently, this elephant being so close to us was very dangerous and she could have done a lot to cause harm to us. But, I couldn’t get past how beautiful this elephant was! It was so big and amazing, but also something that needs to be feared and respected.”

Watson said she is spiritually different after spending time in Africa and her faith was strengthened by the people, her experience, and getting out of her comfort zone.

“Even before we got off the airplane in Africa, I was out of my comfort zone,” said Watson. “During my time there, God opened my heart to so much about my relationship with Him.” ■

LEFT Watson (third from left, front row) journeyed to Africa with fellow YHC student Jared Roach (back right).



PHOTOGRAPH BY CHARLIE ROUTH

THE WORLD BEYOND AND THE WORLD WITHIN

BY BETH SAVOY

Why are we here? What is our purpose? With science, philosophy, and religion in hand, these big questions have always left human beings searching for answers. Many seek these answers in their personal life, finding solace in their private religious and spiritual practices. Others, including senior religious studies major Seth Black, of Beaufort, S.C., choose to seek out these questions in their studies.

“For me, religion is what has satisfied that yearning to answer the important questions of life,” explained Black. “Due to the limited nature of the human condition, the idea of contemplation is dictated by the finitude of our ability to understand. However, this should not come as a discouragement, but, rather, an indication that our work is never done. As I view it, my desire to study religion is simply the continuation of seeking meaning through a life-long process of transformation.”

While Black has always felt called to study religion as a means of understanding the “world beyond and the world within,” he actually came to Young Harris College as a transfer student from Belmont University in Nashville. After growing up in Gainesville, he decided as a high school senior that he wanted to experience something entirely new and different. This led Black to Nashville, but something was not quite right.

“Nashville is an incredible city and Belmont is an incredible school, but I was not receiving the community, surroundings or specific educational experience that I was aiming for in relation to my major,” he explained. “I grew up knowing about YHC and was invited by one of my best friends from Gainesville to come visit him one weekend. I did and fell in love with this place.”

As part of his transition to YHC, Black made it a point to become as involved as he could with religious life on campus. He is a representative on the Inter-Religious Council, which serves as the unifying group for spiritual life organizations at the College. He is also a worship leader for Underground, a student-led ministry. Additionally, he is a member of the Spat Club and recently became a gentleman for Phi Alpha Phi sorority.

In addition to his involvement with religious life on campus, Black is also a Jones Ministry Scholar at Hayesville First United Methodist

Church (HFUMC) in Hayesville, N.C. HFUMC has worked with YHC interns since the Jones Ministry Scholar program began five years ago, including YHC alumni Ali McCollough Sudderth, '15, of Buford, and Sara Beth Tankersly, '15, of Athens.

As part of the internship, Jones Ministry Scholars work 10 hours per week, leading worship on Sundays, working with the youth groups and assisting with the children's choir.

Black first learned about the opportunity two years ago while searching for internships, and he was invited to a service at HFUMC. "I immediately felt a welcoming sense of peace and calling that this church was where I needed to be," Black recalled. "I met the pastor and members of the congregation and everything fell into place after that. I knew I wanted to work with children and youth but also combine that with aiding in the services on Sunday mornings. For this reason, HFUMC was a perfect fit for what I wanted to do."

Black is grateful to have had many opportunities to learn and grow. "I have learned so many lessons that cannot really be put into words but simply experienced," he said. "I have grown in my understanding of selflessness, what it means to be a spiritual leader for a community, the importance of fellowship, that I should thank my parents for putting up with me as a child, and too many other things to count."

Hayesville First United Methodist Church Pastor Rev. Kirk Hatherly emphasized that the gratitude is mutual. As he reflected on the impact interns like Seth have had on the church community, he explained that each of them have brought something unique to HFUMC's ministry.

"Seth, Ali, and Sara Beth have brought energy and fresh perspectives, and enhanced our mission and ministry at HFUMC. We have loved having them," Rev. Hatherly said.

As Black begins to look toward his graduation from YHC, he noted that YHC is just the beginning of his religious studies. His plans for the future include attending a seminary where he hopes to earn a

✦ Named in honor of the L. Bevel Jones family, longtime ministers and YHC supporters, the Jones Ministry Scholars program provides internships through a grant for young adult ministry and vocational exploration by the Smoky Mountain District of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.

master of divinity from one of his top choices for graduate programs: Duke University, Vanderbilt University or Emory University's Candler School of Theology.

Black believes that his time at YHC and as an intern at HFUMC have both provided him with a direction for his journey as he continues to seek understanding in his studies.

"This internship has solidified within me a call to help others along their path of spiritual discovery," said Black, who noted that his heart and purpose reside in serving others. "Being a Jones Ministry Scholar has shown me that I find my greatest joy in assisting others as they step into a faith of their own understanding. It has provided me the opportunity and experience to take what I have learned and make a career out of compassion."

Why are we here? What is our purpose? With his faith and studies in hand, Black continues to find purpose, understanding, and meaning in his chosen life work.

"I can definitely see myself working in a church but am also seriously considering the possibility of chaplaincy, particularly in a prison setting. In any outlet of ministry, though, my overarching purpose, intention and reason would be the same: being a source of love and encouragement for those trying to find themselves and their understanding of the Divine."

As part of his internship, Black often led worship alongside Hayesville First United Methodist Church's MissionAires, kindergarten through fourth grade children who attend the church.



Behind the Questions

BY DR. ERIC DICKMAN

Sometimes students ask, “What do you believe?” They’re usually asking course specific questions. In my “Jewish Experience” course, they ask if I think there’s political interest in obscuring Genesis (Bereshit) 38 relative to Joseph’s story-arc. In “Philosophy of Religion,” they ask what soteriological implications I think the Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna’s notion of emptiness (shunyata) has. In “Hermeneutics,” they ask if I think authorial intent plays a decisive role in interpretation. In these cases, they’re taking advantage of access to an expert. On rare occasions, they’re asking about my personal religious (or irreligious) commitments: “What’s your religion?” “Are you an ‘Atheist’ (‘Christian,’ ‘Daoist,’ etc.)?” “Do you believe in God?” I invite you to peek behind the curtain for a glimpse into what goes on within a professor when trying to respond well.

Notice that the questions are nearly impossible to answer simply. A few things cause this. Direct answers sound evasive at best, or like jargony gibberish at worst. Before answering, I need to know what the students are really asking (and if they know what they’re asking!). So I’ll ask them: “What do you mean by ‘belief’?” “What is ‘religion’ (‘Atheism,’ ‘Christianity,’ etc.)?” “What does the word ‘God’ mean?” I’m sure you see how these could sound evasive when you’re supposed to give a simple answer! But responding with these isn’t evasive. They’re a pedagogical strategy aimed at helping students become aware of assumptions about complicated terms, and of social scripts used in identity politics.

On one hand, the terms of their questions are contested. Is the word “God” a name or title? Are we talking about the God of Abrahamic religions, various Asian religions, or the philosophers? Do you mean belief “in” or merely the belief “that” something is the case? On the other hand, direct answers often are convenient labels for political alliances. Consider what information students get from direct answers. “I believe there is no god but God, and Muhammad is his messenger.” (Oh! You’re Muslim.) “I take refuge in the Buddha.” (Oh! You’re Buddhist.) “I don’t believe that gods exist.” (Oh! You’re Atheist.) What is the use of labels like that?

If labels satisfy students, the conversation stops. This contradicts my commitment to liberal arts education.

Responses ought to raise the level of intellectual reflection, and not placate complacency in tossing terms around. So responses should lead us to more refined concepts (“Are you Pure Land Buddhist, or Theravadin?”). But heading this route shows I’m probably not what’s interesting. Why focus on me when we could be investigating Jesus’ or Confucius’ religion? To address more refined questions takes learning details about religions and philosophical approaches.

You can see here the other extreme from which to steer clear: getting weighed down in technical terms to the point of sounding like gibberish. (Of course, I’m not speaking gibberish!) Our scripts lead us to expect simple answers. (Think of what you’re supposed to say when someone states, “How’re you?”) We react to things frustrating our expectations with impatience, usually expressed as suspicion (“He’s being evasive!”) or self-deprecation (“Well, it’s way over my head!”). Once we get technical with terms and I start to explain my intellectual commitments, students tend to give up their questions put to me about me. As they probably should.

Let me explain. Do you expect simple answers from your repair technician when you ask, “But what’s really wrong with my smart phone?” Or how about from a physicist when you ask, “What’s the exact shape of all of space?” Just because you use phones and look at stars, that doesn’t mean you’ll understand. Just because you participate in a



religion, that doesn't mean you understand religion. As a teacher-scholar, understanding comes first. Consider this: do you believe that the sun will rise tomorrow? (How can you answer that well, when we all know the earth rotates around the sun?!?)

When we specialize in a field we learn a technical language, perfect a particular set of skills, and habituate a set of crucial attitudes. (The right attitude is key for surgeons, that they don't have empathy at the very moment they perform surgery. Can you imagine one cringing every time she uses a scalpel?) I want to emphasize learning a specialized language; we might as well treat it like a foreign language.

Most foundational thinkers in "Philosophy of and Theory of Religion" distinguish religion and philosophy this way: the language of religion consists of narrative imagery and symbols, whereas the language of critical reflection consists of determinate concepts and argument. In the fields of religious studies and philosophy, we know that most Americans lack literacy in both religious symbols and conceptual argument. (For a resource, consult Steven Prothero's "Religious Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know—And Doesn't.") This isn't a complaint! If a student is already literate in religious symbols and technical argument, then she wouldn't need our classes! But given students probably aren't yet fluent in these languages, they're not going to understand me if I merely answer their questions.

That doesn't get us off the hook, though. One criterion for distinguishing effective teacher-scholars is if they can translate their specialized research into something digestible for a lay audience. So in a way, we do start to address their questions by speaking in their terms, asking them questions about their terms, helping them become self-conscious about their own language, habits, and assumptions. But at the same time, we invite them to learn our language(s), which include fluency in the imagery of multiple religions as well as fluency in multiple theories of conceptual analysis.

If you want to know more, though, you'll need to take our classes!



Chair of the Department of Religion and Philosophy and Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies
Dr. Eric Dickman joined YHC's faculty in 2010. He earned bachelor's degrees in philosophy and religion from the

University of Dubuque and a Ph.D. in religious studies, specializing in modern religious philosophy, from the University of Iowa. Dr. Dickman's teaching and research interests are in comparative religious philosophies, philosophical hermeneutics, and philosophy of language.

MY TOP 5:

As a hermeneutics scholar, Dr. Dickman shares with YHC students the importance of text interpretation. Here, he shares with us his five often misunderstood religiously relevant philosophical statements that are worth understanding rather than fearing.

1. "God is dead! And we have killed him!"
-The madman, in Friedrich Nietzsche's "The Gay Science"
Nietzsche's character cries this in grief to condemn contemporary culture in which people settle for convenience instead of striving for highest ideals. This inspired the "Death of God" theologians of the 1960s, Thomas J.J. Altizer and Richard L. Rubenstein.
2. "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman."
-Simone de Beauvoir, "The Second Sex"
De Beauvoir affirms the dignity of women (as well as men). The key is "becoming," with equal opportunities for self-realization in social roles and more. This inspired the feminist Christian theologian Mary Daly in her "The Church and the Second Sex."
3. "There is nothing to do but to demythologize it [the New Testament]."
-Rudolph Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology"
Demythologization is the most misunderstood on this list. Bultmann advocates for interpreting the New Testament, not rejecting it in light of science. This approach was popularized by Joseph Campbell in "The Hero with a Thousand Faces."
4. "There is not the slightest difference between nirvana and samsara."
-Nagarjuna, "Mulamadhyamakakarika" (Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way), XXV.19
The Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna (100 C.E.) came to this profound insight through logic. He helped Buddhist disciples avoid the temptation to objectify nirvana as a place one goes to. This approach inspired Thich Nhat Hanh, whom Martin Luther King, Jr., nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize.
5. "Religion is the opium of the people."
-Karl Marx, "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right"
In Marx's day opium actually was used both as pain-reliever and as means for political domination in China. It's not an attack on religion like a "war on drugs." This influenced the religious studies scholar Russell T. McCutcheon in "Critics Not Caretakers," and the Latin American Catholic theologian Gustavo Gutierrez in "A Theology of Liberation."

INQUIRING MINDS: REV. BLAIR TOLBERT

PHOTOGRAPH BY SAMUEL PHAM, '19

Since arriving on the YHC campus in Fall 2015, Chaplain and Dean of the Chapel Rev. Blair Tolbert has immersed herself in the student-centered culture of the College and focused efforts on helping the campus community grow in their personal faith commitments while learning about the traditions of many religions. We sat down with her to chat about her traveling partner, her favorite campus events and what inspired her to become a minister.

WHEN YOU WERE A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? In fourth grade I did a career presentation about being a child psychologist one day. I dressed Barbie up as a doctor with Skipper laid out on a couch. I have only ever wanted to do “helping” professions—those jobs and vocations that heal heart, mind, and soul, offer compassion, build communities, and create environments that seek the common good. Then I got a call to ministry in the last year of high school and never looked back.

YOU MOVED TO THE MOUNTAINS LAST YEAR. WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE PLACES IN NORTH GEORGIA?

My dog, Marigold, is my traveling partner. She loves to jump in the car and find new trails with me. We love to travel down to Sautee Nacoochee outside Helen. We find waterfalls and visit the Stovall Mill Covered Bridge. Our favorite has been a day into North Carolina to visit Highlands. We love any place that offers new antique stores for me to shop at—and new things for Marigold to sniff!

YOU'VE NOW BEEN AT YHC FOR AN ACADEMIC YEAR. WHAT'S BEEN YOUR FAVORITE EVENT ON CAMPUS?

The Service of Lessons and Carols at the close of the fall semester that ended in the tree lighting brought me great joy. It happened around four weeks after I arrived on campus, and I called on many students to participate. Their willingness to participate in the service overwhelmed me. Plus, they loved the candle lighting as we sang "Joy to the World" and ended with lighting the tree outside Susan B. Harris Chapel. It was a moment of peace and joy before finals.

WHAT'S THE BEST PIECE OF ADVICE YOU'VE EVER RECEIVED? "Gray space is good space." This little phrase happened in a conversation with clergy colleagues to challenge and remind us that the unknown is something to embrace and not fear. It is not always about right and wrong, but life is lived in the in-between. My experience as a chaplain and pastor involves the in-between moments of people's lives. Another piece of advice that has formed my work and ministry is the

"3, 3, 3 Rule" of Bishop Joe Pennel. Bishop Pennel explains that each week a minister should make three phone calls, send three emails and write three thank you notes to be in continual contact with those you serve.

ON THAT SAME NOTE, WHAT'S ONE PIECE OF ADVICE YOU OFTEN SHARE WITH STUDENTS? I frequently ask the question, "What makes you angry about the world?" This is not simply about the person who cut you off in traffic or about the grade you got on a paper. What are deeper realities that cause you to see the injustices of the world? After a few moments of thinking, students will talk about poverty, homelessness, modern day slavery, global warming, equal rights and a host of other circumstances. By asking this question, students begin to see where their passions, their sense of compassion and their gifts can merge as they seek to figure out what they want to do with their lives.



WHAT IS ONE OF THE MOST MEMORABLE SERMONS YOU HAVE DELIVERED?

In my first appointment I preached with my mom on Mother's Day. We preached together, speaking back and forth, sharing our story of God's abiding love made evident in our relationship. My favorite sermon to preach is one where I pull out a pineapple—yes, an actual pineapple—to discuss God's longing for disciples to create welcoming communities of grace inside and outside the walls of the church. The pineapple always keeps people's attention.

WHAT SURPRISED YOU MOST ABOUT YHC?

Maybe not surprised, but what amazed me was the investment of students into the experience of their peers at YHC. The upper-level students at YHC want their peers to find their place here and be able to experience it as home. During my interview and since arriving on campus, students are always trying to find new programs, speakers, and even clubs to bring on campus to create a more welcoming and religiously diverse environment. These conversations and requests continue to impress me.

HOW DOES PARTICIPATING IN RELIGIOUS LIFE AFFECT A STUDENT'S DEVELOPMENT ON CAMPUS?

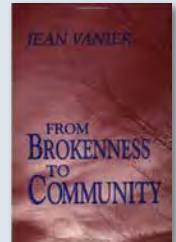
When I share the details of my job with prospective students I simply say, "We care about the whole you, and that includes mind, body, and soul." For that reason, we call it "student development." We are concerned with the experience of the whole self. Religious life involves so many different aspects of living and learning on campus—from growing in your knowledge of world religions to personal spiritual formation through worship and Bible study. There are over 12 campus religious life groups that meet weekly. Each of these organizations offers something different, some emphasizing service, prayer, study, discussion of the hard questions and fellowship. These groups often become a student's support system because there is an underlying nature of grace and love when people come together for spiritual formation. As much as we are concerned about your physical, emotional and mental well-being, we care for your spiritual development. My office door is open. If you are not being supported or finding your place, let's talk! On campus, in the community, with a local church—religious life cares for the whole you. ■

MY TOP 5: TRANSFORMATIVE BOOKS

While Rev. Tolbert seeks to challenge YHC students, she also looks for ways to challenge herself. Here she shares with us her favorite books from undergraduate studies that continue to transform her life.

1. "From Brokenness to Community" by Jean Vanier

Jean Vanier is the creator of the worldwide L'Arche Communities that help adults with mild to moderate disabilities live more independently. This book is a series of lectures that chronicle his experience of L'Arche and its influence to bring together in mutual love and support the poor, differently abled, and people of faith to grow into their full humanity.



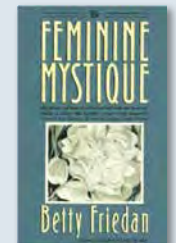
2. "The New Creation" by Theodore Runyon

Having been Methodist my whole life, it was not until I read Runyon's explanation of John Wesley's theology of grace that I had the words to express the faith that formed, transformed and called me to ordained ministry.



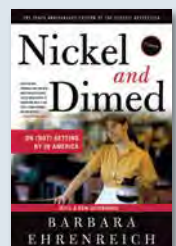
3. "The Feminine Mystique" by Betty Friedan

Any good women's studies major or minor will spend a semester immersed in this book. Friedan's work gave me permission to embrace, use and celebrate my intelligence.



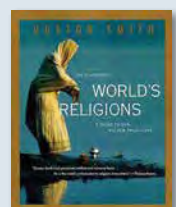
4. "Nickel and Dime" by Barbara Ehrenreich

This was the first book to introduce me to the reality of the working poor. The in-depth investigative experience of Ehrenreich prepared me for my pastoral work in local churches.



5. "The World's Religions" by Huston Smith

Smith's classic work opened my eyes to the faiths, traditions and practices of a diverse world. This important book allowed me to encounter a vibrancy about religion that still informs my study of the topic today.



MOUNTAIN LION LUMINARY: JEFF BAUMAN

BY KYLE HUNEYCUTT, '13 | PHOTOGRAPH BY SAMUEL PHAM, '19

Performing in ancient cathedrals in faraway cities like Vienna, Salzburg, Brno and Munich. Impromptu flashmobs in airports, restaurants and hostels. Taking home top awards from prestigious singing associations and competitions.

Young Harris College Professor of Music, Director of Choral and Vocal Activities, and Musical Theatre Program Co-Coordinator Jeff Bauman has experienced a plethora of adventures alongside his talented YHC students over the course of his 24 years of teaching in the Enchanted Valley.

"We began with two music majors and one choir of 17 in 1992, and now we have two choirs with 80 to 90 singers and around 60 music majors on campus, as well as two student-led choral groups, an instrumental music program, and a musical theatre program. It has been great to be a part of that progression."

One would think that after 24 years of teaching music in the realms of higher education that nothing could surprise or catch Bauman off guard. One would also be wrong.

"My students continue to amaze me with their insights into the learning process," he said. "I think in music we see new discoveries in small ways almost every day. The cumulative effect is powerful and transformative."

Bauman endeavors to be constantly evolving, but admits that it doesn't always work. "Hopefully, students can learn from my experiences and mistakes and not have to experience those mistakes personally."

Bauman had a lot of exposure to music as a child. His father was a college music professor who also played in the local symphony orchestra, and both his grandfathers were band directors. He took piano, trumpet, and voice lessons, and recalls telling his voice teacher that he "didn't want to sing any of that opera stuff."

After graduating from high school, he was primarily interested in musical theatre. "Unfortunately, my school did not offer a musical theatre degree, so a music degree was as close as I could get."

Bauman migrated to the Young Harris area in 1992 following his first interview out of graduate school. He and his wife, Diane, who is an instructor of mathematics and instructional technologist for the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at YHC, were both born and raised in Michigan and had not lived anywhere else before the big move.

"I interviewed in May, which is still quite cold in Northern Michigan, so coming to Young Harris was like visiting Shangri-la," he recalled. Upon visiting the campus, Bauman was struck by the surrounding area's natural beauty and potential for growth, and the decision to teach the students of YHC was made.



When asked what piece of advice he most often shares with his students, he said, "We have a lot of discussions about career options, life goals and plans. These discussions are very fulfilling for me. I learn from my students every day as they are, by and large, brave, artistic souls who remind me every day why I do what I do."

While Bauman's experience as a professor and mentor to scores of students over the years has become an integral part of who he is, it is certainly not the only role that has positively impacted his life.

Bauman has served as the minister of music at First Methodist Church of Union County since 1998. "My favorite thing about being a music minister is how the experience has connected me and my family to the community," he explained. "There is a cross-generational aspect of the church community that you just don't get anywhere else, and I really value that."

Bauman soon found a way to merge his two roles by inviting the YHC Chamber Choir and Concert Choir to perform for his church's congregation each year in addition to other interactions.

"Both choirs are very dear to me for different reasons, and that makes sense since the two organizations have different goals," Bauman said. "I really enjoy finding ways for these groups to encounter one another."

Bauman enjoys all of the wonderful feedback he receives when his choir students visit various churches, including his own. "Both the YHC Chamber Choir and the Concert Choir try to schedule an off-campus performance each semester and the congregations are always very welcoming."

Bauman attests that the constant evolution of YHC's music program, and the College as a whole, has been the highlight of his teaching experience. "Young Harris College has always been an integral part of this community, and thanks to the progress the institution has made, we are even more of a cultural cornerstone for this region than we were 20 years ago."

Discussing Our Differences

The discussions surrounding thought-provoking questions are at the core of a liberal arts education—particularly when those questions are posed by Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies and Chair of the Department of Religion and Philosophy Eric Dickman, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Religious Studies Kendall Marchman, Ph.D., and Instructor of Religious Studies Adam Neal. Six Young Harris College students from diverse backgrounds and academic disciplines joined Director of Communications and Marketing LeAnn Waldroup for a roundtable discussion to answer these questions and delve into the hard topics surrounding religion, cultural norms, and humanity.

Q: WHY IS IT VALUABLE TO STUDY RELIGION AND HOW DOES THAT EXPLORATION BENEFIT THE REST OF THE WORLD?

ANDERSON: Religion seems to remain consistent through human society, so it has been integral to forming and creating a foundation for communities—even in America where church and state are supposed to be split apart, religion is one of the biggest foundations. If we study religion, then we have an understanding of a huge portion of a culture's identity.

ANDIE: I'm not a religious studies major, but I take religious studies classes a lot. My experience in taking those courses has been finding out how people find meaning in the world.

THOMAS: If you want to have a conversation with someone, you have to at least baseline understand where the other person is coming from. So many people use religion as their baseline. If you can articulate their perspective, then you can better communicate what yours is and how you can come to a consensus.

Q: DO YOU FIND IT MORE DIFFICULT TO COMMUNICATE WITH THOSE WHO IDENTIFY WITH A RELIGION OTHER THAN YOUR OWN?

ANDERSON: When I go home from YHC, I have a long car ride with my mom. Those three hours are the most education about different religious traditions that she has received. My mom is not uneducated by any means, but she has not had the opportunity to come into contact with some of these religious traditions. When I share with her what I've learned about Islam, Buddhism and Jainism, these are moments where I get to expand her worldview. In a way, having a conversation with her is helping develop the skills to critically think about religion.

ANDIE: I'm not religious and learning about religion helped me become less jaded. I grew up in a really conservative and restricted area which probably made me—no, definitely made me—jaded towards Christianity and religion as an

organization in general. I think something the religious studies department here does really well is teach us that it doesn't matter if we agree; it's the fact that you're studying how other people are finding meaning. That has been a really good lens for me to look through and now I feel like I'm more open to organized religion. I see it as more of a positive thing than I did when I graduated high school.

JAMI: For me, it's become a responsibility. When you study religion, you get asked the questions: "What does this religion believe?" or "What do these people believe?" In turn, it makes you want to learn more. Religious studies is really a self-furthering discipline.

THOMAS: When we talk about responsibility, I always think about what Dr. Dickman suggests. When asked what a particular group believes, your immediate response should be, "Which person?" You can know what a Buddhist believes, but there's Mahayana, Theravada, Zen... they all believe different things. It's more about further exploration than getting the answer.

Q: CAN YOU STUDY RELIGION WELL IF YOU ARE NOT RELIGIOUS?

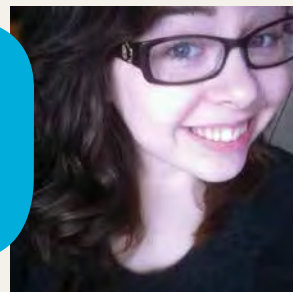
ANDERSON: I think in some ways, having a religious experience is really helpful for studying religion, but at the same time, having a disconnected approach to religion allows you to be objective with it and play with ideas that someone who is religious might not want to play with.

LIZBETH: To me, it isn't a matter of whether you're religious or not. It's more about where you stand with your own personal beliefs. Either way, a religious or a non-religious person can be very restricted in their way of thinking, or very open to exploring different religions. It's learning to respect and learning to adapt your thinking to what other people are thinking.

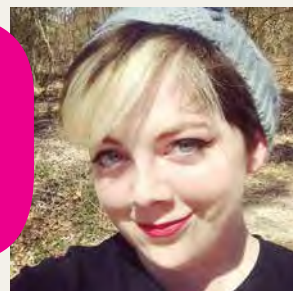
EMILY: As a student who is religious and in talking to others that identify with a certain religion, I feel a lot of us want to stay within our religion when we learn. As a Christian, you may only want to take Christian classes because you don't want to be pulled outside of your comfort zone and question that. I struggle with that even as a religious studies major. Do I really want to be pulled outside my comfort zone of what I identify as? I think you can respect and question your own faith without doubting it. Questioning is what leads to growing in your own faith. You should want to strive to understand other faiths.

MEET THE STUDENTS

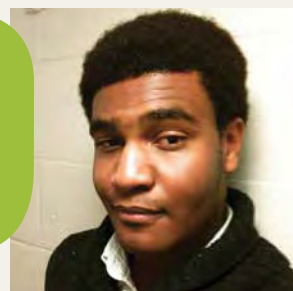
JAMI PADGETT, '16
Religious studies
graduate



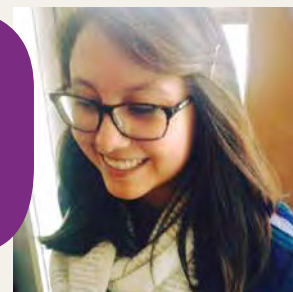
ANDIE WEAVER
Senior creative
writing major



ANDERSON MOSS
Senior religious
studies and history
major



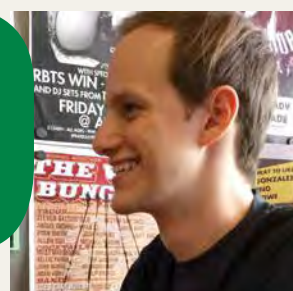
LIZBETH ESTEBAN
Senior communication
studies major



EMILY TODD
Junior religious
studies major



THOMAS JOHNSON
Senior business and
public policy major



Q: AS A RELIGIOUS STUDIES MAJOR, HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO PEOPLE WHO SAY, "SO, YOU'RE GOING TO BE A MINISTER?"

JAMI: It's weird to hear that question because I'm studying comparative and Eastern religions. I never know how to answer it.

ANDERSON: Here in the thickest part of the Bible Belt, you get it often and sometimes you just have to grin and bear it. I want to do Islamic studies, and it's sometimes a struggle to question if I want to tell that to a particular person. Could I end up in a three-hour conversation about whether Islam is trying to kill Americans or not—because that's not really the conversation I want to be having.

EMILY: I'm looking into master of divinity programs. Everyone at my church asks if I'm going into children's ministry, but I'm probably going to write papers or teach a class or something. There's so much more that I can do within the Christian thought process alone that isn't ministry. I think it's hard for people to realize there's more to religious studies than just working in a church.

THOMAS: I want to go into law. Religion is important enough that I feel like I should study it while I'm in college, but its importance doesn't mean it has to be the central focus of my life. Everything I should do might need to be colored by it, but I don't need to only do religious studies or religious life or religiosity.

Q: HOW DO YOU DISTINGUISH BETWEEN BEING RELIGIOUS AND STUDYING ABOUT RELIGION?

EMILY: Someone told me to use the hat analogy—you have your academic hat and your religious hat. What I've learned is that when I go into a religious studies classroom, I still

have the Christian aspect of me but I'm there as "Emily the Student," not "Emily the Christian" trying to find fault in someone else's faith.

THOMAS: To use Andie's words from earlier, religiosity or practicing religion is how you find your meaning, whereas religious studies is how you identify how other people finding their meaning.

ANDERSON: There are a lot of people who've dropped theoretical courses like "Theories of Religion" because they felt as though their faith is challenged. We cover Marx, Freud and all these theorists who have talked about religion as a negative effect on humanity, but the class also explores positive theorists who argue for rich religious cultures. People get so offput by the negative aspects of the theoretical courses that they get tunnel vision. It's hard to convince people to stay in the class, but I try.

ANDIE: One of the distinctions between being religious and studying religion—it's not about what's true or what you think makes sense and is accurate, it's finding out what other people think is true and accurate. Going off what Anderson said about the theoretical courses, many of those are meant to pose questions, not simply give you answers.

Q: A LOT OF STUDENTS MAKE THE MISTAKE OF THINKING CLASSES IN THE RELIGION DEPARTMENT WILL BE EASY. WHY DO YOU THINK THAT IS?

EMILY: I think a lot of students think a course will be easy because they already identify as a Christian and are familiar with the writings, or they learned about the course content in Sunday school.

ANDIE: People may not see it as a practical thing to study. Because of that, it seems like people must think it will be fun or easy. I get that in the creative writing department, too.

JAMI: Also, I think they think of the classes as surveys and don't realize just how in-depth the class goes.

EMILY: I'm taking "Christian Thought" right now. We had 10 students at first and now we're down to four or five. At first people came in and said, "I want to get this or that out of the class." Dr. Marchman explained that he could try, but what they wanted was not the point of the course. A lot of people want to take "New Testament," but then they're challenged and don't want that.

ANDERSON: I think people fail to recognize that religious studies is such an interdisciplinary major and method of study. In any religious studies course, you're going to get philosophy, psychology, sociology and all the other -ology's. People think, "Oh, I'm just going to sit back and learn about this cool religion and its facts." Then, they'll be blown away by the facts, how much you need to know and how to move within the framework of a course like that.

EMILY: I think a lot of people are challenged with writing papers and the fact that there isn't a definite answer sometimes. A lot of religion classes don't have a conclusion—just an opened-ended question. You may end up with even more questions than you started out with. I think a lot of people are really challenged when they face that. I've never written a paper for a higher level religion class that ended with a definite answer.

Q: WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE RELIGIOUS STUDIES COURSE?

EMILY: That's like choosing your favorite child!

JAMI: I've chosen my favorite child: "Asian Religion in TV and Film." By and large, my favorite course. If I go into a master's program in religious studies, I would want to study that topic. That's how much I loved it.

ANDERSON: This is really hard. It's between "Eastern Religions in Film and Media" and "Themes of Religion in Modern China." Both classes have left an impact on me and how I think of religious studies. Before, I thought religious studies was philosophy of religion, and now I see it is also anthropological study of religion, economic study of religion... it's really anything I want it to be and can synthesize a traditional scholarly field with.

EMILY: I'll bite the bullet. You'll have to ask Professor Neal the technical name of this course. I think it's only offered every three or four years, but it's a topic that really intrigued him. We studied the story of Satan and how it has developed in the Christian tradition. Then, we looked at how it's applied in the media today with the different ideologies of Satan. It also intrigued me because that's a big question for Christians—how do we explain the ultimate evil?

ANDIE: Mine was "Jewish Experience." When I used the word "enchanted" earlier, this is the course that came to mind. It was really interdisciplinary—we did philosophical, cultural and historical stuff.

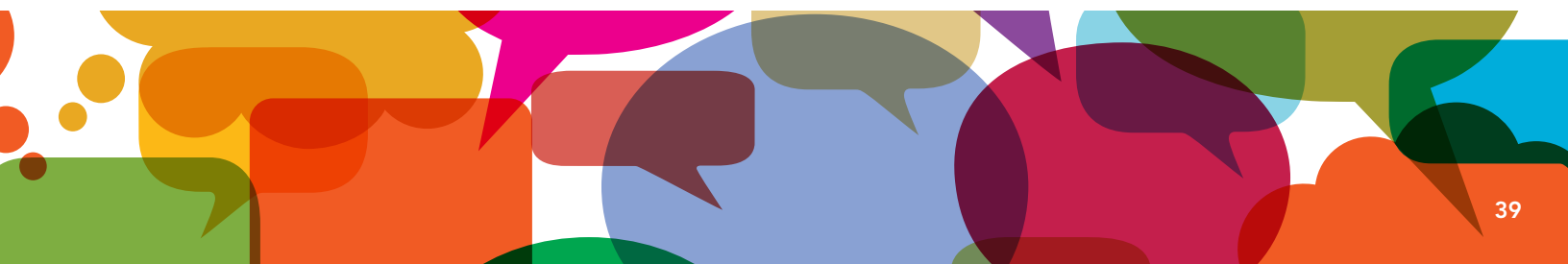
Q: WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE SPIRITUAL LIFE ORGANIZATION ON CAMPUS?

LIZBETH: I can't answer that because they all bring something different and unique to the campus. My duties within the Inter-Religious Council (IRC) include attending meetings for all the religious clubs. They each have something they are passionate about. You get a different feeling from each one. These people come together with their passion to learn and grow.

THOMAS: I think IRC is the best religious organization. The point of IRC is to promote religious diversity and inter-religious dialogue. Every single organization asks questions: "How do we fix this thing that isn't necessarily a problem but could easily turn into one?" "How do we grow the Buddhist group?" "How do we get more perspectives on campus?"

EMILY: They're really supportive which is awesome. They're always asking how they can help and for more ways to be educational and bring more inter-religious dialogue to campus.

LIZBETH: To me, IRC is like the mother of religious organizations. We want to nourish them all.



A Timeless TRADITION

BY KRYSTIN DEAN



"We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord."

This well-known lyric perfectly embodies the purpose of one of Young Harris College's most beloved traditions. For decades, the Spiritual Life Retreat (SLR) has been a source of spiritual growth for students, faculty and staff alike.



The event originated in April of 1970 when YHC hosted a “Retreat for Renewal” at Camp Glisson in Dhlonega. The idea for what would become known as SLR arose within YHC’s Inter-Religious Council (IRC), which serves as a unifying body, resource tool and supervisor for the College’s religious life groups.

“The annual retreat was a rallying point and catalyst for the unity we sought to achieve, not just within the Christian organizations, but among all students on campus,” said Professor Emeritus of Religion and Philosophy Dr. John Kay, ’56, who served as YHC’s director of religious life and IRC advisor.

“I still carry the lessons Dr. Kay taught me in a structured environment—and the ones he never realized he was teaching from his example in everyday life,” said Thomas Clayton, ’74, of Columbus. “Any success in life I’ve enjoyed, spiritual or otherwise, I attribute in some measure to my experiences and relationships at YHC.”

While a few retreats early on were held at the Georgia Baptist Conference Center in Toccoa and the Hinton Rural Life Center in Hayesville, N.C., Camp Glisson remained the primary locale. In 1979, the event shifted to the fall semester.

“The spring retreat was a time to celebrate bonding that had already occurred, at a time when nature was reviving,” Dr. Kay explained. “The fall retreat became a way to bring students together at an early stage, and it helped

freshmen become acquainted with each other and the sophomores who provided the leadership.”

SLR was the perfect introduction to college for Dr. Lee Ramsey, ’76, of Memphis, Tenn., who said he entered YHC as a “rather shy but optimistic” teenager ready to explore emerging gifts for leadership within the church and community.

“It’s hard to believe one place and one set of people can so deeply and decisively help shape the course of a life—my life—but that’s what Young Harris did,” said Dr. Ramsey, an ordained elder in The United Methodist Church (UMC) who teaches at Memphis Theological Seminary.

Katie Brown Strals, who taught health and physical education at YHC from 1967-1987, was also greatly impacted by her involvement in religious life. She attended the first four SLRs as “part chaperone, part participant, encourager and supporter,” as female faculty members typically accompanied the group in the early days.

“SLR helped me grow spiritually and appreciate the Christian presence on campus. It played a major part in my hearing God’s call to ordained ministry and responding to that call,” said Strals, who lives in Blairsville and serves Union Hill UMC in Hiawassee as a retired pastor.

A special guest speaker was often invited to provide spiritual leadership and determine the focus, or theme, of the retreat. “We found encouragement

through the experiences of the speaker and the topic they selected, which had a scriptural reference,” Clayton recalled.

Music was another defining element of the event. Folk dancing was a popular activity, and songfests featured favorites such as “Let There Be Peace on Earth,” “Kumbaya” and “Pass It On.” Ample time was allowed for recreational activities like softball games and hikes, including the still-popular annual trek to Cane Creek Falls on Saturday afternoon.

The weekend was devoted to Bible study and worship, culminating in an evening chapel service with special sharing and Holy Communion that, according to Dr. Kay, “brought the retreat to a conclusion on a high note” before the group returned to YHC “exhausted but uplifted” the next day.

Strals recalled one instance when student leaders forgot to bring the Communion elements. “They went to a small store nearby to get grape juice and bread but couldn’t find any, so they brought back Coke and white powdered donuts!” she said. “That’s what was used for Communion, and I remember John Kay being unfazed by it all.”

Students departed Glisson directly after breakfast on Sunday so Dr. Kay could get back to Young Harris in time to lead the 11 a.m. service at Sharp Memorial UMC. He recalled sometimes slipping away from the group on Saturday to put the finishing touches on his sermon. “I tried not to let that happen often, but sometimes I

LEFT TO RIGHT 2015 Spiritual Life Retreat attendees gathered for a photo in front of Cane Creek Falls. ■ A fellow student washed the feet of recent outdoor leadership graduate Breann Lindsey, ’16, during SLR in 2015. ■ Students studied and discussed scripture in small groups as part of 2011’s Spiritual Life Retreat. ■ Katie Marlowe Coleman, ’11, and Michelle Honaker, ’11, posed under the waterfall at Cane Creek Falls to wrap up the 2009 SLR. ■ Former YHC campus minister Rev. Dr. Tim Moore led 2011 attendees to Cane Creek Falls to close out the year’s SLR.





had experienced one of those weeks,” he explained.

The event’s format hasn’t changed much in the last half-century as four more campus ministers have carried on the tradition. When YHC transformed into a four-year institution, students took on an even larger role in the retreat’s planning and execution.

“Each of my four SLRs helped me grow in my faith,” said recent history graduate Jared Lee, ’16, of Lula, a three-time small group leader and 2015 SLR co-chair. “The first year I focused more on building relationships with people who shared my beliefs. Later I began to focus more on opportunities for deep discussion and helping others open up and develop in their faith as well.”

SLR is a time to forge lasting friendships that shape the collegiate experience—and often a vital stepping-stone for young adults living away from home for the first time.

“The retreat helped me maintain my faith because I was struggling to find people I could relate with on a spiritual level,” said Yosef Daniel, ’14, of Alpharetta. “I still keep in contact with many of those friends today. I also met my girlfriend at my first SLR, so that was an added bonus.”

According to junior business and public policy major Austin Tibbetts, of Cumming, there is a considerable change in the SLR experience as students transition into upperclassmen.

“It was more meaningful my second time because I had already built strong relationships and was able to enjoy being on a retreat with all of my friends, plus meet new people to add to that group,” he said.

Each retreat is still defined by a theme, such as “Change” or “Disciple,” that’s

discussed in large and small group sessions as well as team-building games. The “Unity” theme was particularly significant to Hana Kudela, ’15, of Athens, during her freshman year.

“In so many ways, that solidified what SLR was for me,” she said. “I found a new group of people who were passionate about the Lord, and that was part of my foundation at Young Harris.”

This passion often manifests itself in meaningful ways. Kudela vividly recalled watching Camden Goddard, ’14, of Blairsville, utilize his artistic talents during a worship service by painting on four cardboard boxes. He worked on them separately so no one could decipher what he was creating. Finally, the boxes were aligned to reveal a striking image of Jesus.

“That’s so symbolic of our faith because, at times, it seems like nothing makes sense,” said Kudela. “You don’t know quite what you are, and you definitely don’t know where you’re going. Then, suddenly, the pieces fall together, and it’s a beautiful picture of God’s love for us—whole and perfect.”

Assistant to the Vice President for Student Development Tonya Nix noted that allowing students to express their beliefs and engage with peers from different religious backgrounds makes for a great collegiate experience. “It demonstrates how we can all come together for the same common goal, which is loving one another,” she said.

This sentiment is evident in one of the weekend’s cherished rituals in which student-leaders wash the feet of attendees after the creek walk. Ashley Davenport, ’15, of Athens, remembered how special it felt to serve those she had bonded with her senior year.

“There was a freshman in my group who opened up to me and allowed me

to share the love of Christ with her,” Davenport said. “Being able to wash her feet at the end of the weekend was so humbling. God certainly uses the smallest opportunities to speak the loudest to His children and, for me, this was one of those times.”

The commandment to “love thy neighbor as thyself” came to mind for Nix as she watched students tend to old and new friends. “I felt such a sense of connection. It was almost surreal,” she said.

Moments like this are made even more memorable thanks to the stunning surroundings at Camp Glisson, a ministry of the UMC’s North Georgia Conference located on nearly 400 acres.

“SLR has always been a time of physical, mental, and spiritual renewal and growth,” said Lee. “I’ve loved bonding with old and new friends while playing Frisbee or soccer, and just hanging out in hammocks.”

Outdoor activities are abundant, from climbing a rock wall to rushing down a 600-foot zip line. A themed dance and late-night run to Waffle House have also become SLR traditions over time.

Emily Todd, a junior religious studies major from Coral Springs, Fla., said the weekend getaway is just what’s needed to start the school year—an opportunity to connect with peers while taking time for personal reflection.

“It’s interesting to see people who don’t know each other come together and form these bonds,” she said. “I also like taking time for myself, focusing on my relationship with God. I write a letter to God each time I’m there, and it’s great not only to reflect on my journey but also to read when I’m struggling.”

Some of the most moving moments of the retreat occur during the opening night



evening worship around a campfire as well as the Sunday morning service, when students share testimonies and offer prayers, praises, and advice.

“It’s genuine, pure worship at its greatest,” said Kudela. “There’s no judgment. There’s no worrying about what anybody will think about what you’re going to say. There’s just you and God and people who feel like you do. It’s raw and real and beautiful.”

This time spent with peers during the fall semester has inspired many students, like Olivia Madden, a senior business and public policy major from Cumming, to get more involved in religious life organizations on campus throughout the year.

“SLR got me thinking about my relationship with God, who I am and how I want to grow,” said Madden, who will serve as a co-leader for this fall’s retreat. “It’s a nice escape from campus, schoolwork, and the responsibilities of the real world, and it’s a good jumping-off point for the rest of the year.”

Experiencing this spiritual growth also impacts faculty and staff participants, like Coordinator of Academic Success Emily Richardson, who attended her first retreat in 2015 shortly after coming to YHC.

“It allowed me to truly see that YHC has outstanding students, and it helped me understand that my work matters,” said Richardson. “YHC is such a special place, and SLR can be such a special part of a student’s experience.”

Stories about SLR that are shared today are not all that different from the ones told by those who attended the first retreat nearly 50 years ago. The event remains a highlight of the year for the YHC community—which pleases Dr. Kay immensely.

“The retreat then—and now, I’m sure—established a camaraderie that had a lasting effect on campus religious life,” said Dr. Kay. “New friendships were formed and leadership was cultivated. It is a tradition worth preserving and passing on.”



LEFT TO RIGHT Recent music graduate Courtland Walters, '16, performed during worship at the 2015 retreat. ■ Attendees at the 2014 Spiritual Life Retreat came together following a weekend of worship and connection. ■ Camden Goddard, '14, and Amanda Noonan, '12, attended SLR in 2011. ■ In 2010, students journeyed to Camp Glisson's Cane Creek Falls.

THE SEARCH FOR ANSWERS

BY KRYSTIN DEAN

Religion has been a pillar of civilization for centuries. It even predates human language. Theorists have speculated that religious thinking and mythmaking were actually at the origin of human thought. At Young Harris College, students in the Department of Religion and Philosophy are formulating their own ideas and sparking new conversations through meaningful research.

“Religion formed social structures that still exist today, and continues to influence global diplomacy, governance, and even the economy,” said Assistant Professor of Religious Studies Kendall Marchman, Ph.D. “Because religion is so fundamental to human society, it’s one of—if not the—most interdisciplinary fields of study.”

Anderson Moss, a senior from Warner Robbins, double majoring in religious studies and history, called religious studies the “paragon of liberal arts” on campus because, in one class, he can learn about history, philosophy, culture, science, communication and more.

“My professors go above and beyond to bring more out of their field than just religion,” he said. “I am infinitely thankful for the many ways of thinking they have opened me up to.”

Chair of the Department of Religion and Philosophy and Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies Eric Dickman, Ph.D., said religion is crucial for knowledge of other subjects—and vice versa. “We joke about this being a ‘raider’ discipline, where we see awesome things being done in other fields and look for ways to apply them to studying religions, like relating neuroscience to meditative experience,” he explained.

Many students opt to minor in philosophy, which Dr. Dickman described as the best program to enhance any major. “It promotes courage and creativity in imagining possibilities but simultaneously demands the rigor of determinate thinking,” he said.

These programs attract intellectually curious students like Thomas Johnson, a senior business and public policy major from Columbus. While Johnson wants to pursue a career in environmental law, he said Dr. Dickman’s dynamic teaching style and “genuine concern” for his wellbeing inspired him to add both religious studies and philosophy minors.

Johnson has conducted research regarding Plato’s idea of “the Good,” an analysis of Spinoza’s axiomatic system, and a comparison of Descartes and Nietzsche. If you don’t know the definition of the word “axiomatic” (which means “self-evident or unquestionable,” by the way), that’s kind of the point of these courses designed to nurture the art and skill of questioning.

Instead of reading schoolbook summaries of great thinkers, students engage with their primary texts. Dr. Dickman often tells students it’s an achievement to graduate being able to say they’ve read Plato, Aristotle, Nietzsche and more for themselves. “I say I aim above their heads so they have something to live up to,” he said.

YHC’s religious studies program is distinctive in the region in that students are exposed to the diversity of religious traditions. Dr. Dickman noted that some students have even transferred to the College to take advantage of this well-rounded learning environment.

“We approach all religious traditions with an empathetic yet critical disposition, charitably representing them to the best of our ability while also courageously confronting problems within every one,” he said.

Introductory courses like “World Religions” and “Muslim Journeys” provide students with basic knowledge, while intermediate courses like “Zen Buddhism” and “Philosophy of Religion” allow more in-depth study.

“I was taking religious studies classes because I wanted to, and thought I might as well add the minor,” said senior psychology major Morgan Clark, of Blue Ridge, who dubbed Dr. Dickman and Dr. Marchman her “favorite doctors on campus” and said Dr. Dickman was “the only reason” she presented at YHC’s Undergraduate Research Day (URD) for the last two years.

Clark earned second place at URD in 2015 for a lecture regarding Hegel’s ideas about the beauty of art versus the beauty of nature that was adapted from a paper she wrote for a “Hermeneutics” class.

“Public speaking makes me incredibly nervous,” she said. “That enriching experience allowed me not only to present in front of a large group, but also to have a deeper understanding of my topic. The best way to learn something is to practice explaining it.”

Advanced seminars guide students in extensive research connected to the specified topic selected by the professor in conversation with students the semester it’s offered. For example, Dr. Marchman recently helmed a “Religion and Sports” course that examined ways religions have impacted sports as well as ways sports can be analyzed as religious in nature.

The senior capstone is an independent research project completely developed by the student, who selects a faculty advisor to assist with the process of creating a 25-to-50-page paper and 20-minute formal presentation to the YHC community.

“I like working at an institution like YHC that realizes student—not just faculty—research is important, and represents the future of each discipline,” said Dr. Marchman. “Moreover, opportunities to present research motivate students to produce even better work.”

Dr. Marchman likened meeting with students about research to conversing with colleagues. “I simply provide my own thoughts and questions to their research in an effort to make it

better, because it's already high-quality work," he said. "This demonstrates to them that this kind of feedback is what they can expect when they present research in various forums, and that they really need to hear these suggestions and wrestle with them."

Past projects have focused on the contemporary popular Islamic practice of Sufism, media representations of the Holocaust, and the rabbinic tradition of including debate about the Torah as a religious practice, just to name a few.

"We learn from our students as much as they learn from us in these contexts, because students push us beyond our specializations with their interests," said Dr. Dickman. He noted that faculty members are aware that many students desire to gain spiritual growth, so they aim to ensure pupils leave courses more fulfilled—often with an enriched commitment to their inherited traditions.

Students like Lathem Postell, a senior religious studies major from Cartersville, attest to this. "Being from a Christian background, this field has always interested me," explained Postell, who plans to attend seminary school and become ordained.

"Not only do the faculty care about the subject matter they are teaching, but they also care about the students they are teaching," he said. "They allow us to critically examine many religions and the philosophies behind them for ourselves."

In addition to URD, students are encouraged to submit papers to the annual meeting of the Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion (SECSOR). A handful of students regularly attend the conference, which is also the regional meeting of the American Academy of Religion. Additionally, Dr. Dickman takes students to meetings of the Georgia Philosophical Society.

Moss will travel to Montreal this year to present research comparing Islamic prayer and Zen Buddhist meditation, and he

is currently working on a paper that investigates medieval religious philosophy. He said his professors are always willing to review and discuss his work.

"They push me to strengthen my writing, my reading, my questioning," said Moss.

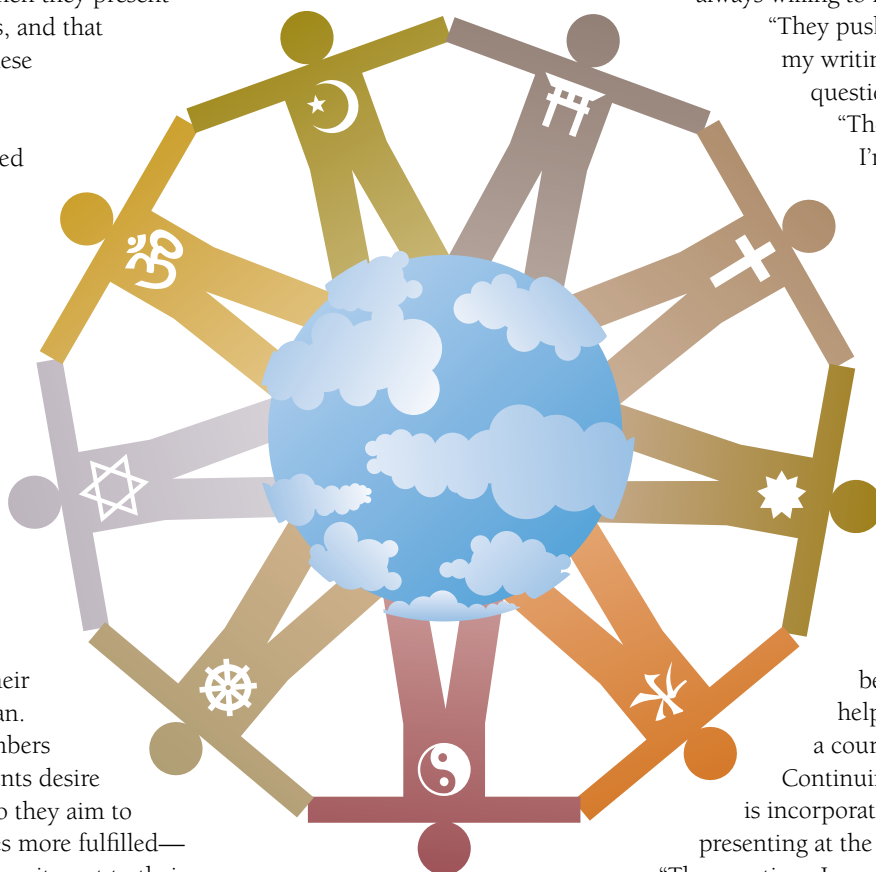
"They know exactly what I'm interested in so that I conduct research that's meaningful to me, and they check up on my research to ensure I'm on the right path."

Johnson agreed that professors always point students in the right direction and encourage them to present their work. He is currently working on a paper to submit to SECSOR regarding semiotics, a topic he became interested in while helping Dr. Dickman teach a course for the Institute for Continuing Learning at YHC, and is incorporating lessons learned while presenting at the latest URD.

"The questions I received helped me build my paper so that the project moved beyond mere analysis and became something substantial in its own right," said Johnson. "Whenever I think about that paper, I think about a contribution I made to religious studies, rather than just a rote memorization of the subject matter."

Conducting and presenting research gives students practical skills—reading closely, writing well, interpreting challenging and vast data sets, integrating and synthesizing resources—that are applicable to many career fields. According to Dr. Dickman, students also benefit on a much deeper level.

"We all want the world to be a better place—where there's more freedom, more peace and understanding, more economic equality and opportunity," he said. "Because the study of religion involves the study of what's of ultimate importance and value to people, our students are on the front lines of confronting prejudice, naiveté, and ignorance. They are positioned well to contribute to bringing about this kind of world we all want to live in."



“MY PROFESSORS GO ABOVE AND BEYOND TO BRING MORE OUT OF THEIR FIELD THAN JUST RELIGION. I AM INFINITELY THANKFUL FOR THE MANY WAYS OF THINKING THEY HAVE OPENED ME UP TO. | ANDERSON MOSS, SENIOR FROM WARNER ROBBINS”

UNDERGROUND CONNECTIONS

BY BETH SAVOY | PHOTOS BY SAMUEL PHAM, '19

Relaxed. Accepting. Genuine. These are just a few reasons a group of Young Harris College students say they were moved to join the student organization they call Underground—a biweekly Bible study and worship experience at the College led by students for students.

While YHC has many student organizations and ministries affiliated with various religious and spiritual groups, Underground is a non-denominational Christian organization committed to offering all YHC students something they need—a place to connect.

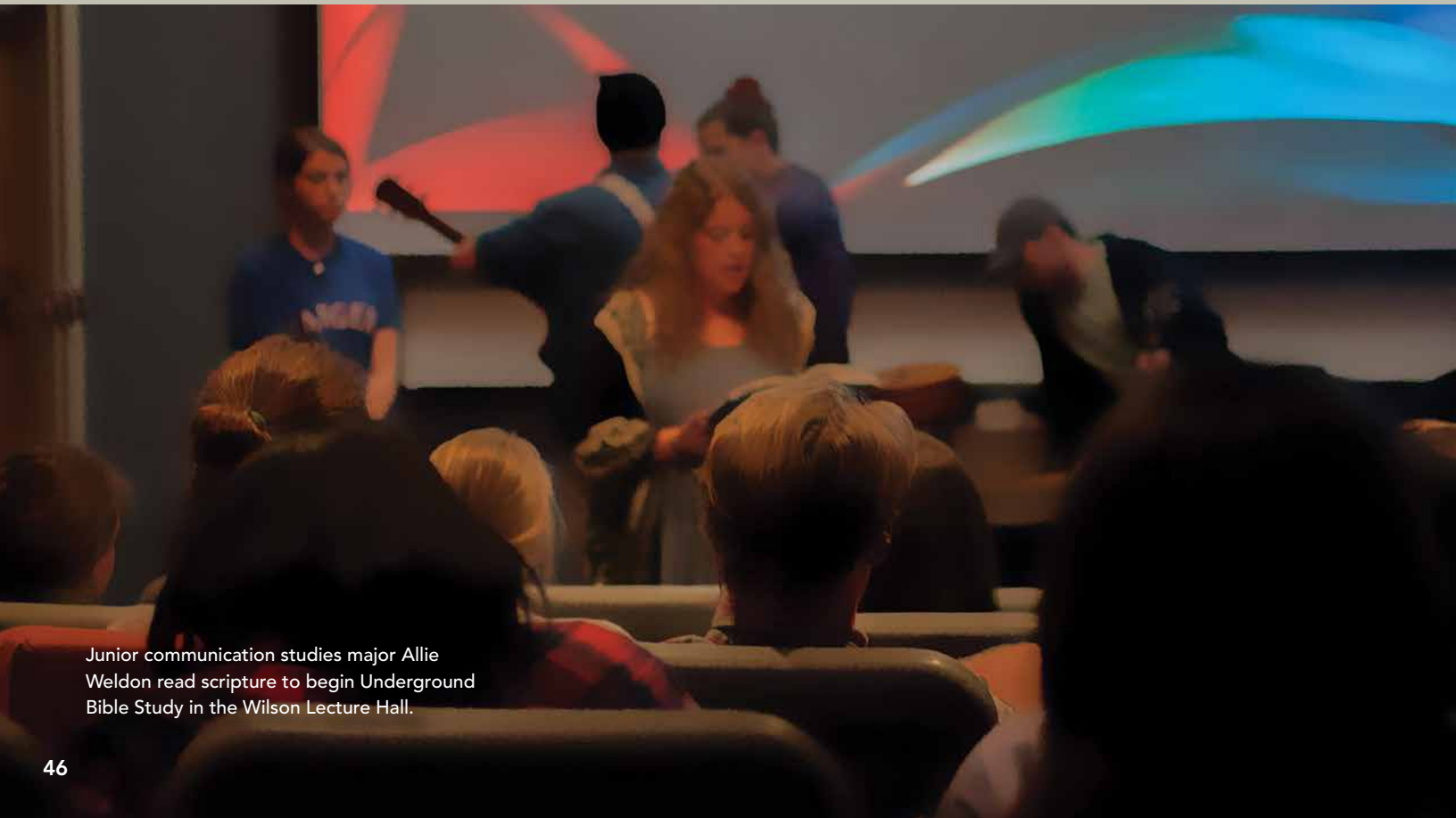
To truly offer a student-centered environment, the leaders of Underground make all decisions about how the group should run. Faculty advisor and Assistant Professor of Biology Johnathan Davis, Ph.D., emphasizes that Underground has always been a student-driven and student-led gathering.

“As faculty advisor, my role is very limited,” Dr. Davis explained. “I only make sure that the meeting space is available and that the

organization is registered on campus.” While he does attend one gathering each week to verify that content is appropriate in relation to the College’s mission, the gathering is 100 percent led by students, allowing them to retain complete ownership of programming.

What is the programming? The students say it often varies from night to night. As an organization committed to the foundational principles and core teachings of the Bible, Underground allows students to meet together frequently as one body or “church” to worship, discuss the teachings of Jesus, and to pray together in His name.

Student-leader and junior theatre major Hannah Johnson, of



Junior communication studies major Allie Weldon read scripture to begin Underground Bible Study in the Wilson Lecture Hall.



“We are very laid back in how we run things, and we seek to be obedient to what the Lord has in store for that night.” | HANNAH JOHNSON, JUNIOR THEATRE MAJOR FROM MARIETTA

Marietta, noted that the leadership team wants each gathering to be a different experience each night. They bring different ideas to the table including worship and prayer nights, Bible study, small group gatherings, video viewings and more.

“Sometimes we change things up and decide to host a night with another religious organization on campus,” she explained. “Other times we’ll have Underground outside or have adults speak. We are very laid back in how we run things, and we seek to be obedient to what the Lord has in store for that night.”

To do that, students must rely on each other to continue leading and participating in the biweekly worship experiences. Many of the students who participate in Underground are also involved in other student organizations or athletic activities, as well as balancing a social life and full class load, so maintaining momentum for Underground is no small feat.

So what convinces this community to continue coming together and planning programming twice a week during a busy semester, and what has established the popularity of these gatherings so students keep coming back? With different takes on these questions, five students described why Underground has been essential to their time at YHC.

First, co-president and senior biology major James Rowe, of Blairsville, emphasized that Underground is a space where he knows he can worship freely while learning from his peers. “I participate because I have the ability to worship unhindered at Underground,” he explained. “I also enjoy digging into scripture in a group environment so that we can grow together. Underground gives me a chance to relax and just worship.”

Allie Weldon, co-president and junior communication studies major from Athens, said Underground has allowed her to grow in many ways. “Personally, I get a lot out of Underground,” she said. “Being on the leadership team has really allowed me to see my own strengths and weaknesses. I have learned how to coordinate and organize effectively while honoring people’s opinions and desires. I’m not saying that I’m the best leader, but I am so thankful for the learning opportunities that leadership has provided me. Also, I can confidently say that I would not be where I am in my faith if it weren’t for Underground. There are some beyond amazing people at YHC that have taught and encouraged me so much through sharing at Underground. I’m thankful for the time set aside for Underground to just be still and grow in my relationship with God. Whether I’m praying over someone or they’re praying over me, the community



ABOVE Members of Underground Bible Study's leadership team for Spring 2016 included (front row) sophomore Paxton Spessard, (second row) junior Allie Weldon, junior Hannah Johnson, junior Kirsten Swanda, senior Jessie Fortner, (back row) senior Seth Black, junior Sara Freeman, sophomore Anna Dyer, senior James Rowe, junior Austin Tibbetts, sophomore Taylor Beck, and junior Luke Giegerich.

and love shared at Underground is a blessing. It is undoubtedly one of my favorite parts about Young Harris College!"

Junior history major Jada Williams, of Snellville, noted that Underground is an escape for her. "By participating in Underground, I get to escape all my issues for about an hour and just focus on God," she stated. "I get to hear my peers speak about issues they face and learn that I'm not the only one struggling. I get to worship God without worrying about the person standing next to me judging my poor singing. Underground also gives me momentum to dig into scripture and further my spiritual growth."

Johnson agreed that Underground is an important place where she can take a pause from her busy life. "I believe students participate in Underground because it is such a comfortable and inviting environment," she explained. "We come together as a body of believers without judgment and without shame. Underground lets us, as students, take

A CLOSER LOOK

YHC currently recognizes 11 religious life groups that meet on campus ranging from Buddhist Mindfulness and Meditation to the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Here, student-leaders share what they love about their organization.

ARMY OF HOPE

Kayla Tucker, sophomore psychology major from Cleveland, Ga.

"I started this organization because I was diagnosed with cancer in 2014. The amount of support I got from family, friends, and even people I didn't know, was overwhelming. I wanted to take my story of hope, and use it to give back for all that was done for me. When we volunteer at places where the circumstances might not always be the best, the benefit simply becomes being able to share God's love and hope, and provide people with encouragement."

CATHOLIC STUDENT ASSOCIATION

Lizbeth Esteban, senior communication studies major from Statesboro

"To speak of CSA is to speak of the bake sales, the off-topic conversations, the hasty

planning, the hilarious and often exasperating group chats, and the friendly banter. Through bonding life moments, they are my small group with whom I share my Catholic faith in acceptance, warmth, silly giggles and confusing moments. Dominus vobiscum. Et cum spiritu tuo."

CHAPEL MINISTRY TEAM

Leslie Ballew, sophomore interdisciplinary studies major from Ball Ground

"The Chapel Ministry Team has provided me with many experiences within worship and leadership. Alongside the great people involved, I have learned a great deal about ministry. I also enjoy the intimacy and worship each Chapel service has to offer. There is a lot of time to reflect and grow during this time on campus through Chapel."

INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCIL

Melissa Wall, senior psychology major from McDonough

"My freshman year, I became involved with multiple religious life organizations, including the Inter-Religious Council. I saw something different with the Inter-Religious Council. I absolutely love the fact that the Inter-Religious Council is so welcoming to students of any religious background; this is the main reason I've always wanted to be involved with this organization. During my time as president, I learned so much about myself and about others. Through my involvement with religious life, I've gained many faculty and staff mentors who I am very thankful for."

“By participating in Underground, I get to escape all my issues for about an hour and just focus on God.” | JADA WILLIAMS, JUNIOR HISTORY MAJOR FROM SNELLVILLE



LEFT Student-musicians led worship during the late-night service.

a pause from our busy lives and breathe. There is a feeling of relief when you are surrounded by others who are just as stressed as you are, but take the time to reflect on their week and give glory to

the Lord. Students who participate in Underground know that where two or more are gathered in His name, there He is also. That has been our main verse this past year, and it has reigned true every single night. I

DELIGHT

Marcia Hall, sophomore communication studies major from Clarkesville

“Delight has provided me with the opportunity to share the light of Christ with my friends and peers on campus. This ministry has been a place for honesty, vulnerability and transparency to take place with the young women who are growing in their faith. Delight has allowed me to take on the responsibility of being a leader, influencer and friend. The girls who participate in Delight are truly a reflection of the love and grace of Jesus and I can’t wait to watch their relationships grow.”

FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN ATHLETES

James Rowe, senior biology major from Blairsville

“FCA is an amazing platform that allows me to grow my faith alongside students that are athletes, as well as ones that are not. Also, it provides me with a

community unlike any other on campus, that encourages and motivates me during the craziness of being a student-athlete. Overall, FCA provides me with a chance to impact our campus for Christ through players, coaches and other students.”

WESLEY FELLOWSHIP

Kayla McElveen, senior English major from Loganville

“When I came to Young Harris as a freshman, I wanted to find a Christian group to meet with and build friendships. I am a Methodist by denomination so Wesley Fellowship seemed like the perfect fit for me. I am happy to report that I have found that group of Christian friends and I have enjoyed our many discussions on all sorts of topics—from the purpose of the sacraments to the mysteries surrounding Star Wars: The Force Awakens. Ours is a small group, but we have a lot of fun and we have an awesome advisor in Professor Adam Neal.”

can see that the students here at Young Harris want to grow in the Lord and help others grow as well, and the fellowship that occurs at Underground does just that.”

Finally, sophomore outdoor leadership major and student-leader Paxton Spessard, of Cumming, confirmed the gatherings feel like a celebration that fuel him as he heads into the week. “Underground rejuvenates me,” he said. “The people I get to interact with are constantly encouraging me and have helped me grow my faith exponentially. Underground also challenges me to be completely vulnerable, authentic and confident in who God says I am. An unavoidable feeling captures me and forces the muscles in my face to reveal a smile that is a reflection of a bliss-filled soul. This is a unique feeling; one that can only be found in the arms of the Creator of space and time.”

While their reasons for attending vary, these five students agree that Underground is an important place for them to find connection with each other and their God. Dr. Davis, too, says that his five years as faculty advisor have allowed him to find a special place to connect each week.

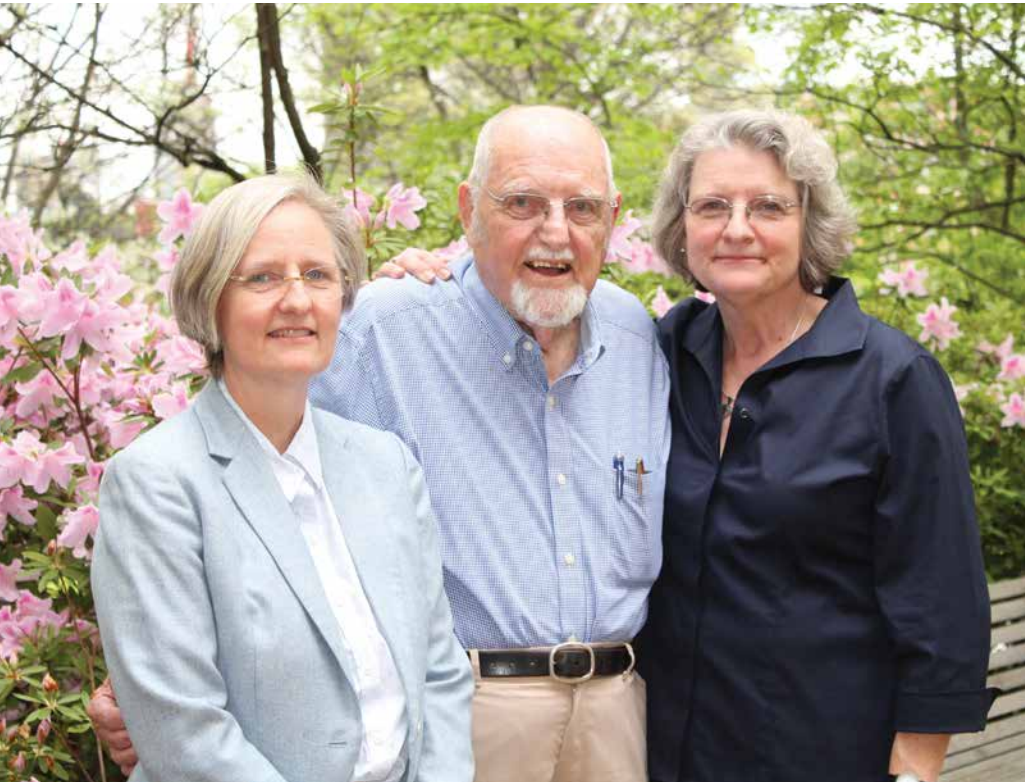
“It has been interesting to watch as students have come and gone, how new leaders have been mentored and raised up, and how student attendance continues to be strong,” he recalled. “Personally, I, too, need a connecting point where I am intentional about worshiping God, and Underground provides that to me once a week.”

Underground, above all, is meaningful because YHC students want it to be. The relaxation, acceptance and genuineness that participants experience are real because they make it a priority to create and foster it each week. ■

Enriching

FUTURE MINISTRIES

BY LEANN WALDROUP



Celeste McCollough, '77, Rev. T. Jack McCollough, '47, and Candace McCollough, '76

The benefits of the Thomas and Virginia McCollough Scholarship Fund came about serendipitously.

"When Dr. Stephen Gunter was the Young Harris College president, he led a 'Wesley Heritage' tour of England for alumni," said Rev. T. Jack McCollough, '47, of Woodbine. "I was so inspired by it, and wished I had the experience earlier in my ministry."

Established shortly after his 2003 trip, Rev. McCollough asked friends, family and former colleagues to contribute to the scholarship that serves as a memorial to his late wife, Virginia, who passed only a short time before he traveled to England.

"Our mom loved YHC and had many deep family connections with the College," said Celeste McCollough, '77, of Atlanta, a talented artist who retired from practicing law. "My sister and I both benefited from scholarships while at YHC, and I wouldn't have dreamed of having the opportunity to travel to England as a student."

Working with YHC's Office of Advancement and Office of Religious Life, the Thomas and Virginia McCollough Scholarship Fund has developed a partnership with Wesley House Cambridge, a Methodist school for theological study in Cambridge, England.

"The connection to Wesley House came through YHC. That was combined with Dad's vision to study Wesley history," said Celeste.

Receiving his education from YHC was also somewhat serendipitous for Rev. McCollough.

"I was at Young Harris College in the fall of 1944, right out of a little one-horse high school—really half a horse," Rev. McCollough quipped. "There were a total of 13 students in my senior class. My pastor had been to YHC and encouraged me to go."

A draft letter calling him to service in World War II interrupted his schooling, though. "They called me up for an

examination in July, but I thought I wouldn't pass due to a bad case of arthritis," he remembered. "The fall quarter at YHC started around Sept. 20, and it was time for me to decide if I was going back or not. I happened to be at the post office when the clerk for the draft board walked in with a letter asking for two men. I was one of the two available."

Rev. McCollough postponed his second year at YHC, joined the U.S. Navy and was sent to San Francisco where he was stationed on a ship. He saved his salary as a Seaman First Class to pay for his final semester's tuition, room and board at YHC. He went on to complete his undergraduate education at Emory University. It was during this time that he began corresponding with Virginia.

"She invited me to meet her family in Florida at Christmas time," he said. "I arrived late one evening at the bus station and she met me. The bus left at 10 a.m., but we didn't get back home until 2 a.m. Her sister and brother were waiting up on us, and to their surprise, I had proposed!"

The couple went on to serve United Methodist churches throughout Middle Georgia, raising three children in the meantime: Celeste, '77, Tom and Candace, '76. Celeste and Candace both followed in their father's footsteps and decided to attend YHC.

"It was far away from home," laughed Celeste. "I had gone to a high school that was pretty weak academically. Not many resources were put into the school. I needed a place that was small with intense, loving care from my professors—which I received."

Celeste credits the YHC faculty with taking a special interest in her life and prompting her to continue her education at Emory University.

"I started out as a recreation major at

YHC. I didn't feel that I was qualified to pursue anything else," said Candace. "I ended up being bored stiff. Then, I saw all these music students having a good time—I wanted to be with them!"

Despite not entering YHC as a music major, Candace convinced YHC Professor Emeritus of Music Bill Fox, '50, to give her the end-of-semester tests needed to move forward in the music program.

"I had a solid theory background and aced all the finals. His willingness to bend the rules for my benefit changed my life and gave me the confidence I needed to go on to the University of Georgia," said Candace, who is now a lecturer in German at Georgia Tech.

As the three reflect on their days in the Enchanted Valley, they continue to stress the value of immersing oneself in another culture—something they strongly believe the Thomas and Virginia McCollough Scholarship Fund provides access to.

"Anything we can do to encourage cross-cultural exchanges will be a benefit to the student and those they interact with, particularly in the church," said Celeste. "In America, we sometimes get tunnel-vision of how the church should be that is different in other countries."

Now, thanks to the generosity of the McCollough family and their friends, YHC students will have the opportunity to enrich their future ministries.

"On my trip, I remember being privileged to look at Charles Wesley's original manuscript of "Love Divine." I hope the scholarship recipients get a great appreciation for the origins of Methodism," said Rev. McCollough. "To have the opportunity to visit so many Wesley sites in the 10 days we were there was amazing. These students will be there for several weeks—it should be a big inspiration."

For more information on the Thomas and Virginia McCollough Scholarship Fund, contact YHC's Office of Advancement at (706) 379-5173.

CLASS SCHOLARSHIP CHALLENGE EXCEEDS GOAL

The Young Harris College Class Coordinators officially kicked off the 2015-2016 Class Scholarship Challenge in January, and enthusiastic alumni from across the generations banded together to provide financial assistance to deserving students.

With the help of a new, interactive website dedicated to raising funds for the Class Scholarship Challenge, 72 classes raised more than \$125,000 from over 590

donors—the first-ever six-figure total for the campaign. An impressive 30 classes surpassed the \$1,000 goal.

The Class of 1952 led the challenge for the fourth time in the last five years, followed closely by the Class of 1947, the winner from 2014-2015. The Class of 1957 rounded out the top three.

Preparations are already underway for the 2016-2017 Class Scholarship Challenge that will kick off in Jan. 2017. Alumni interested in participating can make a gift now marked for the Class Scholarship Challenge, make a gift online at classchallenge.yhc.edu, or call the Office of Advancement at (706) 379-5173.



Read messages from fellow alumni and see your class' rank at classchallenge.yhc.edu.

CLASS SCHOLARSHIP CHALLENGE BY THE NUMBERS

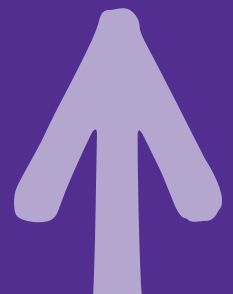
Class of **1952** won the challenge, followed by **1947**

\$125,674 total received

30 classes surpassed **\$1,000** goal

590 total donors

72 classes participated



Make Your Mark ON FINE ARTS

In 2012, Young Harris College Trustee Richard McGinnis and his wife, Shirley, expressed their enthusiasm for the College and its world-class fine arts programming with a \$4 million gift. Thanks to the couple's generosity, the Hilda D. Glenn Auditorium within the Clegg Fine Arts Building is receiving renovations—and a new name.

The Glenn-McGinnis Auditorium will benefit from new seating, improved sound and acoustics for top-quality musical performances, an improved HVAC system, and enhanced lighting.

Alumni and friends of the College can make their mark on the Glenn-McGinnis Auditorium and allow students and the community to benefit from quality programming in a state-of-the-art environment by naming a seat for \$500. With your tax-deductible gift, you can create a legacy on a new seat that will remain for generations to come.

For more information about the Glenn-McGinnis Auditorium seat-naming campaign, contact YHC's Office of Advancement at (706) 379-5173. To make a secure gift online, visit yhc.edu/giving.

MOUNTAIN LIONS ROUNDUP

23 YHC student-athletes were named to their respective All-Peach Belt or Gulf South Conference team in 2015-2016. + 26 YHC student-athletes were named a PBC or GSC Player of the Week during the year. + 57 YHC student-athletes were named to their respective Peach Belt or Gulf South Conference All-Academic team in 2015-2016. + **Lewis Hilton** (men's soccer), **C.J. Wilson** (men's basketball) and **Jeanie Perrucci** (softball) were named to the CoSIDA Academic All-America® Division II Second Team. + **Perrucci** earned the PBC Elite 15 Award for softball. + In 2015-2016, the softball (32), men's lacrosse (10) and women's lacrosse teams (13) posted the most wins in NCAA-era program history. + The women's golf team earned their second consecutive PBC Team Sportsmanship Award in 2016. + Men's Golf Head Coach **Caleb Kelley**, '12, was named the Peach Belt Conference Men's Golf Coach of the Year while Women's Lacrosse Head Coach **Katie Ziek** was honored as the Gulf South Conference Women's Lacrosse Coach of the Year. + **David Wallin** was named the PBC Men's Golfer of the Year while **Sarah Bialecki** was named the Freshman of the Year by the GSC. + Men's basketball's **C.J. Wilson** was named to the All-Southeast Region team by the NABC and D2CCA. + **Darby Stanford** was honored as an all-region selection by the NFCA in softball. + Men's golfer **David Wallin** was named to the Division II PING All-Southeast Region team. + **Mathew Biwott**, **Nancy Murgor** and **Nicole Smith** were named to the U.S.T.F.C.C.A. All-Southeast Region team for cross country. + **Lewis Hilton** was named to the NSCAA Men's Division I and Division II Scholar All-America team. + **Paco Craig** and **Hilton** were each named to the NSCAA and D2CCA All-America teams.

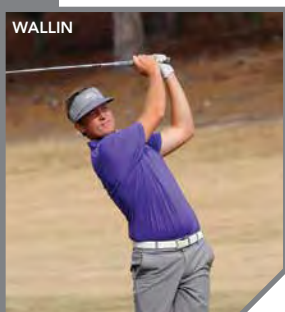


COMPETITIVE CHEERLEADERS FINISH STRONG IN NATIONALS

The Young Harris College competitive cheerleading large coed team recently came in third place at the National Cheerleading Association's Collegiate Cheer Championship in Daytona Beach, Fla. The team was the highest scoring Division II institution in the finals.

The Mountain Lions also captured their first-ever Peach Belt Conference title when they won the Coed Division title in March during the PBC Spirit Competition held at Columbus State University.

"I am so proud of this team and all that they have accomplished," said Head Coach Chase Carter. "Four years ago there was not a competitive program at Young Harris. Now, we are sitting on top of Division II. We had very humble beginnings and have not lost sight of that. We are still the new kids on the block. However, now everyone knows our name. As we say goodbye to the seniors who built this program from the ground up, we know that they are leaving a legacy that will last."



SOFTBALL AND MEN'S GOLF TEAM TAKE ON NCAA REGIONALS

In the spring, YHC's men's golf and softball teams earned their first-ever trips to NCAA postseason play.

Softball was one of 64 teams selected to play in the championship. The Mountain Lions, who finished in third place in the Peach Belt Conference and won a program-best 32 wins in the NCAA era, earned the No. 8 seed from the Southeast Region.

The men's golf team earned the No. 8 seed for the Southeast Region to punch their ticket to the NCAA tournament, which consisted of 80 teams and 32 student-athletes competing as individuals.

The golfing Mountain Lions, who finished in 16th place at the regional, joined 19 other teams at the South/Southeast Regional. Nineteen of the 20 teams in the regional were ranked in the top 50 in the NCAA Division II Golfstat Ratings.



WOMEN'S LACROSSE TAKES HOME CONFERENCE TITLE

Most Outstanding Player Rachel Lepine scored five goals as YHC defeated the University of Alabama in Huntsville 17-7 in the Gulf South Conference Women's Lacrosse Invitational Tournament championship game at the YHC Soccer and Lacrosse Field.

The Mountain Lions, who also claimed the conference's regular-season title, finished the 2016 campaign with a 13-5 ledger.

"I am so proud of the way the team played," said GSC Coach of the Year Katie Ziek. "We were ready from the first whistle and knew that we couldn't let up our intensity. We executed our game plan with teamwork, hustle, determination and heart."

NEW LEADERSHIP WELCOMED TO THE FIELD

Christiane Lessa has been named women's soccer head coach for the Mountain Lions after serving as head coach for Iowa Central Community College women's soccer program for four seasons.

Lessa led the Tritons to a 19-1-0 record in 2015 as Iowa Central captured the program's first National Junior College Athletic Association Division I Women's Soccer National Championship. Lessa was named the National Soccer Coaches Association of America's NJCAA Division I Women's Soccer Coach of the Year in 2015.

"Young Harris College is a perfect fit for anyone that strives to accomplish amazing things, and I look forward to helping our student-athletes achieve excellence both on and off the field," said Lessa, who named Arica Pfeil as YHC's new women's soccer assistant coach.

Pfeil, who will also lead the women's JV soccer team, comes to the Enchanted Valley after spending the past two seasons as an assistant coach at Iowa Central Community College under Lessa.

"I feel as if Arica was born to be a coach and I got very lucky to have her for two years as my assistant coach at Iowa Central and now we are very fortunate to have her join our coaching staff here at YHC," said Lessa.



Read more about Lessa and Pfeil.



A PIECE OF HOME

BY KELLY L. CRAWFORD

Young Harris College, nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains, is known for its home-away-from-home feel. The mountains wrap around the College in a nest-like shape—making it feel even more like home. Stroll through campus and you'll feel the warmth and care of a home. Then venture out into the surrounding communities and find the feeling continues. There is no better way to feel at home than with host families that reach out to YHC's international students and student-athletes.

Last fall, 79 international students and student-athletes from 22 countries around the globe were welcomed to their new home. As with any freshman entering college, international students have many emotions, fears and anxieties about heading off to college—but in a new country. Language barriers and cultural differences make adjusting to life in general more difficult, but at YHC, local host families are ready and willing to help these students make the adjustment.

Host families provide many wonderful opportunities for international students to immerse themselves in local culture by inviting them over for dinner, celebrations, holidays, day trips and much more.

Sam, Carla, Savannah, Victoria and Elizabeth Beck, of Hayesville, N.C., have been involved with YHC as a host family for more than 10 years.

"We originally interacted with the international students through

our church," explained Carla. "A church member and friend, Melanie Thompson, suggested that our ladies group begin a ministry involving the international students at YHC. We began slowly with planning one to two holiday meals on YHC's campus."

The ministry slowly dissolved, but in 2010, after moving to a new church in Young Harris, the Becks knew they were in the perfect location to again serve as a host family—and invite other families in the community to take part as well.

"We began a new endeavor to offer home-cooked meals several times a year to the international students at YHC—not just the student-athletes but all international students," said Carla.

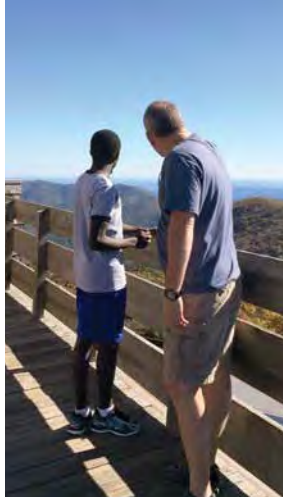
Often times, the Beck's church, Mountain Grace Baptist Church, would provide easy-to-prepare food for Thanksgiving break since many of the students were unable to go back to their home country for the holiday.

"The ministry that began years before led my family to have a desire for a deeper connection with the international students," said

“EXAMS CAN BE STRESSFUL AND THEY ARE VERY ENCOURAGING. THEY TAKE ME TO DINNER AFTERWARDS AND JUST HANG OUT WITH ME SO THAT I CAN RELAX.”
MATHEW BIWOTT OF ITEN, KENYA

LEFT TO RIGHT Junior Mathew Biwott joined the Beck family on a trip to the Tennessee Aquarium. ■ The entire Beck family—including grandparents—have gotten to know Biwott (left) and his fellow international student sophomore Nancy Mugor (second from right). ■ Biwott celebrated his 22nd birthday with the Beck family.





LEFT TO RIGHT The Plemmons family hiked to the top of the Brasstown Bald with junior Abraham Asis. ■ Chad Plemmons pointed the town of Hayesville, N.C., out to Asis while atop the Brasstown Bald. ■ Amy Pollin and daughter, Emi, cheered on recent graduate Carolina Hernandez, '16, at one of her tennis matches.

Carla, who reached out to the Office of Admissions to inquire about hosting a student.

Over the years, the Becks have hosted international students from South Korea, Ireland, Ukraine, England and Africa. They enjoy taking students on day trips to local attractions including Cherokee, N.C., and the Tennessee Aquarium in Chattanooga, Tenn. The Becks plan weekend activities, too, for their students, invite them to church events—and, of course, cheer on those who are athletes at sporting events.

In Fall 2015, the Becks became a host family to junior biology major Mathew Biwott, of Iten, Kenya, who is a standout on the College's men's cross country team.

"Having a host family makes a positive impact on my college life," said Biwott, who expressed his appreciation for doing "small things" like taking him to the grocery store, providing home-cooked meals and visiting him on campus, especially during exam times—just like his parents would if they were in Young Harris. "Exams can be stressful and they are very encouraging. They take me to dinner afterwards and just hang out with me so that I can relax."

One of Biwott's most cherished moments occurred on his birthday. "The Becks brought me to their home and surprised me with a celebration and birthday cake. It was the first time I have ever had one," said Biwott, who noted that in Kenya, birthdays are not celebrated like they are here in the United States.

During YHC's winter break, the Becks gave Biwott Christmas gifts just as they would their own children. "The Becks are very nice people and they treat me just like my parents do."

The Plemmons family—Chad, Heather, Maggie and Nathan—became a host family in Fall 2015 after being introduced to the idea by the Becks. "We admired the relationships the Becks had with their students and decided being a host family would be a good fit for our own family," said Heather, who also resides in Hayesville. The Plemmons were connected with junior business and public policy major Abraham Asis of Eldoret, Kenya, a teammate of Biwott.

One of the family's fondest memories with Asis included a hike to Brasstown Bald—an outing that served as an opportunity to spend quality time with Asis and for both he and the Plemmons to get to know each other better.

In order to make Asis feel more at home, the Plemmons quickly

“THIS EXPERIENCE TAUGHT ME THERE ARE PEOPLE OUT THERE WILLING TO WELCOME A COMPLETE STRANGER INTO THEIR HOME TO ONLY BRING THEM HAPPINESS AND LOVE.”
ABRAHAM ASIS OF ELDORET, KENYA

learned one of his favorites: cookies. "We often bake Abraham cookies and bring them to his dorm room to enjoy," said Heather. "After all, there's nothing like homemade cookies to make you feel at home here in the U.S."

Recent communication studies graduate Carolina Hernandez, '16, of Cali, Colombia, took full advantage of her relationship with her host family during her time at YHC—Amy Pollin and daughter Emi, of Blairsville.

"It's a blessing to have someone who truly cares about you, and only wants the best for you," said Hernandez, who was a member of the women's tennis team. "As an international student, sometimes you feel alone here, but having a host family provides you with a sense of family and being home."

Hernandez has created many lasting memories with the Pollins—from sharing meals and attending church to shopping trips to Blue Ridge.

"I definitely recommend having a host family to other international students. Host families are a true blessing and make your whole experience at YHC more enjoyable," said Hernandez.

There is a resounding theme among host families and international students—home. They find the comfort of home together, each offering something the other is needing. Sometimes, it is simply knowing that each care for the other.

"Amy and Emi impacted my college life because they have given me a completely different perspective of the people around here," said Hernandez. "This experience taught me there are people out there willing to welcome a complete stranger into their home to only bring them happiness and love."

All★Star Athletes

YHC HONORS 2015 ATHLETICS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

Inductees from the third class of Young Harris College's Athletics Hall of Fame were honored at a special dinner and ceremony on Nov. 20 as part of the College's Homecoming festivities. "It was a privilege to recognize these outstanding YHC alumni for their athletic success and service to the College and their communities," said President Cathy Cox. "Being named to the Athletics Hall of Fame is a great honor and each inductee is very deserving of it."



Learn more about each inductee.



2015 Inductees

Don Wade, '61, basketball
Phil Meadows, '62, basketball
Brian Berry, '76, tennis
Roberta Pelarigo, '05, soccer
John Dalton, '76, tennis
Billy Buckner, '03, baseball
Larry Cart, '62, basketball (not pictured)

PICTURED ABOVE L-R



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE Inductee Brian Berry, '76, posed with his wife, Marty, following the special dinner and ceremony. ■ President Cathy Cox and Director of Athletics Randy Dunn presented honoree Larry Cart, '62, with his award during a special ceremony. Cart's friends, John W. Penick, Eddie Rushton, '78, and fellow inductee Phil Meadows, '62, were also onsite for the event. ■ Phil Meadows, '62, was surrounded by family members during the ceremony, including wife Jane, '62.





Nominate former student-athletes, coaches and major contributors for the Class of 2016.



ABOUT THE *Hall of Fame*

The Young Harris College Athletics Hall of Fame was established in 2013 by the Board of Trustees to recognize individuals for their outstanding athletic achievements and distinguished service to YHC and the greater community. Each class is comprised of men and women nominated by alumni and friends for being an integral part of a celebrated history of athletics at the College.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP Former tennis coach and Emeritus Professor of Mathematics Dr. Bob Nichols and former members of the YHC tennis team including Richard Peacock, '78, and James Robertson, '75, attended the ceremony to honor teammates John Dalton, '76, and Brian Berry, '76. ■ Inductee Don Wade, '61, delighted the audience during his acceptance speech. ■ Soccer standout Roberta Pelarigo, '05, flew in from Miami along with partner, Adriana, for the special ceremony. ■ Inductee Don Wade, '61, and his wife, Ruth, joined President Cathy Cox following the event. ■ Billy Buckner, '03, celebrated this achievement alongside his wife, Hayley, and son, Beckett. ■ Phil Meadows, '62, shared many humorous stories after accepting his award.



View more photos from the event.



YOUNG HARRIS COLLEGE
MOUNTAIN LIONS

Remember



Following the theme "There's No Place Like Homecoming," YHC students, alumni and Mountain Lions fans celebrated the 2015-2016 basketball season with a full week of Homecoming festivities in November.

11.17

TUESDAY

Taco Tuesday
Women's Basketball Game
Lip Sync Competition

11.18

WEDNESDAY

T-Shirt Giveaway
Men's Basketball Game



PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRITTANY MCCONNELL

▶ Watch the Homecoming 2015 highlights video online.



THURSDAY

Thanksgiving Dinner
Dodgeball Tournament

11.19

11.20

FRIDAY

Scholarship Luncheon
Athletics Hall of Fame Induction
Concert by Brandon Hood, '05
Pep Rally

11.21

SATURDAY

Pre-game Lunch
Meet the Mountain Lions
Women's and Men's
Basketball Games
Former Basketball Players
and Cheerleaders
Reception





View more photos from Homecoming 2015 @ [flickr.com/youngharriscollege](https://www.flickr.com/photos/youngharriscollege/).



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT YHC's competitive cheerleading team performed for guests during the annual Homecoming lunch. The men's and women's basketball games were filled with spirited encouragement from members of the competitive cheerleading team. Members of the Class of 2015 returned for a special reception during their first Homecoming as alumni. Alumni and current students mingled in front of the Rollins Campus Center during lunch. YHC's Alumni Board and Class Coordinators met on campus prior to kicking off the day's festivities. Associate Professor of Chemistry Dr. Amanda Song chatted with students during the annual Thanksgiving Dinner. Senior Frank Easterlin landed a three-point shot between games and took home a special prize. Breann Lindsey, '16, and senior Thomas Johnson were crowned Homecoming Queen and King during halftime of the men's basketball game. Past Homecoming Queen Grace Patterson, '15, (fourth from right) and past Homecoming King Zach Champion, '16, (third from right) congratulated members of the 2016 court including Elijah Briscoe, Maddy Elledge, '16, Zach Wagoner, '16, Ivey Franklin, '16, Breann Lindsey, '16, Thomas Johnson, Wade Orr, '16, and Jordan Silvey. Former athletes were recognized during halftime of the men's basketball game. Kaycee Cash, '15, Stephanie Mills, '16, and senior Parker Sewell chatted with President Cathy Cox during lunch.



Insta YHC

The YHC community captured memories through photos and shared their excitement with the word of Instagram during Homecoming 2015. Here's a glimpse at the festivities from behind the lenses of their phones.



They always enjoy visiting with Luke the Lion. #yhchc15 #youngharris

SCOTT THOMPSON, '93



Homecoming Lip Sync Champions with the sisters of Gamma Psi #yhchomecoming #kappasigma #gammapi

KAPPA SIGMA FRATERNITY



We always love cheering on our Mountain Lions! #yhchc15 #getphiesty

PHI ALPHA PHI SORORITY



Happy Hoco from your fav Mountain Lions!!! #yhchc15

MADISON RANNALS, '19



I can't believe this was my last YHC Homecoming as a student. I wouldn't have changed a minute of it! From being on Homecoming court to my sorority placing first in Homecoming week and all the in between, the memories made this week are some of my favorites! #yhchc15 #youngharris

MADDY ELLEDGE, '16



This lovely couple is the reason why I was able to attend Young Harris College. Without their generous donation, I would not have been able to attend college. Thank you Dr. and Mrs. Dotson for your generous contribution towards my scholarship. #thankful #youngharris #senior #scholarshipluncheon

LADAREON COPELAND, '16

SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, Nov. 19

YOUNG HARRIS COLLEGE
HOMECOMING 2016
OUR PRIDE
CANNOT BE TAMED

Find out more about Homecoming @ yhchc.edu/homecoming.

Start the conversation on social media using the hashtag #YHCHC16.

For more information, contact the Office of Alumni Services.
(706) 379-5334 | alumni@yhchc.edu

WALKING THE WALK

BY KRYSTIN DEAN

In a remote area of Northeast Georgia last November, a family watched their house burn to the ground when a fire truck couldn't make it up the driveway to help. As they attempted to rebuild their lives, a borrowed horse trailer with no electricity or running water became a temporary "home."

Then a phone call from Meg Gring Whitley, Ph.D., Young Harris College professor emeritus of foreign language, prompted a meeting in a parking lot in Blue Ridge. The family's matriarch arrived in a dilapidated car. She was unkempt and worn down. When she looked into Dr. Gring Whitley's van and saw cases of food piled high for her family, she burst into tears.

"When you get into helping the really needy, it changes you," said Dr. Gring Whitley, who has dedicated much of her life to food ministry—a calling she partly attributes to her "unbelievable" parents, who generously invested themselves in their local community.

"One of my mom's most famous sayings was 'enough is enough.' It often came to us as a reprimand growing up, but now I interpret it as I have enough," explained Dr. Gring Whitley. "I don't have to have everything. I have enough. And what's left over, I can give away to someone else so they can have enough."

For the last 25 years, she has supported and organized CROP

Hunger Walks sponsored by Church World Service (CWS), a relief, development, and refugee assistance ministry. When CROP began in 1947, it was an acronym for the Christian Rural Overseas Program; today, it's the name given to interfaith hunger education and fundraising events sponsored by CWS. The majority of the funds raised through the walks help those in need around the globe, while 25 percent is allocated to local hunger-fighting programs. [See sidebar on page 63.]

When her church's deacon told Dr. Gring Whitley about CROP, she said it was "an answered prayer" after working in Atlanta's soup kitchens and day shelters for years. "That was something I was missing when I came up to the mountains," she recalled. "Once this opportunity came along to continue doing what I love, it was like a gift to me."

In 1991, Dr. Gring Whitley started recruiting students, colleagues and local citizens to participate in the CROP Walk in Hayesville, N.C.—the only one in the region at the time. For 15 years, participants assembled on the YHC campus and carpooled across the state line to walk.

Also in 1991, Dr. Gring Whitley became the founding president of the Clay County Food Pantry. In the past quarter-century, she's become known as the person to call when someone needs food assistance. "There has not yet been a person I've heard about that I haven't helped," she said.

To drum up interest during the CROP Walk's early days, Dr. Gring Whitley simply announced the event in her classroom or



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP Dan Moore, '01, dressed as "Captain CROP Walk" to express his enthusiasm for the annual fundraising event.

■ More than 160 walkers participated in the 2015 CROP Walk held at Lake Winfield Scott. ■ Anne, '99, and Justin Shook, '98, participated in the 2006 CROP Walk alongside Professor of Biology and Chair of the Biology Department Dr. Paul Arnold. ■ Professor Emeritus of Religion and Philosophy Dr. John Kay, '56, and retired campus minister Rev. Fred Whitley, '66, have participated in CROP Walk for the last 25 years.



CHANGING LOCAL LIVES

Here are some of the ways the CROP Hunger Walk is helping the local community.

- Filling the pantries of all 15 homes built to date through the Towns-Union Counties chapter of Habitat for Humanity
- Purchasing 1,200 meals for the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia to aid families struggling to feed their children during the summer months
- Providing groceries for families seeking shelter at the SAFE House in Blairsville
- Making annual financial donations to the Clay County Food Pantry in Hayesville, N.C., Towns County Food Pantry in Hiawassee, and Atlanta Mission
- Giving baskets of food to families during several holidays in surrounding counties
- Donating food to the Hurlburt-Johnson Friendship House, an emergency homeless shelter in Murphy, N.C.
- Sponsoring the garden at Colwell Probation Detention Center in Blairsville
- Offering food support to Almost There Ministries, which provides housing and a safe haven for women transitioning from prison

during Chapel services led by her husband, retired YHC campus minister Rev. Fred Whitley, '66—and, she said, “five minutes later” word had spread around campus.

“La profesora is nothing if not persistent,” joked Dan Moore, '01, of Atlanta, who heard about the walk in Dr. Gring Whitley's Spanish class. He has walked as a student and alumnus—even dressing up as “Captain CROP Walk” for a Halloween dance at YHC, much to Dr. Gring Whitley's amusement. All jests aside, Moore credits Dr. Gring Whitley with teaching him an important life lesson.

“If you never ask, the answer will always be no,” he said. “If you look at the success of any cause, those who are the most committed and speak with the most conviction are the ones who can persuade others to take action. Meg is 100 percent sold on the fact that CROP is making a difference and, because of that, others follow.”

Anne, '99, and Justin Shook, '98, of Dillard, have also participated through the years due to Dr. Gring Whitley's “tremendous enthusiasm.” Anne, a native of France, bonded with Dr. Gring Whitley while serving as president of YHC's International Club, and Justin took four of her Spanish classes.

“Meg's unstoppable vision for helping people both globally and locally and for meeting goals inspires us to join the good causes she and Fred have committed to,” said Anne. “We admire their faith in God. We admire the way they work as a team. Their enthusiasm for life and loving others compels us to give and to go, to follow their example in our own lives and ministries.”

Georgia was officially incorporated into the Southeast region for CROP in 2006, and Dr. Gring Whitley hosted two walks on YHC's cross country trail until the Whitelys retired in 2008. In 2007, she founded a second CROP Walk at Lake Winfield Scott during Rev. Whitley's summer ministry known as “Church Without Walls.”

That walk is still held on the Sunday of Labor Day weekend.

The 25th anniversary of Dr. Gring Whitley's involvement in the CROP Walk last year truly marked a milestone, as the event saw record participation and donations with 160 walkers and 47 sponsors raising over \$18,000. Dr. Gring Whitley's longtime goal to raise \$200,000 in 25 years was surpassed by more than \$12,000.

“It was the fulfillment of a dream, a hope, a prayer,” she said. “It has been an overwhelming, fulfilling, celebratory time for me. It has renewed my resolve. I've never had a year like this. I'm so pumped it's unreal.”

When people ask Dr. Gring Whitley about her goal for the upcoming CROP Walk, her answer is always the same: “Have we put an end to world hunger yet?”

Rev. Whitley said he's proud to be married to the “CROP Walk Lady,” as Dr. Gring Whitley is affectionately known to many, and to have participated in every single walk with their beloved dogs, Rybka and Brindelle.

“Meg lives and breathes CROP Walk, and without her it would have never happened at YHC and in the community,” he said. “Because of her energetic, creative leadership, thousands of ‘the least of these’ have been served globally and locally.”

Professor Emeritus of Religion and Philosophy Dr. John Kay, '56, has also participated every year. He said that “walking is the easy part”—especially since the distance has been reduced from six miles to less than one in the past few years.

“Why wouldn't anyone want to do something as easy as walking if in that act several hundred dollars can be secured to aid people in desperate need?” he said. “And when you think about it, the real heroes are those individuals who contribute money to the cause.”

Dr. Gring Whitley said the success of the CROP Walks speaks volumes about the local area. “We live in a very generous community. I am thankful for the faithful support all these years.”

Moore called the Whitelys “true ambassadors” for YHC who have made “immeasurable” contributions to the College, students and local community through their leadership in causes like the CROP Walk.

“The fact that Meg has chosen to take on the challenge of ending world hunger and to do so much for people who can do absolutely nothing for her in return, speaks volumes about her,” he said. “She embodies what a YHC liberal arts education should be about: empowering students to live a life of meaning and purpose best measured by how they serve others.”

A TOUCHING TRIBUTE

In Dec. 2015, U.S. Congressman Doug Collins (GA-09) delivered a special tribute on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives honoring Dr. Gring Whitley in honor of the 25th anniversary of her involvement in the CROP Hunger Walk.



Watch the tribute.



CLASS NOTES

Share your news with other Young Harris College alumni and friends.

Send achievements, announcements and photos to: Young Harris College Class Notes
P.O. Box 275, Young Harris, GA 30582 | alumni@yhc.edu | yhc.edu/alumni

ACHIEVEMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

1950s



Homer Overstreet, '57, recently published a new book of poems and prose titled "Whoa Back, Nellie! Tales in Prose and Poetry." The book, which reflects on happy memories of youth, childhood, love, marriage, seasons, beach life, and discovery, is available for purchase through Amazon.

1960s

Ron (Ronnie) Bell, '64, was honored and recognized in February for his outstanding achievement as Marist High School's varsity boys' basketball coach for 31 years. In a special ceremony, the basketball court was named for

him with his name and signature inscribed on the floor. While at Marist, he had a 616-199 record. His team was state AAA champion for three years, state runner-up for three years and earned eight region titles. In 1995, he was named the National High School Basketball Coach of the Year. He also is in the Georgia Coaches Hall of Fame.

Rev. Dr. George Mathison, '63, retired in June 2016 after 26 years as the senior minister of Auburn United Methodist Church in Auburn, Ala. During his pastorate, he also served as team chaplain for the Auburn University Tiger football team. In April, Dr. Mathison and his wife, Montaigne, were back in the Enchanted Valley where he served as the guest minister for YHC's Alumni Weekend at Sharp Memorial United Methodist Church.

1970s

Rev. David Monroe, '74, has recently accepted the call to become the rector of St. Michael's Anglican Church in Haymarket, Va.

Rev. Monroe is a resident in the Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic of the Anglican Church in North America.

1980s

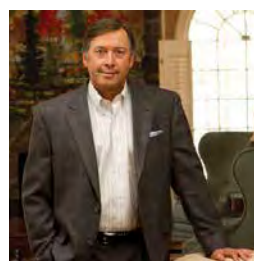
Dr. Mark Ivester, '83, was recently named the sixth president of North Georgia Technical College with campuses in Blairsville and Clarkesville. He previously served as vice president for economic development, vice president of administrative services, acting president, and adjunct instructor. Since 2011, he has been responsible for all adult education activities at the college, as well as the commercial truck driving and electrical lineman programs. He and his wife, Eleanor, have four grown children and reside in Toccoa. After leaving YHC, Dr. Ivester went on to earn his accounting degree from West Georgia College, M.B.A. from Brenau University and Ed.D. from the University of Georgia.

Rev. Brad Whitaker, '81, serves as priest in charge of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Chattanooga, Tenn.



YHC Trustee and former Board Chair Jerry Nix

was recently presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award by The Atlanta Business Chronicle at its CFO of the Year event in May. Nix retired as the CFO of Genuine Parts Co. in 2013.



YHC Trustee **Marlan Wilbanks, '81**, was honored with the Hope of Habersham Award in January by Prevent Child Abuse Habersham, an organization that Wilbanks, his wife, Diane, and his mother, Marilyn Motz, helped found and have generously supported. Wilbanks and Diane also recently founded at the University of Georgia's School of Law the nation's first experiential law school clinic, to be known as the Wilbanks Child Endangerment and Sexual Exploitation Clinic to further train generations of lawyers on the law and processes related to prosecuting criminal and civil cases for the benefit of child abuse victims, and provide resources and legal assistance to combat child abuse.

in St. Louis, Mo. During the conference, she was selected to co-chair the Public Safety Special Interest Group Committee for 2016. In Jan. 2016, she helped found the first-ever North Carolina Chapter of Grant Professionals Association and was elected chapter president for 2016. Ricardo is the grants analyst for the Winston-Salem Police Department and also works as a freelance grant specialist. She and her husband, Nelson, reside in Winston-Salem, N.C.

Amanda Nolen Seals, '94, has recently made a move within state government. She now holds the title of associate vice president for economic development and community engagement at Kennesaw State University.

Dr. Alan Wilson, '95, returned to the YHC campus in January to offer his services as program director for the National Science Foundation. He gave students and faculty tips on successful NSF grant writing and helped broaden their understanding of NSF structure and procedures. Dr. Wilson is an associate professor in fisheries at Auburn University, and also serves as the NSF program director for population and community ecology.

The town of Blairsville recently honored YHC Trustee **Bob Head, '63**, by dedicating a new road and exit in his honor. **W.C. Nelson, '63**, and wife, Patsy, Blairsville Mayor Jim Conley, Head's wife, Carol, and Union County Commissioner Lamar Paris were all onsite for the special dedication ceremony.



1990s

Rebekah Lee Ricardo, '94, recently co-presented a workshop titled "Public Safety Roundtable for the Advanced Practitioner" at the 2015 Grant Professionals Conference

2000s



Brittany Girle, '01, recently founded Photoserve, a non-profit organization designed to help humanitarian aid organizations around the world share their stories. Photoserve creates opportunities for visual artists to serve alongside these organizations and capture their work through photography. Giving back what is captured as a free gift to the organization helps them move forward and continue their life-changing missions. She invites YHC alumni to learn more about Photoserve at photoserve.org or to contact her personally at brittany@photoserve.org.

Jason Norton, '02, was recognized as a top financial advisor and named to LPL Financial Chairman's Council in February. Norton is an independent financial advisor affiliated with LPL Financial at Norton Financial, Inc., in Villa Rica.

2010s

Dr. Meg Patterson Ferdos, '11, has opened a general dentistry practice of her own with Apalachee Family Dental in Dacula. She is a graduate of the College of Dental Medicine at Georgia Regents University, now Augusta University. Following her graduation, she married Dr. Mark Ferdos.

ENGAGEMENTS, MARRIAGES & BIRTHS

1970s



Paul and Betty Butler, '77, are proud grandparents to Graham and Hudson Butler—future members of YHC's Classes of 2033 and 2035.

2000s



YHC Trustee **Matt Anderson, '03**, and his wife, Rachael, announce the birth of their baby girl, Mary Ruth Anderson. Ruthie was born Feb. 8, and weighed 9 pounds, 3 ounces.



Nick Klinger, '06, and **Allie Matulia, '12**, were married in Fort Valley on Oct. 17. Matulia, a former Zell Miller Leadership Award recipient, met Klinger while attending graduate school at GCSU. Currently, Nick is the store team leader for Target-Atlantic Station while Allie serves as the logistics executive team leader in Buford. The couple happily resides in Lawrenceville with their puppy, Olly.

Continued on page 66

A Tribute to Dan A. Pattillo

1928-2015



Dan A. Pattillo served the College as a loyal and dedicated member of the Board of Trustees for 17 years after being elected in 1980. He then served for 18 years as an emeritus trustee.

A native of Rockdale County, Pattillo graduated from Lithonia High School in 1945 and received his undergraduate degree from North Georgia College. He went on to serve two years as an Army officer during the Korean War.

Along with his father and brother, Pattillo founded Pattillo Construction Company. Through years of hard work and dedication, Pattillo Construction grew into one of the largest industrial real estate development companies in the Southeast.

Pattillo was active in his community, serving in many volunteer and civic positions, including chair of the Administrative Board and Board of Trustees at Decatur First United Methodist Church and chair of the MARTA Board. He also served as chair for the North Georgia College Foundation and Simpsonwood Methodist Center in addition to serving on the boards for the National Bank of Georgia, Atlanta Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America, and Wesley Woods.

He was also active with Honduras Outreach, where he was instrumental in the construction of a school, clinic and numerous infrastructure improvements.

As a YHC trustee, Pattillo served on the Building and Grounds Committee, Membership/Nominating Committee, Executive Committee, and as chair of the Finance Committee. He also served as chair of the Board of Trustees from 1994-1995.

He is survived by his wife, Anne, two sons, Daniel Pattillo, Jr., and wife, Joan, and YHC Emeritus Trustee David Pattillo, and wife, Paige, as well as five grandchildren.

Pattillo passed away peacefully in his home surrounded by family on Nov. 25 at the age of 87.

The Office of Alumni Services hosted several of the ever-popular Decade Gatherings in the spring. Groups from across the generations mixed and mingled at locations including Marietta's Strand Theatre and the Atlanta Botanical Garden in Gainesville. Visit yhc.edu/alumni-events to learn about events planned for 2016-2017.





Chantell Girle Rice, '01, and her husband, Jordan, were thrilled to welcome their first child, Aiden David Rice, on July 9. Aiden weighed 8 pounds and was 20.5 inches long. His aunt, **Brittany Girle, '01**, is excited to be the godmother.



2010s

Emily Hartbarger Bagwell, '10, and **Stephen Bagwell, '10**, were married on Oct. 10. The couple first met at YHC in 2008 and became college sweethearts. Shortly after being married, Emily accepted a job with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation as a firearms scientist.



Molly Blaschke, '14, and **Daniel Deas, '14**, were engaged atop Bell Mountain in Hiawassee in January. The couple currently resides in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Katie Marlowe, '11, married Austin Coleman in a ceremony near Helen on March 19.

Michael Severin, '11, and **Allie Coker, '13**, were married in a beautiful outdoor wedding on the Young Harris College Plaza on May 14.

Jack Tripp, '12, married Caitlin Faith Ritchey on June 11 at Northside United Methodist Church in Atlanta.



Rebecca Westbrooks Vanderhorst, '10, and husband, Tom, happily announce the birth of their daughter, Evelyn "Evy" Brooks Vanderhorst. Evy was born on Feb. 14 at 5:06 p.m. in Jackson, Wyo.

Remembering Robert E. "Bobby" Williams, '55 1934-2016



A devoted member of the Young Harris College Board of Trustees, Robert E. "Bobby" Williams served his alma mater for 23 years after being elected in 1993. He then served as an emeritus trustee for seven years.

Born in Sewanee, Tenn., Williams attended Lakeview High School in Rossville prior to his time as a Young Harris College student. He went on to attend Emory University and began working at the university as a student. After graduating, he continued his work for Emory for 42 years before retiring in 1999 as vice president for business.

Williams was an active member of Emory's Alumni Association and Glenn Memorial United Methodist Church. He was also a member and former president of the Druid Hills Golf Club.

As a YHC trustee, Williams served on the Executive Committee and as chair of the Properties Committee for 14 years. During his tenure as chair, YHC made numerous campus improvements including the construction of Hillgrove Hall and the Plaza. Improvements were made to existing athletic fields, and the E.D. Rivers Softball Field and Zell B. Miller Baseball Field were constructed. The O. Wayne Rollins Planetarium was renovated to include a state-of-the-art star projector and the YHC Observatory was constructed.

Williams is survived by his wife of 36 years, Mary Beth, three children and seven grandchildren. He passed away on Feb. 5 at the age of 82.

IN MEMORIAM

William L. Adams, '40
Philip E. Anderson, '63
Carolyn Ansley, '58
Leon Boling, '37
Rebecca L. Breedlove, '70
Gloria A. Brooks, '50
John W. Burgess
Former Employee
Thomas O. Burruss, '62
Linda Chandler, '59
John A. Coker
Former Employee
David C. Cole, '59
Eugene Cook, '60
Edward A. Cunard, '84
John W. Durand, '58
William B. Edmonds, '57
William D. Ellis, '58

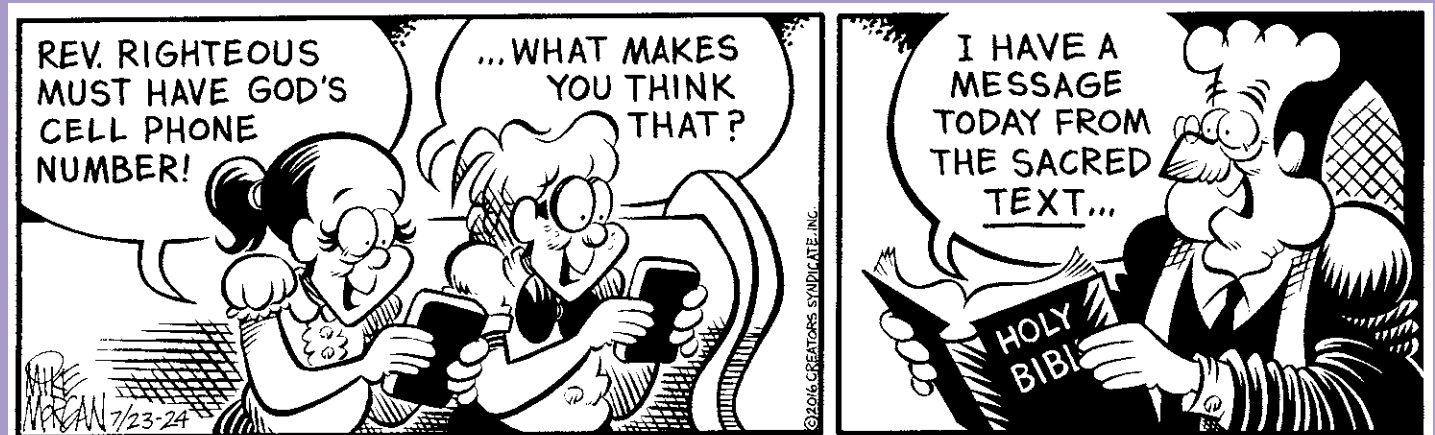
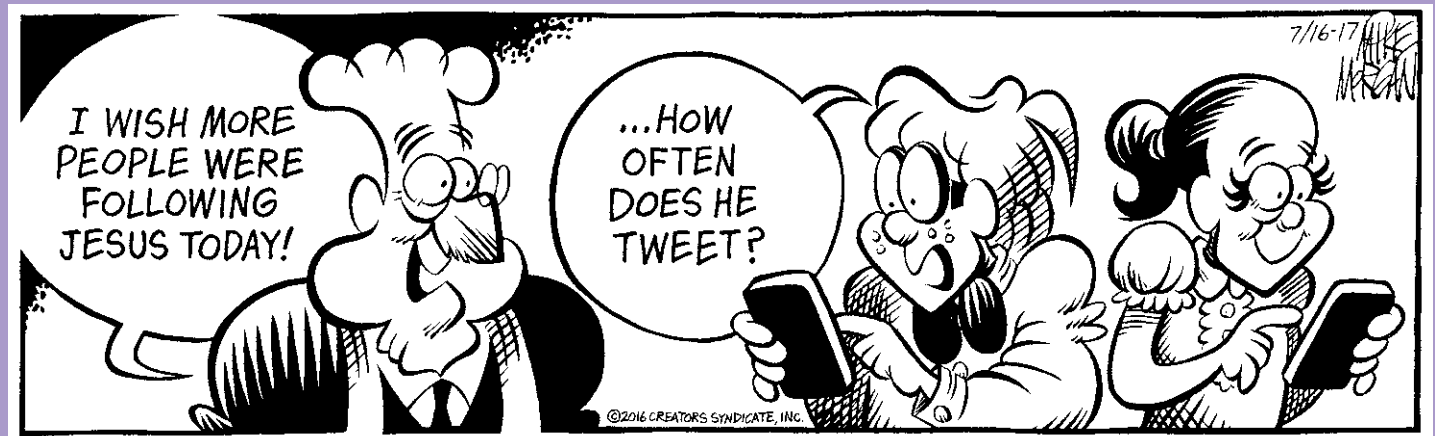
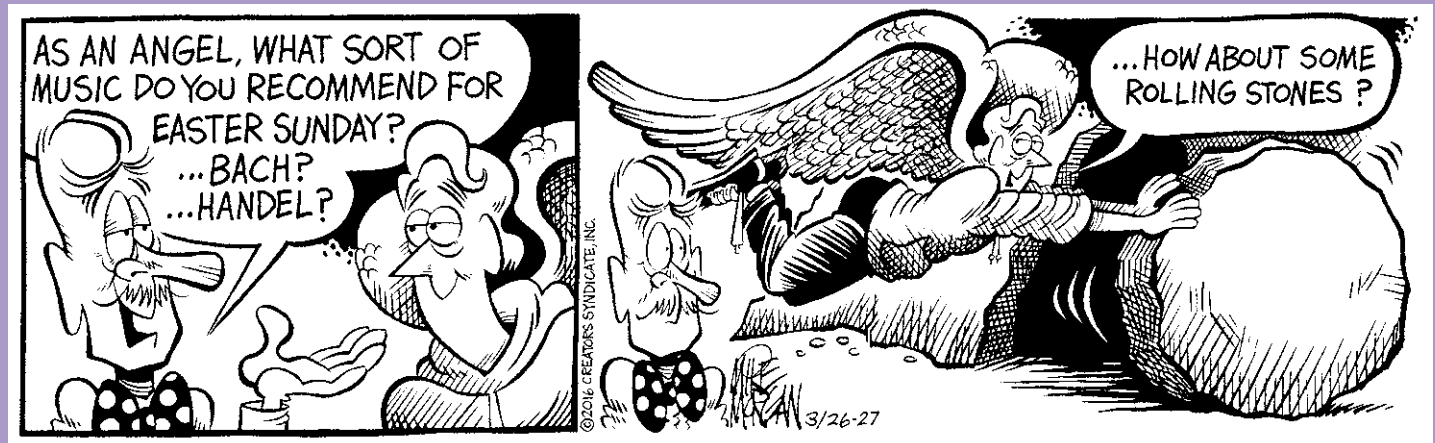
Emory C. Gilbert, '47
Carlton F. Gosselin
Friend of the College
Matthew T. Hudson, '08
Charles R. Huff, '71
Florence K. Hutchings, '43
Brenda G. Johnson, '65
Evelyn H. Kephart, '35
Brianna L. King, '14
Lorraine Lambert
Friend of the College
Herbert Marsengill, '63
Michael C. McClain, '59
Calvin A. Middlebrooks, '65
M. Louise Millwood, '46
Tracy L. Morse, '59
Mary J. Neville, '67

Dan B. Pattillo
Emeritus Board Member
Betty S. Pierce, '53
Charlie K. Pike, '57
Martha Postero, '43
Agnes V. Robertson, '58
LaRue Rogers, '65
James L. Scott, '60
Fred Shook
Former Employee
Cathy J. Smith, '80
Henry R. Turpin, '55
Joshua M. Wilkinson, '94
Robert E. Williams, '55
Emeritus Board Member
Dan Winn, '40
Shelby Woody, '57
Phillip D. Woody, '55

The names above indicate YHC alumni and friends who have passed away from Nov. 1, 2015, to July 1, 2016, as reported to the College.

THE LAST WORD

"Humor can often help folks who disagree with each other find common ground," said cartoonist turned Methodist minister Rev. Mike Morgan, '77. Each week, he injects lighthearted jest into "For Heaven's Sake!," a comic strip in its 25th year that simultaneously celebrates the faith and ribs the people of the fictitious Mainline Memorial Church. "Drawing 'For Heaven's Sake!' has had a positive impact on my life and ministry by opening new doors of communication for the message of God's love. I often receive emails from readers around the country who say my strip has inspired them and/or made them laugh at themselves," said Rev. Morgan. The YHC alumnus hadn't settled on a path when he arrived in the Enchanted Valley, but knew he had a passion for art. He declared that as his major at the suggestion of legendary art professor Ezra Sellers, Ph.D., '41. "As I learned the fundamentals of design, composition, modeling, color theory, and use of dark and light from Dr. Sellers and Emeritus Professor of Art Dick Aunspaugh, I began to contemplate a vocation in visual arts. By the time I left Young Harris, I knew I wanted to enter the graphic design program at the University of Georgia to prepare for a career in cartooning," said Rev. Morgan, who also met his wife, Karen, '76, at YHC. Rev. Morgan was called to the ministry in 1985, and today serves as senior pastor at Greensboro First United Methodist Church's two campuses while continuing to reach people through "For Heaven's Sake!" each week. "Perhaps someone who would never attend my church may be brought closer to the Lord because of one of my cartoons," he said. "I feel truly blessed to share this unique form of ministry with God's people everywhere."



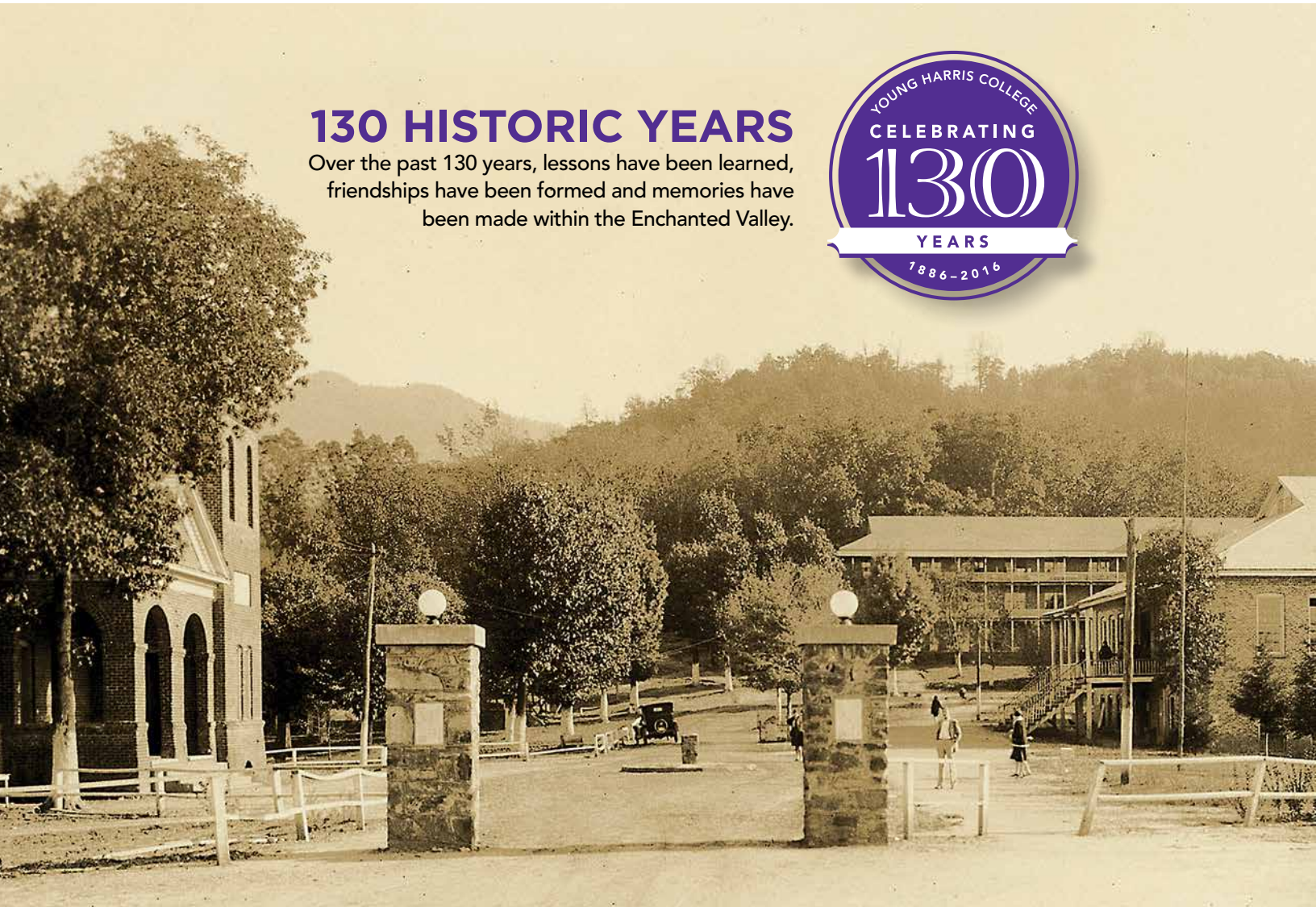


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130 HISTORIC YEARS

Over the past 130 years, lessons have been learned, friendships have been formed and memories have been made within the Enchanted Valley.



I love the campus, with the beautiful buildings and trees. I also loved hearing the bells of the Chapel toll at noon each day I was there. The professors were all encouraging. The one thing I love most is that I can take my children back to the campus. I always feel welcome when I visit. I always feel at home at YHC.



—STACIE COLLINS HARKINS, '02

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT YHC? TELL US @ YHC.EDU/130.