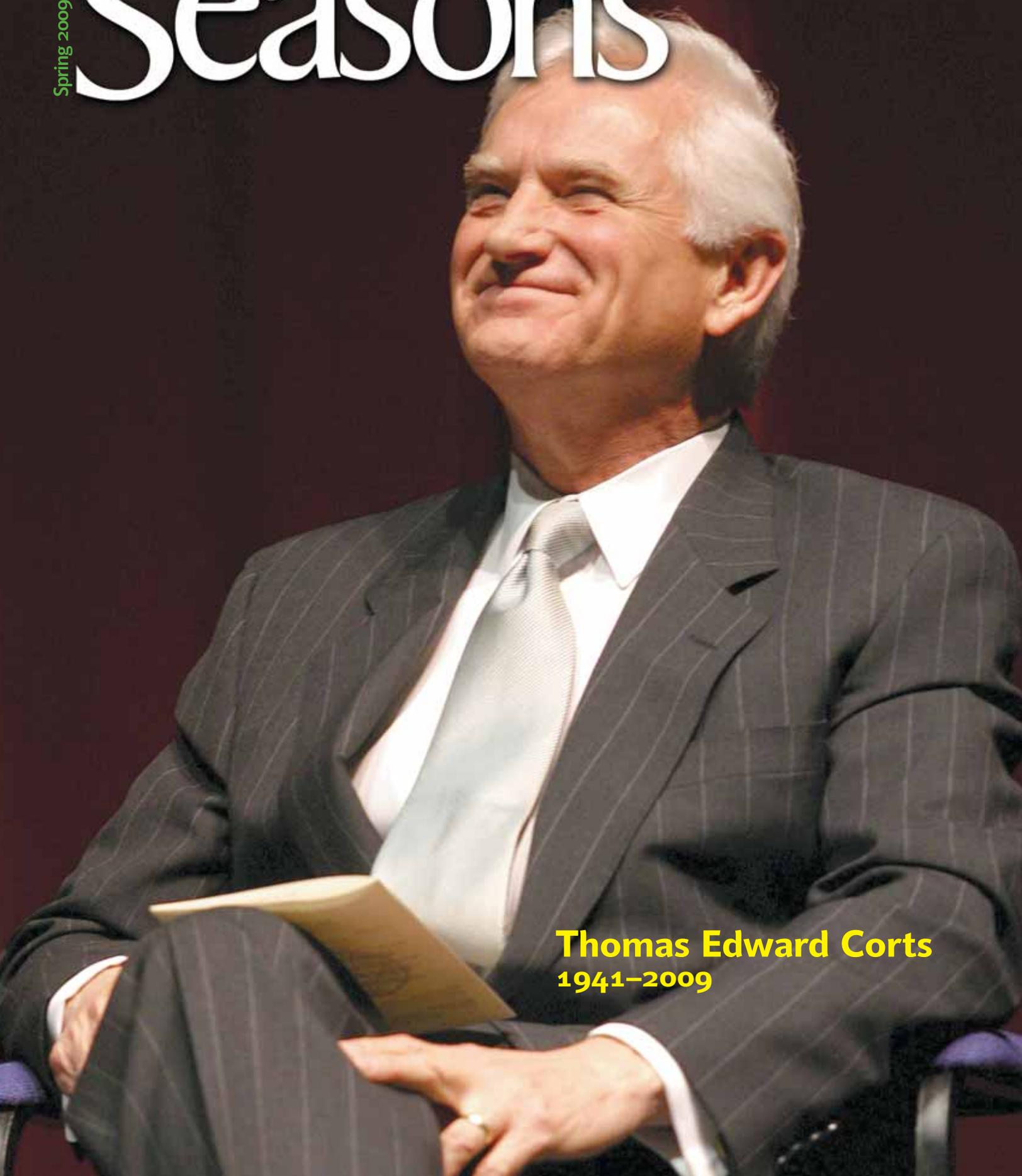


Samford University

Seasons

Spring 2009



Thomas Edward Corts
1941–2009

spring features

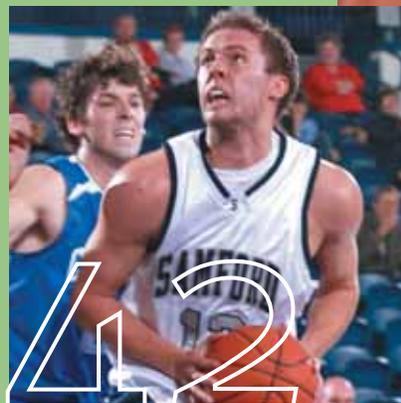
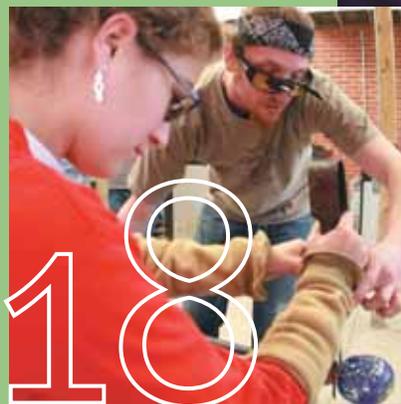
4 **A Life of Service**
Thomas E. Corts devoted his life to serving higher education and other worthy causes, both before and after his 2006 retirement as Samford president. *Seasons* pays tribute to the man who led Samford during one of its brightest periods.

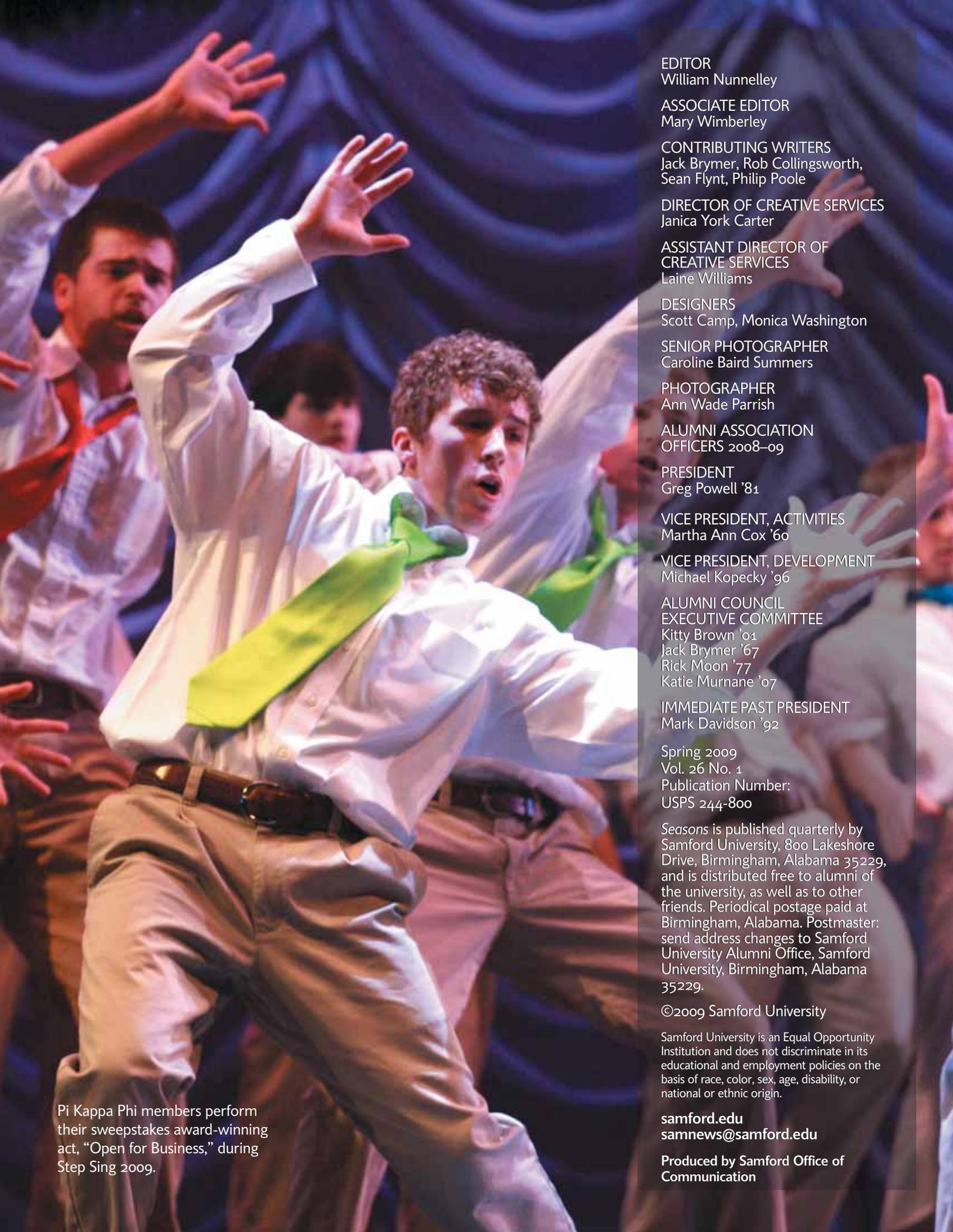
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Samford dedicated its \$27 million science building as William Self Propst Hall March 10, honoring a 1961 graduate who planned to attend medical school but found his calling as one of the nation's most successful pharmacists.

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32 **'We Were Gliding'**
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Pi Kappa Phi members perform their sweepstakes award-winning act, "Open for Business," during Step Sing 2009.

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A Great Friend

Within these pages, you'll encounter the shared grief of members of the Samford family in the loss of Tom Corts. Our sadness, of course, is not for him; we know that Dr. Corts is safe in his eternal home. Our lingering heartache is for Mrs. Corts, the Corts family and for those of us who have lost a great friend.

I knew Dr. Corts for a dozen years. By the time I met him, he was already a legendary figure in higher education. I relished the opportunity for brief conversations with him while attending meetings with other educators, and I still can recall the insights that he offered me as a young administrator, struggling to learn my craft. Fifteen minutes with Tom Corts was worth more than a two-day seminar with anyone else in higher education.

To know anything of Samford University over the past quarter-century is to know of his singular impact on the life of the institution. Dr. Corts saw unlimited potential—and he led with limitless vision.

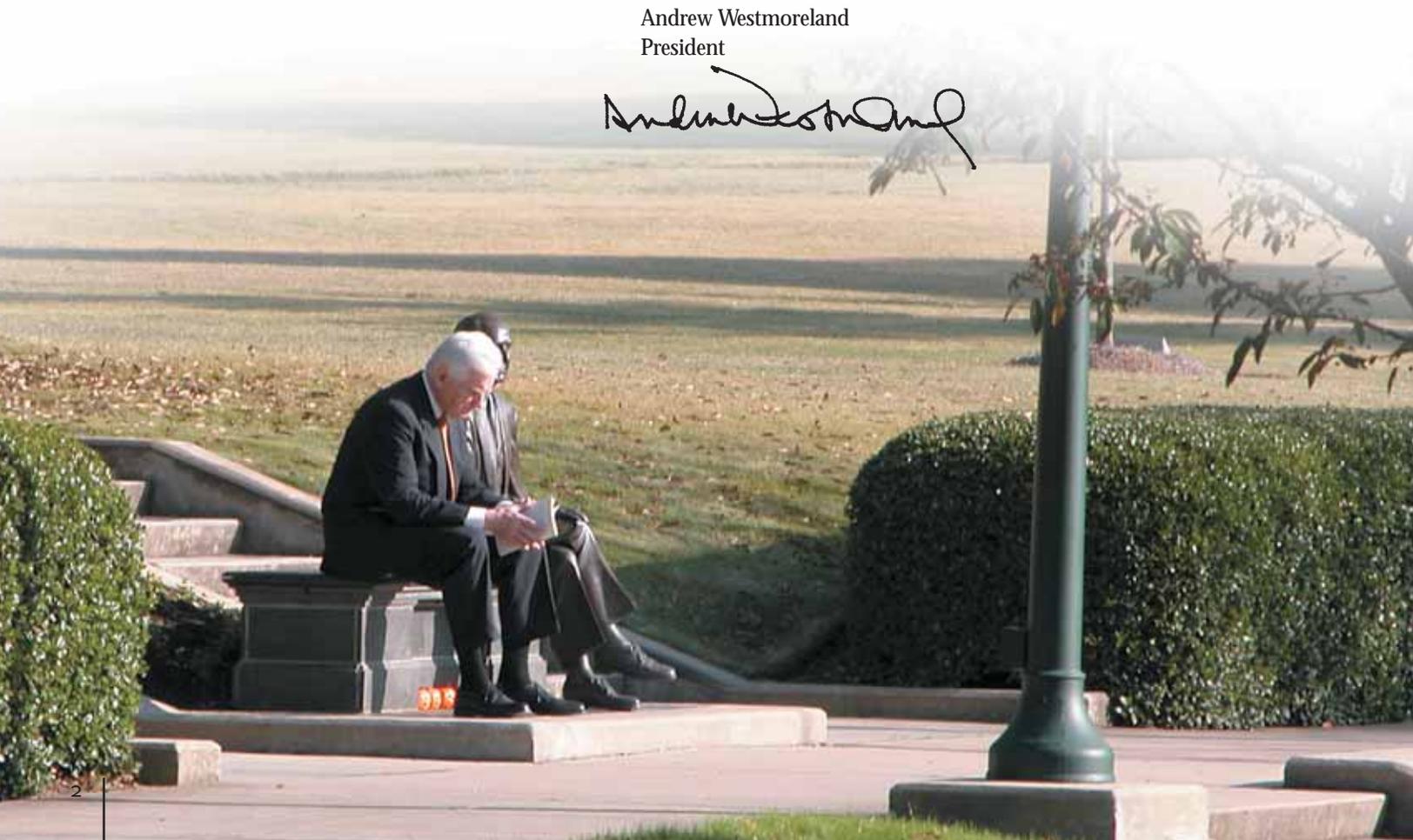
You may be aware of the appreciation that Dr. Corts shared for Philip P. Bliss, the famed writer of hymns. From the earliest days of my childhood, I remember the words from a Bliss hymn, "Let the Lower Lights Be Burning":

*Eager eyes are watching, longing,
For the lights along the shore.*

Tom Corts was one of those lights along the shore, guiding to safety those in his care. It is our challenge to keep bright those lights for eager eyes, watching and longing.

As always, please keep Samford in your prayers.

Andrew Westmoreland
President



SAMFORD report

Kimrey Gets New Post as Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management

Samford University Dean of Admission and Financial Aid R. Phil Kimrey will become vice president for student affairs and enrollment management at Samford, effective June 1. The new vice presidential position will combine the leadership of Samford's student affairs and admission/financial aid divisions.

Dr. Kimrey will take on overall direction of the student division headed by Vice President for Student Affairs Richard H. Franklin since 1990. Dr. Franklin earlier announced plans to retire at the end of the 2008–09 academic year.

Samford President Andrew Westmoreland announced the administrative change Feb. 24, noting that combining the two units would achieve greater efficiency in the utilization of resources and bring together two components that fit naturally.

"Specifically, I want this new unit to adopt a philosophy that melds together the developmental needs of both prospective and current students," said Dr. Westmoreland. "Among other priorities, my hope is that we may utilize this new framework to engage our prospects earlier in the process, thereby making greater use of the senior year in high school as a time of transition to college, with renewed emphasis on the academic implications."

Westmoreland said the term "enrollment management" stresses the need to approach student recruitment and retention in a "truly comprehensive" manner. "We have been making steady progress toward that goal," he said, "and this is just another step in that direction."

He added that creating the new unit would reduce administrative barriers and encourage greater dialogue between the unit and faculty and staff.

During the spring semester, Kimrey's highest priority has been leading his present staff in recruiting Samford's freshman class for this fall.



Phil Kimrey

The goal is a class of about 770, based on the record number of applications Samford has received this academic year.

"However," Westmoreland added, "I have asked him to begin to shift as much attention as possible to listening to the members of the campus community as he works to shape this new unit."

Kimrey has been dean of admission and financial aid at Samford since 1997. He joined Samford in 1993 as director of admission after serving in a similar role at Houston Baptist University (1989–93) and William Carey College (1985–88).

A native of Chattahoochee, Fla., Kimrey holds the Ed.D. degree from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, the M.R.E. from New Orleans Baptist Seminary and the B.A. from William Carey College. For more information, go to www.samford.edu/admission. ■

Spring Enrollment Up, Fall Applications Reach All-Time High

Samford spring enrollment is up by 61 students over the spring of 2008. At the same time, the university has received a record number of more than 2,200 applications for the fall semester of 2009.

Spring enrollment is 4,298, with increases recorded primarily in graduate programs.

"The enrollment increase is welcome news for the university, and represents the positive results of our faculty and staff efforts to retain our students," said President Andrew Westmoreland.

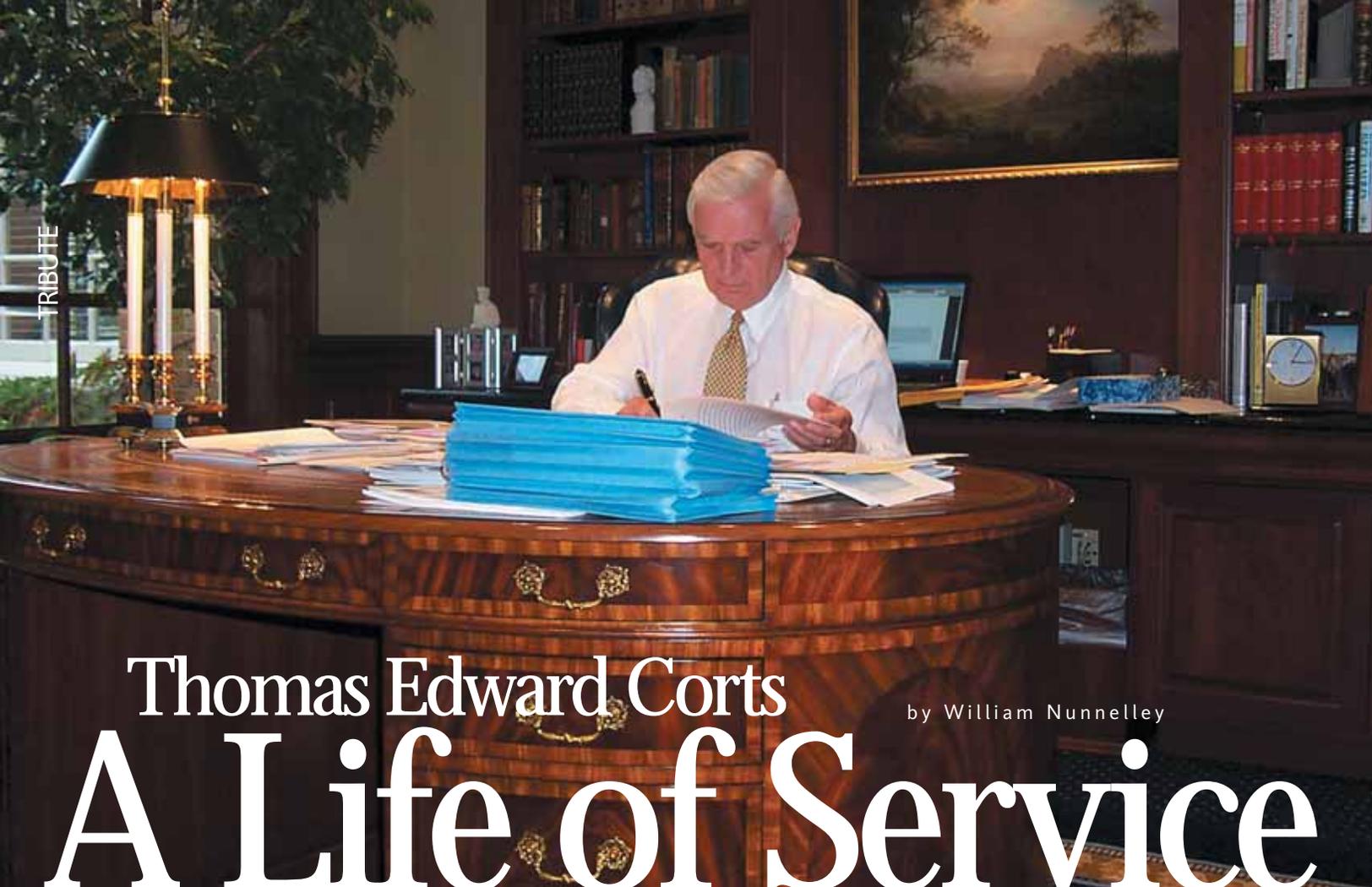
Meanwhile, the number of undergraduate applications received through February already exceeded last year's record total of 2,154 for the fall of 2008, according to Dean of Admission and Financial Aid Phil Kimrey.

The university's administration and admission staff are working to meet a fall enrollment goal of about 770 freshmen, based on the number of applications. The entering freshman class has increased steadily from about 660 five years ago to about 710 last fall.

Samford's affordability compared with other private universities and the university's transition from regional classification to national doctoral research university status are among factors creating a growing interest in the school, said Kimrey.

He added that Samford also is being aggressive with financial aid opportunities for qualified students. The university recently sent approximately 750 merit scholarship award letters totaling about \$3.9 million.

"By offering these scholarships now, it gives both the university and the families a longer window to develop a feasible financial plan for the student's Samford education," he said. ■



Thomas Edward Corts

by William Nunnelle

A Life of Service

Service was a way of life with Thomas E. Corts, and this was as true after his retirement from Samford as it was throughout his tenure as president. When Dr. Corts announced his retirement, he said he looked forward to a life of contemplation, or in his words, the “*vita contemplativa*.”

But he no sooner stepped down in 2006 after leading Samford through one of its brightest periods than he took on one of the toughest assignments of his career. He accepted Governor Bob Riley’s appointment as interim chancellor of the troubled Alabama College System of 26 two-year schools.

“I would consider accepting this responsibility a fulfillment of a sense of civic duty, and I would do it out of a desire to help,” he said.

He inherited a system that recently had fired its chancellor amid concerns over a corruption probe and nepotism issues, a system that was the focus of a joint federal and state investigation into allegations of wrongdoing, according to *The Birmingham News*.

Riley appointed Corts to provide stable leadership while the state board of education sought a permanent chancellor. “Education is a noble calling,” Corts said, “and this kind of thing [the practices under investigation] should not go on.”

Corts wasn’t able to solve all the widespread problems of the system by the time he resigned

seven months later, but the program was pointed in the right direction. Investigations had ferreted out some of the system’s chief offenders, and indictments followed.

Corts had just accepted another service post, executive director of the International Association of Baptist Colleges and Universities, when President George Bush called on him in the fall of 2007 to lead an international program that would help four million schoolchildren in six nations around the world.

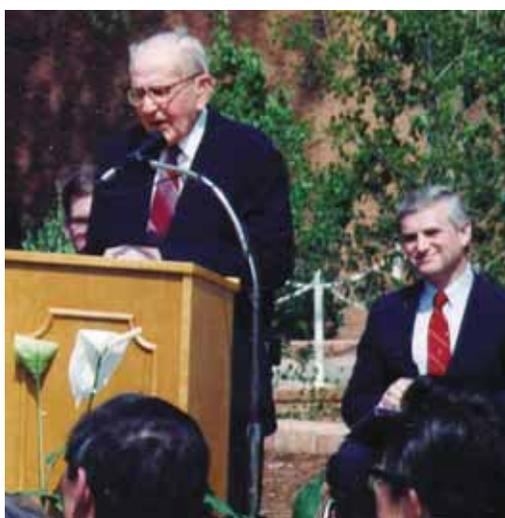
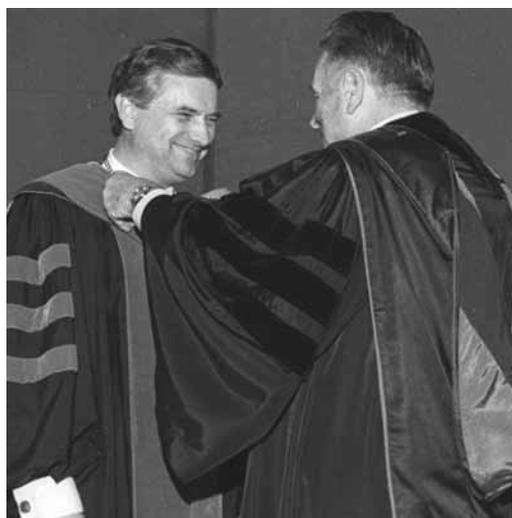
He was named coordinator of the President’s Initiative to Expand Education, and subsequently, as coordinator of basic education in the Office of the Director of Foreign Assistance, U.S. State Department. The program helped children in Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, Liberia, Mali and Yemen.

Corts stepped down from that post Jan. 19, just 16 days before his untimely death at age 67 of a heart attack Feb. 4 in Birmingham.

Corts spent his life in education, serving his alma mater, Georgetown, Ky., College, as a young administrator before being named president of Wingate College in 1974 and of Samford in 1983. He promised no “grand plan” that would vault Samford into some higher level of accomplishment at his inauguration in the fall of ’83.

Even so, the stamp of his progressive influence on the university is well-documented, from

Below, left: Board chairman Ben Brown inaugurates Thomas Corts as Samford president in 1983. Right: Samford benefactor Ralph Beeson speaks as Corts looks on.



the purchase of a London Study Centre to astounding endowment growth, increased regional and national recognition for the school, 30 new buildings—including some of the most distinctive architecture on campus—and numerous academic achievements.

Corts extended a personal touch to those receiving a Samford education, personally signing and awarding more than 17,000 diplomas to graduates over his 23 years as president.

He put his service ideal into practice away from the campus in such endeavors as leadership of the Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform, which he served as founding chairman.

“He did so much to involve Samford University in the corporate community in Alabama and to help it meet its civic responsibility,” recalled former Governor Albert Brewer, who joined Corts to start the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama at Samford in 1987.

“I think the Alabama constitutional reform movement began with him, starting with his speech to the Birmingham Kiwanis Club in 1999,” said Brewer. “People went thinking they were going to hear a speech about Samford, but they came away knowing a great deal more about the need for constitutional reform in the state. And he carried that message all over Alabama.”

Corts told the Kiwanians that Alabama had “such great capacity, so many positive attributes,”

that he tired of seeing it ranked so low in national studies by *Governing* magazine and the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University.

He blamed such results on Alabama’s constitution, a document “bloated with excess specificity” that resulted in concentrating power in the hands of the legislature in Montgomery. He called for a constitutional convention to rewrite the 1901 document, taking his message to Mobile, Huntsville, Anniston and Florence, and writing opinion pieces for daily newspapers around Alabama.

Although he found widespread support, he acknowledged that “a lot of people want to leave it as it is because they’re doing fine.” He added, “This [reform] is not for one person or group; it’s for Alabama.”

Such a stance was typical. As retired former Samford Provost William E. Hull said, “Corts was unafraid to challenge the status quo because his conscience was not captive to the latest poll.”

Dr. Hull spoke at a Feb. 8 memorial service for Corts, whom he described as a person who read Scripture carefully, prayed earnestly and kept a journal faithfully to refresh the wellsprings of his spiritual vitality.

“We live in a day when religion has become militantly aggressive, in your face, wear it on your sleeve so nobody can miss where you stand,” said

Below, left: Former President Gerald Ford, right, visits with law dean Parham Williams, Corts and donor Lucille Beeson at the Beeson Law Library dedication in 1996. Right: Corts hosts former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher for Samford's sesquicentennial in 1992.



Dr. Hull. "But we gather here to honor a man who did just the opposite. He practiced his religion in private because he had learned from the Master that the secret of religion is that religion is secret.

"This modesty never muted his witness, however, because he lived out his faith in everything he did."

Corts was the quintessential educator. During his Samford presidency, he served as chairman of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools [SACS] and later as president of SACS, the accrediting agency for universities and colleges in 11 Southern states. He also was president of the American Association of Presidents of Independent Colleges and Universities, and of the National Fellowship of Baptist Educators. He served on the Fulbright Scholarship Board courtesy of an earlier Bush appointment, and was active in numerous education organizations.

But Corts expended his greatest energies on Samford, and was proud of what the school and its people accomplished. He ticked off a list for a 2006 *Seasons* interview with Jack Brymer.

"To have had the school of education recognized as one of the top four teacher education programs in the country; to have the nursing school recognized as a center of excellence; for the law school to be getting the kind of attention it is beginning to get; for pharmacy to be recognized

for the great international dimension it has added and some of the creative things they have done; to have divinity personnel quoted in national publications; to have performing arts students winning competitions on a regular basis; to have arts and sciences lead out in learning strategies, such as problem-based learning . . . these are all most gratifying."

Brymer asked him what was the most challenging aspect of his role as president.

"Finding money! For Samford, . . . finding discretionary funds to do the things that great institutions ought to be doing."

He added, "Maintaining our Christian emphasis, equal to a strong academic thrust—those are constant challenges. We try to maintain in good standing our very important relationship with Alabama Baptists. I've always felt that the people of our convention cared about Samford and that Samford cared about the convention."

Corts said he looked forward to his life of contemplation after retirement from Samford. But as a man devoted to service, he found his "vita contemplativa" by accepting all manner of additional opportunities to serve.

As he said to *Seasons* in 2006, "I do not want to be on a shelf." ■

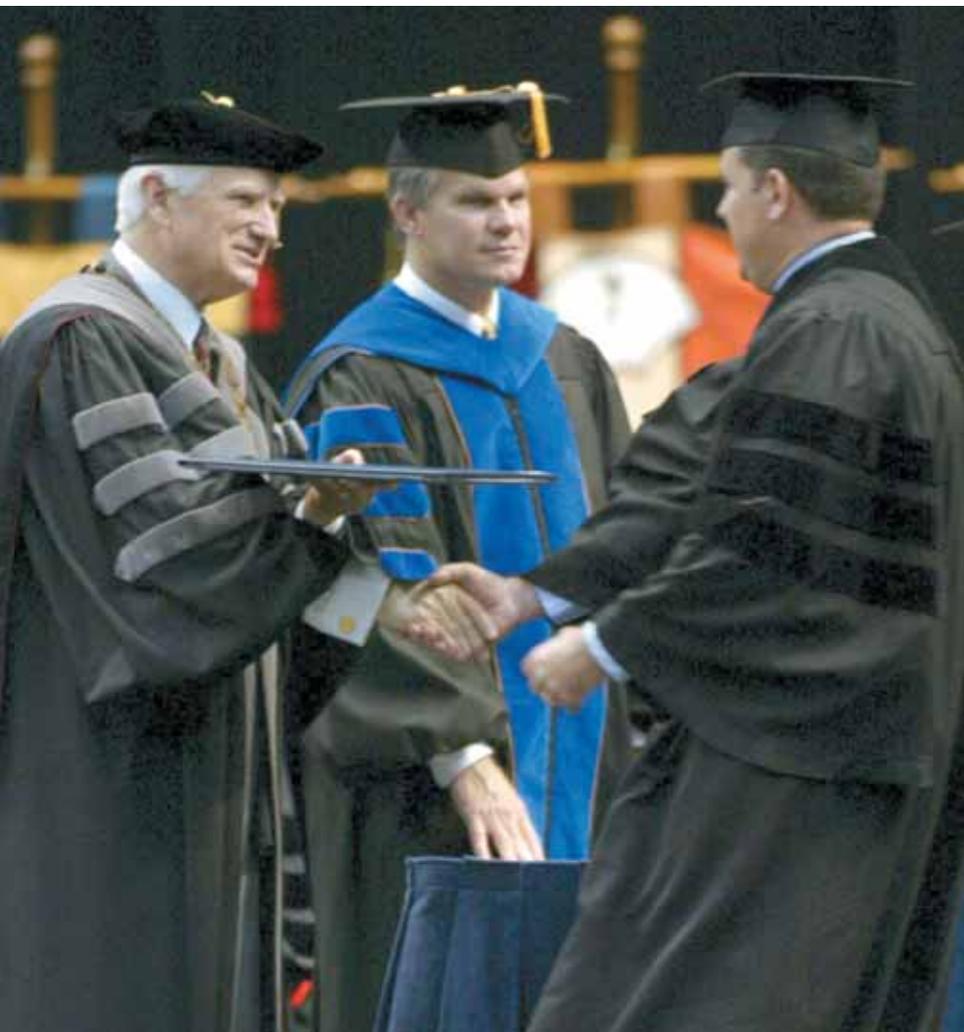
For more information and tributes, go to www.samford.edu/news.



Corts speaks to the incoming freshman class of 2004.



John Major, another former British prime minister, sees Samford with Corts in 1996.



Corts presents one of the more than 17,000 Samford diplomas he awarded. Provost Brad Creed looks on.

Samford Names Its Sciencenter William Self Propst Hall

Samford University dedicated its \$27 million science building as William Self Propst Hall March 10, honoring a 1961 Samford graduate who became one of the nation's most successful pharmacists.

"William Self Propst has given us appropriate cause for celebration today with one of the most significant gifts in the 167-year history of our institution," said Samford President Andrew Westmoreland.

"His gifts will endow the upkeep of this building in perpetuity. They will provide enrichment funds for the natural sciences and for pharmacy, and they will secure a measure of strength for the breadth of Samford University, now and in all the years ahead."

The 96,000-square-foot building, known as the Sciencenter since its completion in 2001, is home to Samford biology, chemistry and physics programs. It also houses a 2,000-square-foot medicinal plant conservatory, Christenberry Planetarium, and Vulcan Materials Center for Environmental Stewardship and Education.

Propst began his pharmacy career in his hometown of Huntsville, Ala., with one store after graduation, but initiated the concept of leased pharmacy operations in Kmart stores that eventually saw 1,258 pharmacies operating in the



discount chain. He served as president of the Kmart pharmacy operations for 17 years.

Propst commended Samford on “its great curriculum and faculty, and its Christian influence.” He said he had worked to maintain a connection with the school and friends he made there.

“I would come back to Samford to interview students to serve as interns in the Kmart operation, and some of our best interns were from Samford,” he said. “They had a better feel for what was needed because of their experience in visiting pharmacies.”

Clark Watson, chairman of the Samford board of trustees, noted that the ceremony celebrated completion of a process begun when the building opened seven years ago, providing a state-of-the-art science facility.

“The one thing missing at the time was a patron who would ensure the ongoing maintenance of the building,” said Watson. “That patron has been found . . . and we are here today to honor Samford alumnus William Self Propst with one of the highest honors a university can bestow—the naming of an academic building.”

Watson noted that Propst came to Samford as a premedical student but became so interested in pharmacy that he dedicated his life to it.

The Samford graduate went to work at a Walgreens store in Huntsville after earning his degree, and his managerial talents helped make it the number one store in the nation. “I could meet people and be helpful,” he recalled earlier. “I enjoyed the hustle and bustle of the business.”

He opened his first store in 1964 and added four others in Huntsville before initiating the Kmart project. Later, he also founded and served as president of Qualitest Products, Inc., a wholesale drug products and equipment company.

Propst was named Samford’s Alumnus of the Year in 1996. ■

William and Eloise Propst enjoy the science building naming ceremony.

Inset: President Andrew Westmoreland and Student Government Association President Drew Davis, right, help unveil new sign.

‘You Can’t Run Something Well That You Don’t Keep Your Hands On’

by Mary Wimberley

When William S. Propst, Sr., enrolled at Samford in the late 1950s, there were five buildings on campus. Fifty years later, he remembers what departments the buildings housed, where they were located and that, to his recollection, there was “not a tree on campus.”

Propst shared his memory of the new, still sparse campus at the March 10 naming ceremony for William Self Propst Hall, one of 56 buildings on today’s bustling campus.

The 1996 Alumnus of the Year honoree was in the second class of students to enroll at Samford after the school relocated to Homewood from East Lake. His brother, the late Michael Propst ’60, also a pharmacy graduate, was in the first group.

Propst entered Samford with the intent of eventually becoming a physician but felt that a pharmacy degree would help provide part-time employment during medical school. Along the way, however, the pharmacy profession won out, and he began a career that would change the way consumers nationwide purchase drugs.

After first working at a Walgreens store in Huntsville, Ala., and opening the first of five stores he would own in Huntsville, he developed the concept of leased pharmacy operations in Kmart stores nationwide. By the time he retired from Kmart in 1985, the company had 1,258 pharmacies throughout the nation.

In the early years, he worked nonstop to make sure the venture was successful.

“I was behind the counter seven days a week for nine years,” recalled Propst. “I might work in Birmingham, or Florence, at locations all around the Southeast, for two or three days at a time. I went wherever I was needed.

“You can’t run something well that you don’t keep your hands on,” explained Propst, who served as president of Kmart pharmacies for 17 years.

Under his leadership, Kmart pharmacies became among the first in the industry to use computers.

By 1972, Kmart pharmacies were linked by computer from the company’s headquarters in Detroit, Mich., to Bradenton, Fla.

After retiring from Kmart and returning to Huntsville from Detroit, he became founder and president of Qualitest Products, Inc., and founded Vintage Pharmaceuticals, a generic drug maker.

Today, he oversees Propst Properties real-estate developers.

The son of a Methodist minister, Propst spent his early childhood in Walker’s Chapel in Jefferson County, but moved to Huntsville with the family in 1946. As a young adult, he attended college for a while and worked in the steel business for several years before enrolling at Samford.

He has enjoyed staying connected to his alma mater, which he said prepared him with a good science background for his pharmacy career.

He recalls sharing an organic chemistry class one summer with Joseph O. Dean, Jr., ’62, later dean of Samford’s McWhorter School of Pharmacy.

“Joe and I were studying, cramming really, for the final exam when the lights went out,” he said, noting that though it was an inopportune disruption, “We managed to squeeze through.”

Later, before he moved to Detroit with Kmart, Propst studied law for a time at Samford’s Cumberland School of Law.

One thing that his law studies taught him, he said, is that everything is not black and white. “That’s a good lesson for anyone in business,” he said.

Propst and his wife, Eloise, have four children: William, Jr., Charles, Michael and Emily Propst Reiney, and nine grandchildren. ■



Science and Christianity Cadre Welcomes Challenge of Big Questions

by Sean Flynt



According to historian James F. Sulzby Jr., Howard College biology professor H. Calvin Day was a man of faith and science who lost his job in 1929 after raising scientific doubts about the literal truth of many Bible stories. Eighty years later, a group of Samford faculty, staff and community friends safely discusses issues unimaginable in Day's time, and with implications far beyond Bible stories.

Controversy has often arisen when science and religion mix, but participants in Samford's informal Science and Christianity Cadre see greater danger in the ways science and religion fail to mix. As Tom Woolley, professor of statistics and founder of the group, explained, "ours is an increasingly technological and scientific culture, one in which the authority of Christianity to address the big questions of life has been replaced, for many, by science."

Woolley said that although Christians have been marginalized in scientific discussions—and sometimes marginalized themselves—they have much to learn from science and much to contribute to it.

"As the pace of scientific advancement and technological change quickens," he said, "Christians need to understand the science and its implications for their faith and our common

culture if they hope to be respected and consulted when major ethical and moral issues arise."

Beyond Evolution

After completing his studies in the prestigious John Templeton Oxford Seminars on Science and Christianity at Oxford University in 2005, Woolley returned to Samford eager to connect with others who share his interest in the biggest of big questions. He soon found Samford professors Wilton Bunch, Steve Donaldson and George Keller, who he said have been faithful to the cadre from the beginning and share responsibility for its longevity.

The cadre now has as many as 12 participants at its monthly meetings, some from the campus community and some not. They're a mixed bunch, both professionally and theologically, but they all seek "better understanding of science and Christianity as coseekers of truth," Woolley said.

Monthly book readings drive cadre discussions. Although their selections address complex issues, most of them are approachable, popular books representing believers and nonbelievers alike. "We just want to be open and honest," Woolley said. "We're willing to listen to most anybody who has an idea."

The cadre casts a wide topical net but confounds stereotype by spending little time on the subject of evolution.

“We look at that as almost a dead issue,” Woolley said. “That’s old stuff, and religion has either dealt with it or it hasn’t.” He pointed out that even the Vatican has acknowledged that evolution is compatible with Christian belief. But the controversy still rages in some circles, and cadre participants fear that this is alienating Christians from science (and science from Christianity), and distracting them from pressing issues.

“There’s so much more on the horizon when it comes to science and technology that’s just going to broadside the faith community,” Woolley said. “The more science touches people’s lives, the more conflict there’s going to be.”

Big Questions

The questions raised in even a one-hour cadre discussion help explain the sense of urgency participants feel.

What will it mean to be human as our bodies merge with technology and artificial intelligence challenges traditional concepts of consciousness? Cochlear implants, advanced prosthetics and other new additions to the body are widely accepted and viewed as positive, but ethical problems already have arisen at the leading edge of this science. Steve Donaldson, associate professor of computer science, said, “I can do artificial intelligence research on my home computer that wasn’t dreamed of 20 years ago.” He added, with a mix of awe and concern, “nobody can stop me.” In any case, he said, laws aren’t necessarily the answer and might even be counterproductive.

What is the nature of God as creator if (when) humans manage to create life? George Keller, associate professor of biology and assistant dean of Howard College of Arts and Sciences, said there are credible scientific predictions that humans will eventually create life, perhaps within just a few decades. England’s *Daily Telegraph* reported in March that a recent breakthrough in synthetic biology might allow a “second genesis” within a decade. “That’s going to be a shock to some people,” Keller said. “If you’re just trying to put out the fire on evolution, it’s going to sneak up on you.”

What are the implications for theology and every other aspect of human life if neuroscience demonstrates

that humans have no free will?

Donaldson said an article in one of the cadre’s readings (*The Volitional Brain*) sheds light on this “dialog that’s been going on for thousands of years.” He said that while reading, he thought, “every Calvinist needs to read this article. When they see that neuroscience suggests that free will is an illusion, they can say, ‘Look! Science proves my position!’”

How much genetic manipulation is too much? If it’s acceptable to intervene genetically to prevent a debilitating birth defect, is it acceptable to select a child’s IQ or height or eye color while we’re at it? How will we reconcile what is scientifically possible with ethical and moral concerns about eugenics, elitism and profit motive?

Should those nations most capable of human cloning ban that research or take the lead in order to control it? According to Keller, “the thinking, among some people, is that if it’s going to be done anyway, let’s do it where at least it has a chance of being done ethically and there can be some government control because of the funding.”

Woolley is among those who foresee trouble if we forego serious discussion on the assumption that regulation and popular disdain will prevent or control such research. “If somebody will pay \$155,000 to have their puppy cloned,” he said, “it’s not far down the road—I don’t care what the laws are—before somebody’s going to clone their lost child.”

When should we discuss the ethical implications of science and technology? In the wake of news about human octuplets, Wilton Bunch, a physician and professor of ethics, noted that the generally accepted science of in vitro fertilization outpaced discussion of its ethical implications.

“It was not until it was applied widely that people started to say, ‘Oops . . . when should we be doing this?’” he said. “The questions about it were never asked until, effectively, the genie was out of the bottle.” Woolley added that the timing of an ethics discussion is itself an ethical problem because it would be unethical to withdraw a technology that is already improving human lives.

Next Steps

“Religious people have to have a seat at the table when these things are discussed, wherever they’re discussed,” Woolley said. “The cadre is looking for ways to expand the discussion on science

and Christianity through community and campus lectures, adult education opportunities in local churches, the development of undergraduate courses in science and religion, and through collaborative research.”

The group expects to make significant progress toward those goals this year, and is seeking grants and other sources of funding for the work. Participants believe their efforts will stand out, nationally, because Samford defies popular stereotypes of Christian higher education and the South. Secular and religious partisans both may be surprised to find balanced and open discussion of controversial issues at a Baptist university on the buckle of the Bible Belt. But what better place to learn how faith can enlarge science? What better place to learn how science can enlarge faith? ■

The Science and Christianity Cadre’s Recommended Readings

The Savior of Science (Stanly Jaki)

The Volitional Brain: Towards a Neuroscience of Free Will (Anthony Freeman, Benjamin Libet and Keith Sutherland)

The Life of the Cosmos (Lee Smolin)

God’s Debris: A Thought Experiment (Scott Adams)

Chance or Purpose? Creation, Evolution and a Rational Faith (Christoph Cardinal Schonborn)

Reinventing the Sacred: A New View of Science, Reason, and Religion (Stuart Kauffman)

At Home in the Universe: The Search for the Laws of Self-Organization and Complexity (Stuart Kauffman)

Radical Evolution: The Promise and Peril of Enhancing Our Minds, Our Bodies—and What It Means to Be Human (Joel Garreau)

Modern Physics and Ancient Faith (Stephen M. Barr)

The Deep Structure of Biology: Is Convergence Sufficiently Ubiquitous to Give a Directional Signal (Simon Conway Morris)

Divine Action: Examining God’s Role in an Open and Emergent Universe (Keith Ward)

Science and Religion: Are They Compatible? (Paul Kurtz, Barry Karr and Ranjit Sandhu)

Coordinator Jeanna Westmoreland leads a workshop session for Chinese teachers.

Chinese Visitors Learn Techniques of Teaching English

by Mary Wimberley

Sometime soon, students in Zhang Hanjun's English language classroom in Beijing, China, may be looking at each other's faces instead of the backs of their necks.

The use of round tables versus endless lines of student desks was one of many things the Chinese educator liked about what he observed in American schools in January.

"The many rows of desks make good teacher-student contact hard," said Zhang.

He and two dozen other English teachers had come to Birmingham from their native China with a common goal: to become better equipped to teach the English language and American culture to their middle school and high school students.

Thanks to the efforts of Samford's Orlean Bullard Beeson School of Education and Professional Studies, they took home not only suitcases of lesson plans and materials, but tons of inspiration and hundreds of digital photos chronicling their on- and off-campus experiences and adventures.

For two weeks, the teachers were exposed to the best practices in American schools through lectures and workshops on the Samford campus, and visits to Birmingham area schools. Topics ranged from the latest in classroom technology to identifying and relating to different learning styles.

"I wanted to learn real things about

American schools, and I did," said Zhang, citing the variety of hands-on learning activities he observed during the school visits. "American students are very lucky compared to many Chinese students."

Chinese students, he said, are under pressure to perform well in their academic studies, sometimes at the cost of developing other life skills that are useful and important.

The educational workshop was a joint effort of Samford and the Consortium for Global Education [CGE], an organization of Baptist-related institutions, with support from the Chinese government's Chaoyang Education Committee.

The organizers' goal was to provide experiential learning opportunities that would improve the teachers' classroom skills. Hand-picked to make the trip, the teachers had attended a series of CGE-led sessions in conversational English and American culture last fall.

During their stay in Birmingham, the teachers learned many things, noted the workshop coordinator, Dr. Jeanna Westmoreland, a veteran leader of many international academic efforts and the wife of Samford President Andrew Westmoreland.

They learned why and when they should use some strategies that they already knew, and she said, "They learned many new strategies targeted toward content with which they struggle, such as how to teach vocabulary



Yang Li, left, and Yang Guiyun were among teachers hand-picked for the Samford workshop after attending preliminary classes last fall in China.

effectively," said Dr. Jeanna Westmoreland.

Her observation was confirmed by Dou Sa during a lunchtime conversation with Education Dean Jeanne Box and members of the dean's executive council.

"We have learned good writing and reading strategies. I know that we can



lations from President Westmoreland and a keepsake Samford belltower wallet. That evening, they enjoyed a farewell dinner at the Westmorelands' home.

"Perhaps the greatest lesson they learned was from the joy and kindness that was shown them by people at Samford," said Jeanna Westmoreland. "They were deeply moved by the many acts of kindness and the friendliness of the Samford faculty, staff and students.

"The joy of Christ, living in us, was abundantly clear to the teachers," she said. "They commented on and asked questions about that joy each and every day."

As a final exercise, the teachers evaluated various aspects of the workshop and offered comments.

Wrote one: "What impressed me most is that all the faculty [members] are very experienced and gave us a lot of help. I think all of us experienced and learned more than our expectation."

And another: "When I go back to China, I believe my students will find I have made progress in English teaching. Thank all the faculty and staff. I'll remember it forever." ■

use all of them in classrooms in China," said Dou, who found the visits to special education classrooms especially moving, useful and practical.

Like most of her colleagues, teacher Bu Lan was in the United States for the first time and capitalized on each moment, whether it was shopping at a local mall or attending a Christian worship service.

"I wanted to experience the life so that I can teach my students the real English and about its environment," said Bu, whose students include some who have lived in English-speaking countries.

"We need the confidence to discuss American culture, not just the language, in the classroom," said Bu, who also appreciated the tips and special techniques she learned about managing and teaching large classes.

The itinerary included visits to McWane Science Museum, Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, Ala., and other area attractions. Before arriving in Birmingham, the group spent several days in Washington, D.C.

Knowing that the Chinese sponsors expected an "academically rigorous program" for the participants, Samford faculty planned a curriculum that required each teacher to complete specific assignments and make a

presentation from research done using education school resources and the University Libraries.

"The Samford faculty has been fabulous in being responsive and answering questions, and planning," said Dr. Carol Dean, who organized the intensive schedule of lectures and off-campus experiences. "We have learned a lot from our guests."

At a closing ceremony on their final day on campus, each participant received a certificate of completion, congratu-

Zuo Weijun, left, and Kang Chunyan participate in discussion as Zhong Huli records the moment photographically.



Celebrating Astronomy

Planetarium Shares Spectacular NASA Images of Milky Way

by Rob Collingsworth

Galileo first used his telescope to gain an advantage for the mercantile business, but when he turned his instrument heavenward in 1609, he opened a whole new vista.

“We don’t quite know what made him do this, but he made some initial observations on both the moon and Jupiter that forever changed what people thought about the heavens,” said Samford professor Christopher Metress, who has researched the astronomer.

This year, the United Nations International Year of Astronomy celebrates the 400-year anniversary of modern astronomy. Samford’s Christenberry Planetarium participated in the celebration Feb. 17 as one of 100 sites selected by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration [NASA] to display spectacular images from space.

As part of this network, the planetarium showed the same image of the Milky Way captured from three different telescopes: the Hubble Space Telescope, the Spitzer Space Telescope and the Chandra X-ray Observatory.

The event, hosted by the Birmingham Astronomical Society [BAS], commemorated Galileo’s discovery and allowed people to use telescopes to look into the sky for themselves.

Planetarium Director George Atchley, along with others from the BAS, explained the significance of each image to the packed crowd of more than 100.

“Each of these images shows a different aspect of this particular cluster,” said Atchley. “While one captures objects visible only in infrared, the Chandra shows the black holes and things not seen through a typical telescope.

“We were very excited about the turnout,” Atchley added. “You can never predict how many people will come out for an event like this, but to have people in every seat and all the way into the lobby listening to the explanation of these images is really exciting.”





The nationwide event, cohosted by the Night Sky Network, is one of many scheduled throughout 2009 as part of the International Year of Astronomy.

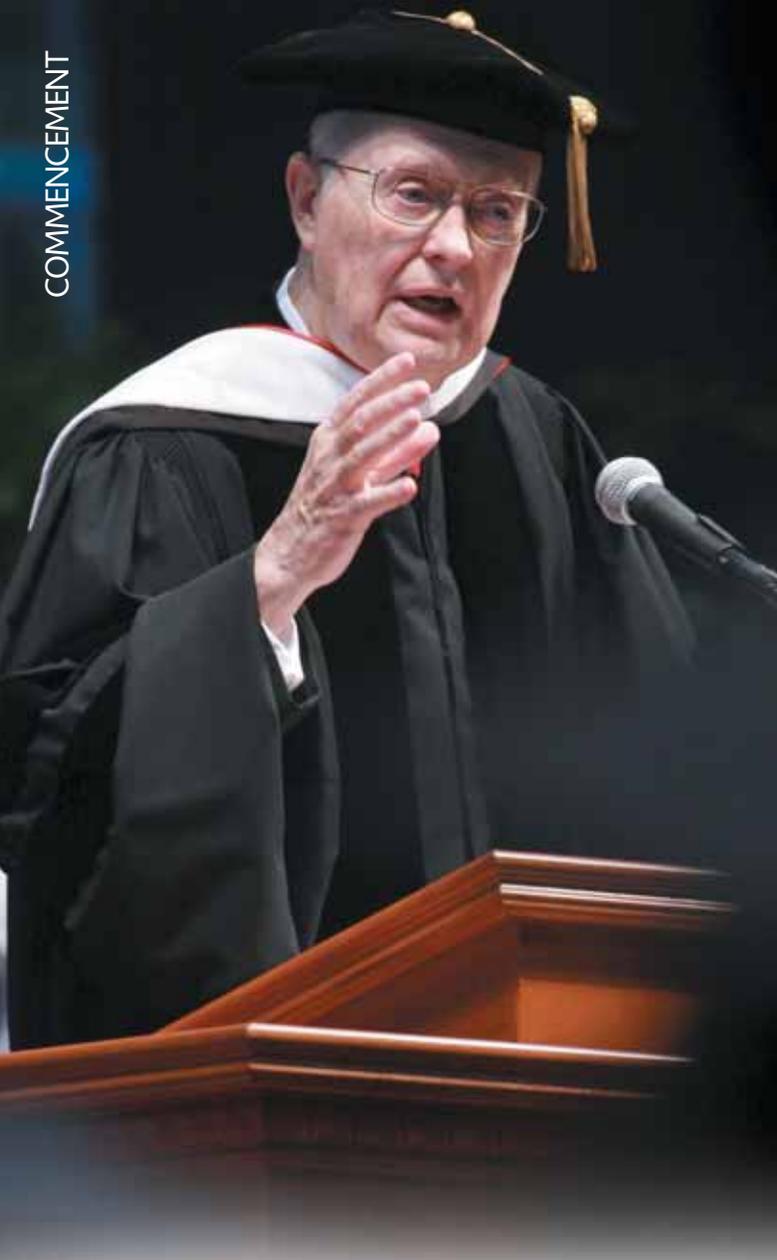
“Galileo first received a copy of the telescope in 1609 and improved upon it,” said Dr. Metress, an English professor who directs Samford’s University Fellows program. “The device was invented for its mercantile possibilities, so that business owners could look from towers and get about a two-hour lead on ships arriving into port. Galileo’s original intention seemed to be improving business, both for others and himself.”

Christenberry Planetarium hosts various groups throughout the year. In addition to the annual Christmas show, the planetarium hosts church groups, Boy Scout troops, public school groups and corporate meetings.

The planetarium has three different shows that it uses for such groups, in addition to being used for film screenings by organizations such as the Samford Film Club.

For information on the planetarium, contact Atchley at geatchle@samford.edu or 205-726-4139. ■

Planetarium Director George Atchley shows off projection equipment. **Insets:** NASA images of the Pinwheel Galaxy or M101, at left, and Monocerotis V838, above, shown at Samford.



Samford Confers Honorary Doctorate on Former Provost William E. Hull

Samford University conferred an honorary doctor of letters degree on retired former provost William E. Hull during fall commencement Dec. 13. Dr. Hull is a well-known writer and theologian who served as provost during 1987–96 and later as university professor.

A Birmingham native and 1951 Samford graduate, he continues to hold the position of research professor at Samford, and serves as theologian-in-residence at Mountain Brook Baptist Church.

Hull has written 12 books on theological subjects, the most recent being *Harbingers of Hope*, published in 2007. He has contributed to 24 other books. He recently completed another manuscript that is an update of his 1981 book, *Beyond the Barriers*.

Clark Watson, chairman of the Samford board of trustees, presented the honorary degree, saying, “As much as any other person over the last two decades, Dr. Hull has led the charge to ensure that Samford continuously strived for the highest possible standards at all levels.”

Watson read a doctoral citation that described Hull as “a man of intellect, a gentle spirit, a world-renowned theologian, a loving pastor, a lifelong learner and teacher, a Renaissance man, and a Christian committed to the integration of faith and scholarship.”

Hull addressed the class of 265 seniors from 19 states and three foreign nations, reminding the graduates that their “educational pilgrimage should last a lifetime” and offering suggestions on how to make that happen.

His remarks were greeted with a standing ovation from a crowd of more than 2,000 in Samford’s Pete Hanna Center. They are printed here in their entirety.

An Invitation to Lifelong Learning by William E. Hull

Samford University Commencement Address
December 13, 2008

To the graduating class of December 2008

Fellow students:

We are both here today for the same reason—to get a degree! But there is an obvious difference between us, for you will receive your diploma near the beginning of your adult life while I will receive mine near the end of my adult life. This is not because I failed to complete a degree program many years ago, having received the bachelor of arts degree from the Howard College of Samford University in 1951. Rather, the difference is that yours is an earned

degree while mine is an honorary degree. But what does it honor?

Here we come to the crux of the matter. I have no great fortune that this award might encourage me to share with Samford. Nor am I a celebrity who might attract attention to Samford by appearing on this platform. Rather, the awarding of this degree is Samford’s way of saying that the educational pilgrimage should last for a lifetime, that your search for truth should not cease today but should continue all the days of your life. In a phrase, the awarding of honorary degrees is one way that Samford

symbolizes the importance of lifelong learning. Let me offer you five suggestions as to how this may be done.

1 Take seriously the operative word for this occasion, which is not “climax” or “conclusion” but “commencement.” Most of your formal education has involved learning how to learn. You now have some sense of what is available to be learned in your chosen concentration. Hopefully, your professors have modeled how to appropriate the findings of the past and to launch new inquiries of your own.

But all of this is about to change in

dramatic ways. First, a knowledge explosion is transforming what each generation needs to learn. In 1951, we had no African American, Hispanic or Asian perspectives on life, no computers or Internet, no outer space or subatomic exploration. But what an educated person must know is likely to change more in the next half century than it has in the last half century. Science is on a roll that promises amazing discoveries. The sleeping dragon of China has awakened to become a key player in world affairs. Religion is being reinvented before our very eyes, and you will have to assimilate these stupendous changes without benefit of professors or courses or textbooks. You are going to have to learn to educate yourself without the incentives of grades, credits and degrees.

All I am saying here is that if, with a sigh of relief, you think your education is finished, then you are finished! What you have learned thus far will not last you five years in the real world. So let me urge you to set a new goal today, to define your future as an ongoing educational venture that will qualify you to graduate in another half-century from Lifelong Learning University—whether you get an honorary degree for doing so or not!

2 As you embark upon this journey, do not keep your learning in the separate silos where you received it. Disciplinary specialization is at the heart of formal education according to which faculty major on English, history, biology or some career competency. This departmentalization provides a convenient way for schools to organize knowledge, but life will hopelessly scramble such categories the minute you walk out these doors. For example, in the presidential campaign that dominated the headlines this year, politics, economics, regionalism and religion were so inseparable that those who viewed the race only from one perspective badly misunderstood it. You have probably moved beyond segregation to integration in race relations, but now you must learn to do the same in the cognitive domain, thinking holistically rather than segmentally.

One way to do this is to major on experience rather than on ideology in organizing your lifelong learning. Avoid the lazy way of assuming that you have a coherent worldview just because you call yourself a liberal or a conservative, since nobody knows what these categories really mean. (Have you noticed, for example, how the lynchpins of conservatism, small government and

free-market economy, died a brutal death this fall at the hands of conservatives?) Instead, throw yourself headlong in the path of life. Read biographies and memoirs to see how others have coped with its infinite complexity. Study yourself, particularly those pivotal moments that redirect your pilgrimage. Keep a journal, live an examined life, learn to articulate the meaning both of your breakthroughs and of your heartbreaks.

3 Test your learning in honest dialogue with views that differ. Get over the idea that you can grow without making a lot of mistakes. Professors can seem to have all of the answers by steering classroom presentations into areas of their greatest competence, but you will not enjoy such controlled situations in the real world. Instead, celebrate your ignorance as a learning threshold inviting you to explore where you have never gone before. The grading system under which anyone can aspire to get an “A” gives the impression that, with a little extra effort, we can know all that we need to about a given subject, but that assumption is false, as is demonstrated by national leaders who, with brilliant advisers at their disposal, nevertheless make colossal mistakes. For example, no one saw radical Islamic Jihad coming until it exploded on our shores. No one on Wall Street saw the present economic collapse coming, even though we had more data than ever at our disposal. So wear your learning lightly and be prepared to update it as new understandings emerge.

One way to guard yourself from becoming defensive about your limitations is to read newspapers, periodicals, books and blogs that challenge everything you believe. Pick thinkers and writers whose views represent a serious alternative to yours and dare them to overturn your position. It is perfectly fine to seek out the best minds that agree with your views and use them to fortify your understanding, but this should be balanced by a desire to understand other options regardless of whether they are persuasive enough to make you change your mind.

4 Never underestimate the potential of your peer group. In school, fellow students have been your competitors for the top grades and awards. To collaborate with them on assignments or examinations could be called cheating and incur harsh penalties, but lifelong learning requires the reinforcement and encouragement of

others who share your goal. The group provides motivation that you will no longer receive from being enrolled in school. Obviously, it offers more resources than you could assemble on your own, and membership teaches you how to learn both for each other and from each other.

While the group needs to be congenial and collegial, it should also build in deliberate diversity. If Republican views tend to dominate the conversation, recruit a thoughtful Democrat. If Baptist views go unexamined, look for an articulate Roman Catholic. Learn to cross generational lines by having at least one guru to help mentor the group. The point is not to follow a politically correct quota system, but to avoid listening to the echo of your own voice or becoming the echo of another’s voice.

5 Once you have learned to think for yourself and to relate to others, don’t stop until you have also learned to commit. It may seem that I have stressed exposing yourself to a variety of viewpoints, which might encourage a posture of perpetual neutrality. However, it is precisely the awareness of genuine alternatives that strengthens the recognition of your need to choose between them. It does not take courage or insight merely to go along with what the crowd is saying, but it does take soul searching and firm resolve to choose an option counter to the views of others whom you truly respect. In a world where so many are seduced by media slogans, by the hype of advertisers, by the political doublespeak of the spin twisters, you will know that you have really begun to learn when your positions are independently taken after considering all of the evidence presented in its most persuasive form.

True commitment begins with the creative exercise of the imagination, when you are seized with wonder and awe at the mystery of existence. Deciding what you value will help you ponder: What makes my life truly significant? What do I want to shape my character? What do I want to pass on to my kids? True religion should help you make these higher-order decisions, but be sure to choose a religion that has not become captive to its culture. Once you know who you are, why you are here, where you are going and what you want to leave behind, you will be ready to apply for that most important degree in lifelong learning. May you qualify to receive it with all the honors that come from being a truly educated person! ■



Learning the Art of

by Melissa Gibson

Glassblowing

It starts with a blob and a 900-degree kiln. It ends with a delicate glass ornament. The process in between—glassblowing—requires determination and patience.

Samford students learned about the process firsthand this spring, working alongside artist Sam Cornman to create their own glass art. Cornman, whose work is known internationally, has been working with glass for nine years.

“Glass is a unique medium,” he said. “It gives a student another opportunity of visual expression and broadens the visual vocabulary that one can create with.”

Senior art major Shelby Patton found the process “a lot hotter than you would expect.” Students wore safety glasses and hand coverings to shield the heat.

Katherine Hammers, another senior art major, found the metal blowpipe hard to twirl. “The glass was so hot that when I stopped twirling the pipe, my ornament collapsed,” she said.

With some practice, the students were able to form ornaments, heat and reheat them in the kilns, and blow bubbles into the interior of the glass.

“It is important for a visual artist to create each day,” Cornman said, “as it is [for them] to hone skills and explore the mind.”

After graduating from the Rochester Institute of Technology, Cornman moved to Birmingham to work for Bear Creek Glass as the hot shop studio coordinator and head gaffer. He helped the University of Montevallo set up its hot glass studio and last year created a commissioned

sculpture for the Balch and Bingham law firm in downtown Birmingham. His glassblown artworks are represented in collections in Germany, Japan and New York as well as Birmingham.

Cornman’s work was displayed in the Samford Art Gallery during February and March. He worked with students to introduce them to glassblowing at the University of Montevallo hot glass studio as part of his exhibit. ■

Melissa Gibson is a senior journalism major who served as an intern in Samford’s Office of University Relations during the spring of 2009.



“Sea Life Composition,” left, was part of Sam Cornman’s exhibit at Samford. Right: Students Holly Long (red shirt) and Carolyn Conklin (yellow) get glassblowing tips.

Fellows Parents Provide More than Tuition

by Jack Brymer

Rick and Teresa Dunn of Knoxville, Tenn., are members of the University Fellows Parents Council at Samford. Their daughter, Jessica, a sophomore, is a member of the program that began last fall and targets academically gifted high school students.

At the first Parents Council meeting last October, Rick Dunn asked how parents might help with the program.

“We told them that our top priority was to find funding to support needy University Fellows with miscellaneous and unexpected expenses,” Program Director Chris Metress said. The Duns took the lead in a campaign that has raised more than \$3,000 for the fund thus far.

Dr. Dunn is helping in other ways as well. The pastor of Fellowship Evangelical Free Church in Knoxville is an 18-year veteran in the field of youth and family ministries. He recently volunteered to conduct a leadership seminar for the Fellows program.

Dunn has served as a campus ministry leader, a youth and family life pastor, a retreat/conference speaker, and as a college and seminary professor in both national and international contexts. Before taking the Knoxville post, he was chair of the department of educational ministries at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Ill. His wife is a licensed clinical therapist.

About halfway through the fall semester, several Fellows expressed a desire to remain on campus during Jan Term, according to Dr. Metress.

“They didn’t want to necessarily take courses; rather, they just wanted to be here to continue building the community they had started in the fall,” he said. Metress contacted Dunn about conducting a seminar. “He graciously agreed to do so, and it was a great week.”

Students who attended the seminar agreed.

“I attended the seminar with Dr. Dunn because I wanted to learn about leadership within a spiritual context,” said Anne Marie Pope of Chesapeake, Va. “It is important that we, as Christians, learn to be strong, Christ-focused leaders in a world that is severely lacking in such leadership.

“I walked away from the seminar encouraged, and with a renewed sense of

purpose. Dr. Dunn’s lectures helped me understand that God can use my strengths in spite of my weaknesses to fill a need in the different communities around me. I came away with a practical sense of how to fulfill his purpose in my life.”

Caroline Miller of Nairobi, Kenya, said she thoroughly enjoyed the seminar and vicariously gained an inside look at leadership through Dunn’s experiences.

“I was reminded that leaders are ordinary people, that there are numerous types of leaders and styles of leadership, and that balance is key in many areas of leadership,” she said. “Not only a balance between results and relationships, but also balance insofar as leaders need people around them to balance out their abilities, qualities and viewpoints.

“Also, Dr. Dunn emphasized the importance of integrity in leadership.”

Dunn shared that his motivation was singular in providing this seminar. “I was aware from conversations with Metress and Ashley Floyd [associate director] that providing this type of seminar would be beneficial to the students and to the future of the Fellows Program,” Dunn said.

“I wanted to give this seminar as a gift to Samford to express my appreciation for the school and for the opportunities that have been created for my daughter, Jess,” he said. “As I told them, being a pastor does not afford me the

luxury of substantial financial resources with which I can be a significant donor to the school. However, I can offer my time and experience and gifts.”

Metress said the seminar was a blessing to the Fellows Program. “[Dunn] challenged us to think about our deepest convictions, because his own experience has taught him that good leaders must understand the principles that guide them before they can begin to guide others. Many of our students now see leadership as a journey of the spirit that demands strength and vision, but also compassion and risk. As director of the program, I’ve been building upon those insights in my courses and in my daily decisions.”

In addition to his pastoral leadership, Dunn is the author of *Shaping the Spiritual Life of Students: A Guide for Youth Workers, Pastors, Teachers & Campus Ministers*. He is coeditor of *Reaching a Generation for Christ: A Comprehensive Guide to Youth Ministry* (Moody Press). For more information, go to www.samford.edu/fellows. ■

Rick Dunn conducts a leadership seminar for University Fellows.

