

Happenings

Kristen Bowden Sharp to Share Her Story through Song at Fall Luncheon

by Summer Robinette

Join us for an exciting event with musical performer Kristen Bowden Sharp. Kristen sang her way into the hearts of adults and children alike in her lead role in *Mary Poppins* at Red Mountain Theatre this past summer. Some of Kristen's other roles include her national tour as Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, Liesl in *The Sound of Music* and Mary Phagan in *Parade*. She has also appeared in such Birmingham favorites as *The Sound of Music* (Maria), *Singing in the Rain* (Kathy) and *Les Miserables* (Fantine).

Kristen has been praised by critics for her performances. In *The Last Five Years*, she was described as "coming through with flying colors" and "bringing to the role every bit of emotion it requires." A self-described hopeless romantic, Kristen thoroughly enjoyed her performance with artist David Friedman in the Red Mountain Theatre production of "Listen to My Heart: The Music of David Friedman." His music spoke to her heart. She described the role as "one of the most challenging things [she'd] done in theater" but believed that God had a plan for sending it her way.

God plays an important role in Kristen's life, both personally and professionally. She credits Him for the many blessings in her life—the opportunity to perform, her husband and her twins. She attends church at Trinity United Methodist where she sings in the choir. Her previous church was First Baptist Church Trussville, which still holds a place in her heart and where she helped with the creation and leadership of the new

contemporary worship service.

Kristen was born and raised in Trussville, Alabama, developing her God-given talents at an early age as she danced and sang Sandi Patty songs in the privacy of her bedroom. Kristen credits her start in theater to her ballet teacher who announced a summer workshop and asked if anyone was interested. That initial interest led her to a large and public stage at the age of 16 when she began traveling the U.S. with Broadway shows. By the age of 17, she was living in New York City, leaving behind the quiet life of suburban Alabama for the bright lights of New York.

Kristen's life and priorities were changed after witnessing the tragic events on September 11, and she returned home to pursue a degree in marketing. She now leads a busy life as the mom of 8-year-old twins—balancing performing, church, date nights with her husband and spending time with her children. Kristen still lives the exciting life of a performer. However, she is continuously learning to listen and let the Lord hold her heart, rather than pursuing the bright lights that are constantly calling her name. Kristen will regale everyone at the Fall Luncheon as she tells her story through song, ranging from show tunes and spirituals to her own compositions. She will be accompanied by the talented Kathryn Fouse, assistant dean of the Samford Department of Music.



The Fall Luncheon will be held at Vestavia Country Club on Thursday, October 1. Members may make reservations online at samford.edu/legacyleague or by returning the reply card included with the invitation. The cost of the luncheon is \$25. ❖

Save the Dates

Sept. 20: Hymn Sing, 2-4 p.m.

Oct. 1: **Fall Luncheon** featuring Kristen Bowden Sharp, 11:30 a.m.

Oct. 31: **Tailgate** prior to Furman game

Nov. 6-8: Homecoming weekend

Nov. 10-13: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 7:30 p.m.

Nov. 12: **Legacy League Meeting** with Kaleen Riley, 10 a.m. refreshments, 10:30 a.m. program

Nov. 17: Samford Orchestra and Choirs present a Centennial Celebration Concert, 7:30 p.m.

Dec. 3: Hanging of the Green, 6 p.m.

Dec. 10: **Christmas Home Tour**, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. and 4-8 p.m.

Jan. 28: **Scholarship Luncheon** featuring Kelly Minter, 11:30 a.m.

Legacy League events in bold.

Program Speakers Will Inspire

by Lynn Larrish

Our theme for the coming year is “For such a time as this” from Esther 4:14. The speakers for our membership meetings will inspire us as they share how God has used the talents He has given them in the places He has led them.

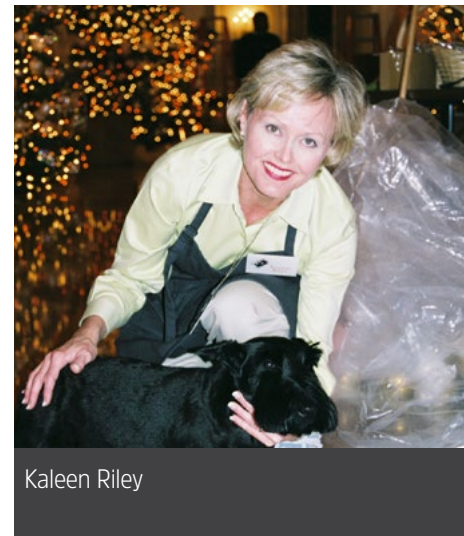
On November 12, the Legacy League will welcome Kaleen Riley, former White House Christmas decorator. Born and raised in Birmingham, Kaleen worked in her family’s florist business for 16 years. In 2003, she was one of 52 applicants selected by First Lady Laura Bush to serve as a volunteer to decorate the White House for Christmas. She continued to hold this honor until 2008. Kaleen currently freelances in addition to working part time with Ginni G Florist in Trussville. She and her husband, Dr. Allen Riley, a veterinarian, have three children and attend Northpark Baptist Church. Kaleen expressed that she feels truly blessed to have had this opportunity and is excited to share her experience and journey with us.

Dr. Lowell Vann, former Samford art department chair for more than 36 years, will delight members with his chalk talk drawing at our meeting on March 10. Dr. Vann received his undergraduate degree from Samford, then Howard College, and his doctorate from Florida State University. While at Samford, he taught classes in basic drawing, design, painting, crafts and pottery. In 2009, Dr. Vann was the honored recipient of the John H. Buchanan Award for

Excellence in Teaching. Dr. Vann retired from Samford after teaching 46 years. He has served as pastor of Rocky Ridge Baptist Church in Hoover, Alabama, since 1992. “A beloved Samford tradition, Dr. Vann’s chalk talks are always among students’ favorite convocations,” says Sharon Smith.

Sara Williams Berry will be our guest as we gather on April 14. She is an author, blogger, teacher, missionary and mother. Sara is the author of two Bible studies titled *Beyond Bethel* and *Stones from the River Jordan*, as well as a novel named *A Cord of Three Strands*. She has also written a devotional book, three children’s books and seven curriculum programs for children. She has a passion for discipleship, and her desire is to teach God’s word through her Bible studies and books. During her 27-year career, she has taught elementary school, directed a tutorial program for inner city children and served as a program director for an inner city humanitarian service. She has been a missionary teacher in Costa Rica and Ecuador. She and her husband, Dr. Mont Berry, have seven children; one is a Samford student and two are adopted from China. She is currently working on a new novel with a potential release date by April.

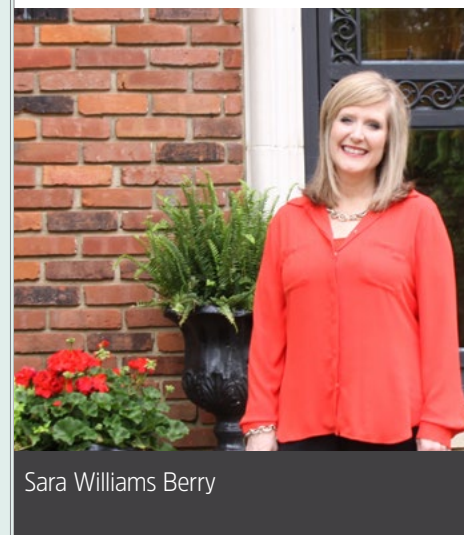
Join us at our membership meetings this year to hear these special guests share their hearts and stories of how the Lord has worked in their lives, as He did in Esther’s. ❧



Kaleen Riley



Dr. Lowell Vann



Sara Williams Berry

DID YOU KNOW . . . compiled by Terri Robinette

- The new Brock School of Business building opened its doors this fall. Employees and students are excited to utilize the new classrooms, community resource room, investment room and patio with its view of the Samford campus. Brock received national recognition this year from *U.S. News and World Report* as a top tier “best part-time M.B.A. program.”
- Legacy League member Karen Carlisle ’88 and her husband, Todd Carlisle ’88, have been selected as 2015 Alumni of the Year. Fellow member Carolyn Robinson and her husband received the honor in 2009. Honorees are distinguished in their professional careers, community and church involvement, and their ongoing service to and financial support of Samford.
- This summer, parents of incoming freshmen received the newly introduced parent prayer guide with accompanying prayer map. The guide lists 31 suggested prayer topics, including trustees, faculty and staff, specific student programs, campus facilities and academic areas.
- Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing was granted 10 years of continuing accreditation from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). The accreditation marked a maximum time allotment and is a testament to the high standards in nursing education upheld by Samford.
- Samford’s Big Give, a 36-hour fundraiser, was a success with seven of the 13 projects completely funded. Some of the projects included an interactive nutrition lab, international mission trips for pharmacy students and the renovation of the student lounge at the Daniel House in London. The campaign went worldwide via social media, bringing in gifts from as far away as Bangkok, Thailand. ❧

Meet 2015–16 Legacy League Officers

by Lynn Larrish

Since its inception, the Legacy League has been blessed with the dedication of many outstanding ladies serving as officers. This tradition continues as we embark on a new year.



Kathryn Woodruff

Kathryn Woodruff now serves as president. Kathryn is a graduate of Samford with a B.S. in mathematics. She became a part of Legacy League after retiring from BellSouth and has been active for several

years, serving as vice president for communication/recording secretary and a member of the Newsletter Committee.



Harriet Williams

The vice president for programs is **Harriet Williams**. She joined the organization in 2014 and quickly became involved by chairing the Scholarship Luncheon in February. Her husband, Jim, is the executive director of

the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama, which is housed at Samford. Their daughter, Mary Beth, is a graduate student in the nurse anesthesia program at Samford.



Vickie Gord

Vickie Gord, vice president for communication/recording secretary, became a member of Legacy League after retiring from a career in education. Her daughter, Allison, graduated from Samford. Vickie

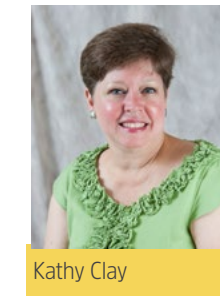
served as president of Chi Omega’s Parent Club while Allison was a student.



Paula Gossett

Paula Gossett, vice president for student scholarship and support, was re-elected for a second term. Paula’s husband, Kerry, is a 1973 graduate of Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing and a 1982 graduate of the nurse anesthesia program. Paula was encouraged to become a part of Legacy League by Elouise Williams while attending a Samford football game.

Three officers are returning to fulfill two-year terms. **Kathy**



Kathy Clay

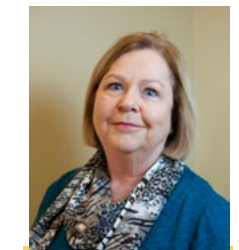
Clay is vice president for membership. She graduated from Samford’s Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing. Her husband, Michael, and their two children, Stephanie and John Michael, received degrees from Samford. John Michael played football for the



Lisbeth Cease

Bulldogs. **Lisbeth Cease** is vice president for fundraising. Several years ago she had the opportunity to join her Sunday school class in decorating the dorm room of a young woman from Iran who was enrolled in

Samford’s pharmacy school. After this experience and an invitation to join Legacy League, Lisbeth knew she wanted to be a part of an organization where she could make a difference in the lives of deserving students. Her daughter-in-law is a graduate of



Jane Lewis

Samford. **Jane Lewis**, treasurer, learned about the Legacy League from friends in her church and strongly believes in its mission. She is thrilled that her niece is currently attending Samford. ❧

Christmas Home Tour Adds New Twist

by Kathryn Woodruff

The Legacy League Christmas Home Tour, set for Thursday, December 10, is a much-anticipated event for many in the Birmingham area. While it’s always exciting to see fabulous homes that are beautifully decorated for Christmas, this year’s tour will have a little something extra. In addition to offering holiday hors d’oeuvres for guests to enjoy, the Samford President’s Home will also feature a Holiday Gift Market. A number of vendors will sell things such as jewelry, art, children’s items, holiday/seasonal items, and home interior and gift items.

The lineup for this year will include stunning and expansive homes ranging from contemporary to traditional in design, with unique features such as an indoor fountain. Homes are in Mountain Brook and Vestavia and will be open from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. and 4-8 p.m. The cost of the tour is \$25 in

advance or \$30 at the door. Ticket and market proceeds will help fund a new scholarship, intended to provide assistance for students with significant financial need and challenging circumstances.

As always, the Christmas Home Tour will require a large number of volunteers to be successful. There will be opportunities to plan the event, prepare food, serve food, serve as a home hostess, seek sponsorships and assist with pre-event publicity. Many of these opportunities involve getting to wear the famous red aprons. Let’s all get ready to volunteer so we can have a successful Christmas Home Tour! ❧



Vickie Gord greets guests at the 2014 home tour.

David Phelps Wows Guests at Scholarship Celebration

by Vickie Gord



David Phelps performs at the Scholarship Celebration with daughters Maggie Beth and Callie and family member Jack Daniels.



Becky Weeks, Sherry Armstrong, Emily Sanders and Pam Matthews enjoy meeting David Phelps.

Center. The candlelit setting was beautifully decorated with black linen tablecloths covered with burlap and topped with black lanterns and white hydrangeas. Magnolia leaves were abundant, and burlap ribbon tied both the napkins and large white draperies, forming columns around the tented arena.

The buffet featured beef and turkey carving stations as well as a smashed potato bar. Other delicious treats included a shrimp and grits station, baked crabmeat soufflé, buffalo chicken dip, Mediterranean garlic hummus, assorted vegetables, and abundant fresh fruits and cheeses. Tiered dessert trays offered a variety of sweet treats, tartlets and pastries.

After dinner, guests moved into the Wright Center where scholarship recipient Micah Green-Holloway thanked Legacy League for the privilege of attending Samford University and for helping to change his life. “I am literally a product of grace. I know God has a purpose for me being at Samford.” Growing up in a neighborhood riddled with violence, crime and insecurity, Micah had no direction in his life.

With guidance from his mom and a teacher, Micah persevered, excelling as a student, a leader and an athlete. He is now a leader in campus ministry and serves as a Samford Ambassador.

Suzanne Hopkins, Scholarship Celebration chair, then introduced her former Baylor classmate, spirited tenor vocalist, songwriter and arranger David Phelps. A prominent member of the Gaither Vocal Band since 1997, David has received four Dove Awards and two Grammy Awards. Phelps told the enthusiastic crowd he loves to travel and sing, but he especially loves the connection with the audience where he “can share what the Lord has taught me. We are all on a journey . . . we are not done yet.” His concert was the highlight of the evening, and the audience responded numerous times with cheers and standing ovations on numbers including “End of the Beginning,” “Nessun Dorma,” and “What a Wonderful World.” Daughters Maggie Beth and Callie joined him on stage, as well as his trumpet-playing sister Carrie and his wife’s keyboard/harmonica/strings-playing cousin Jack

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Daniels.

Legacy League Executive Director Jeanna Westmoreland closed the evening with special thanks to the event sponsors, outgoing President Karen Bergquist, and to the more than 50 event volunteers. The Scholarship Celebration Planning Committee was comprised of Suzanne Hopkins, chair, Lisa Beckham, Lisbeth Cease, Vickie Gord, Jane Lewis, Suzanne Page, Harriet Williams, Karen Bergquist, Jeanna Westmoreland, Sharon Smith and Allison Strickland. ❧

Where Are They Now? Cassie Sizemore: A Dreamer Whose Dreams Came True

by Cynthia Walker Watts

Cassie Sizemore had a “dream school,” and Samford University was the only college to which she sent an application. She had faced many difficult challenges as a child. Her mother died at an early age, splintering the family. Instability followed, and Cassie lived in numerous different homes in Alabama and Texas. One thing stayed consistent—her dream of attending Samford University.

The Legacy League helped that dream become a reality from 2008 to 2012. “Samford encouraged me to be one who deeply honors the Lord, is dedicated to a life of learning, and has an unwavering love for people.”

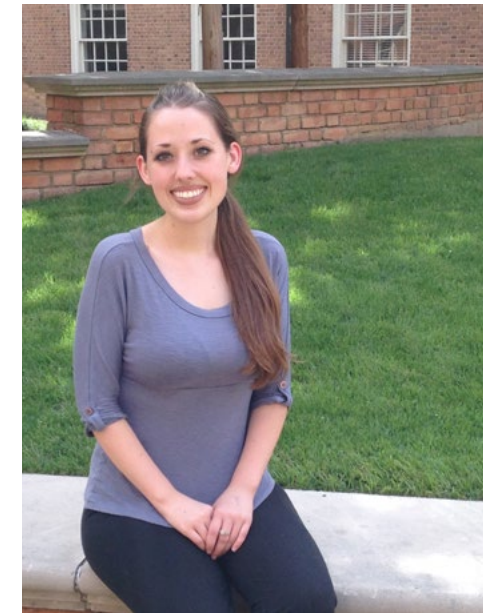
She recalls two especially memorable events as a student. She spoke at the Legacy League’s 2012 Scholarship Gala where best-selling author Andy Andrews encouraged her to pursue her dreams. The second significant occasion was when she received the Student Employee of the Year Award.

When asked what difference the Legacy League scholarship made for her, she responded, “My life would not be what it is today had it not been for the generosity of people like all of those who make up the

Legacy League and the loving kindness of Samford professors and staff who empowered and encouraged my future. Each year I prepared myself to await the news of what scholarship funds I would be able to rely on. And each year I was astounded at the unbelievable people I met who decided to be a part of adding priceless value to my story.”

Cassie now lives in Lake View and commutes to Vestavia Hills where she serves as the manager of a veterinary practice. She says she is surprised to have a career in the veterinary world, having majored in communication studies. However, she is certain her degree prepared her for this position. “Amidst responsibilities of financial planning, human resources, industry relations, marketing and operations, I simply communicate all day long in crucial conversations.”

Cassie has realized more dreams, studying for two years at Highlands College and now pursuing a Master of Science in Organizational Development. The owner of the veterinary hospital is encouraging Cassie to attain further credentials upon completion of her master’s degree. Ultimately, she would like to earn a Ph.D. in organizational leadership and continue her career in the



Cassie Sizemore

veterinary industry.

Cassie is grateful for Samford. “Again and again, people spoke life into me and challenged me to continue dreaming, and that has made every bit of difference today.” ❧

Share a Memory: How a Walk to the Dorm Began a Samford Legacy

by Frances Rollins King

When a tall, lanky ministerial student asked to walk me from Samford Hall to my dorm, I never envisioned the beginning of a Samford legacy.

Occupying the desk behind me in church public relations class, Jerome King often initiated conversation before class. I hadn’t paid much attention to Jerome until he asked to walk me to Smith Hall, so I didn’t even know his name. En route, he asked for a date. Standing in front of the student union building, I hesitated. “Um, let me check my calendar.”

On the third floor of Smith, I described the young man to a sorority sister. She said, “That’s Jerome King. If you go out with him, he’ll never leave you alone.” I accepted the date anyway, and he didn’t leave me alone.

After a couple of dates, Jerome showed up at the public relations office, where I worked as a student correspondent, and surprised me with Valentine candy. News

Bureau Director Bill Nunnelley, now Samford’s senior editor and director of public relations, commented, “This is looking serious.” I wasn’t so sure.

Next, Jerome invited me for a weekend at his parents’ home. Viewing our relationship as a friendship, I turned him down. The next week he inquired, “Have you prayed about this?” I confessed I hadn’t. When I did pray, God helped me change my mind. That weekend in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, I began falling for the man I would marry in April 1968. What started on a walk from Samford Hall became a 41-year adventure of church ministry in three states—and a Samford legacy.

The legacy? All three of our children and their spouses are Samford grads, so, except for grandchildren ages 4–12, we have become a complete Samford family. All six have post-graduate degrees and include two



physicians, two musicians, a math teacher turned photographer and a corporate banker now a stay-at-home mom.

In 2009 we lost Jerome to brain cancer, but the Samford legacy continues through the D. Jerome King Memorial Scholarship, established by our son-in-law, Dr. Jason Swanner. ❧

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For information about Legacy League membership, scholarships or upcoming events, go to

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The Servants and the Served are Changing Lives

by Sharon Smith

“You have made this scholarship a gateway to a Samford family that I now love so dearly. I truly cherish the kindness you have shown me and the servant-heartedness of the Legacy League’s mission.”—2015 graduate

“Being a recipient of the Legacy League scholarship was literally life-changing—allowing me to even come to Samford. Every dinner, meeting or event, I have been humbled by the incredible generosity that overflows from the organization.”—2014 graduate

The Legacy League’s mission, in short, is to make life-changing scholarships available to deserving students with financial need. Significant life change comes through a Samford education, but it comes, as well, through relationships with Legacy League members. Every contribution given, meal prepared, invitation addressed, centerpiece created, card sent, event planned and meeting

attended makes an impact now and for eternity. In 2014–15, nearly 300 people served a combined total of more than 3,000 hours through the Legacy League, making a real difference in the lives of our scholarship recipients. THANK YOU for caring for our students!

Our scholarship recipients, in turn, are making a difference in the lives of many others. Our recent graduates are now in

seminary, working at Lakeshore Foundation, on the mission field and pursuing full-time work in the non-profit sector. Our current students spent the summer serving at a variety of places, including summer camps, leadership programs and medical offices. Even as they receive, they are giving back. The Lord is at work indeed! **✚**



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Raising Ebenezers *by Jeanna Westmoreland*

I am a preacher's kid. For many of you, the term "preacher's kid" conjures up stereotypical images of untamed children and teens, rebelling against their strict, religious upbringing. While I was certainly unruly at times and definitely engaged in a bit of rebellious behavior, my most enduring memory of stereotypical preacher's kid activity was learning to play the piano. As you know, a measure of success among the women in a traditional pastor's family is the ability to sing or play the piano or, even better, do both at the same time.

My piano lessons began in second grade with the rudimentary scales, basic music theory, simple songs and five-finger exercises. Once these were mastered and the basic piano curriculum completed, the goal became mastery of the music of the church. My mother envisioned my being able to open the hymnal to any random page and commence playing without missing a beat. Her vision translated into the parental edict that I could not quit piano lessons until I met that goal.

Being goal-oriented, even as a child, I set out to learn each and every hymn in the Baptist Hymnal (1956 edition), from hymn #1, "Holy, Holy, Holy," to hymn #542, "The Lord Bless You and Keep You." Yes, I also learned all the Amens that followed hymn #542, but being in Baptist churches in mostly rural areas, we didn't sing an Amen except on special occasions.

As my piano studies shifted from Beethoven to the Baptist Hymnal, I would ask a family member for a number between

one and 542. I would turn to that hymn number, and if it were one I had not yet learned, I would start to work. As I practiced a new hymn, I would sing along, learning and singing each of the four parts, and, of course, singing all the verses. I had my favorites, usually because of the great alto or tenor part. I began and concluded my time at the piano each day with one of these favorites, belting out the alto or tenor part with my raspy voice at the limits of its range. It must have been a test of endurance for my family.

As I worked my way through the hymnal, I encountered tunes I loved with lyrics that sometimes puzzled me. Titles such as "There is a Balm in Gilead," "When I Can Read My Title Clear" and "There is a Fountain Filled with Blood" contained religious symbolism that was lost on me. I didn't have the life or loss experiences to understand or feel the meaning, but the combinations of notes themselves resonated in my soul.

One such favorite was "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing." The second verse begins, "Here I raise my Ebenezer; hither by thy help I've come." As I learned that hymn, I was not familiar with the concept of an Ebenezer, and I had never encountered anyone who used the word "hither" in conversation. Yet, I sang those words, committed them to memory, and, years later, this hymn is still one of my favorites.

You are probably wondering why I am imposing this personal memoir upon you. The reason is found in the hymn from which

I quoted above. Each of us in the Legacy League has experienced the "streams of mercy, never ceasing." In a variety of ways, individually and as an organization, we have experienced the abundant blessings of God. Likewise, we have raised an Ebenezer (in Hebrew, literally stone of help) to show to others that we have made it here (hither) with the help of God. We have our family stories or experiences that tell others of the faithfulness of God in our lives. We use these markers, our Ebenezers, to serve as reminders to others and ourselves that we have experienced challenges, but God was (is) with us.

In the Legacy League, each of our scholarships is an Ebenezer. Each one is a reminder that it is only through God's help that we are here. The story behind each scholarship, along with the funds awarded, testifies to its recipients, both figuratively and literally, God's faithfulness in meeting our needs.

Thank you for your testimony of God's faithfulness as we all seek to make a Samford University education possible for students with significant financial need. ❧