

WOFFORD COLLEGE

Wofford College's Main Building was constructed in troubled antebellum times, but with faith that learning and service could make the church, state and nation more humane. Major renovations in 1902 and 1961 kept the building functional as Wofford prepared its graduates for a time of dazzling technological, social, economic, and political change. A decade ago, Wofford initiated an effort to transform "Old Main" for a fourth time. The goal was not to create a seldom-visited shrine or administration building, but to keep Main Building serving as it was designed to be in 1854, the college's one indispensable place for learning and reflection. Realizing an investment of more than \$8 million by 1200 alumni and friends, Main Building reopened in 2006 as a powerful symbolic statement that Wofford is what it always has been, a true liberal arts college, still growing and serving in the United Methodist tradition of higher education. Concluding with a dedicatory prayer by Bishop Mary Virginia Taylor, impressive reopening ceremonies were held on February 20, 2007.

At the foundation of the transformed Old Main is a new campus ministry center, which includes Mickel Chapel and the headquarters of several busy service learning programs. These new facilities will continue to make Wofford a benchmark college for the church, as reflected in Prothro-Perkins Chaplain Ron Robinson's election as presiding chaplain for the National Project for Excellence in Chaplaincy for United Methodist Colleges and Universities. This project grew out of a realization that the UM chaplains play a role that differs from denominational campus ministers at public universities. "A good church-related college sends out a welcome to people of all faiths, and to peoples of no faith," Robinson explains. Chaplains also bear the major responsibility to interpret the church relationship for faculties and staffs. "The tensions sometimes inherent in the relationship between church and academy will be greatly lessened if chaplains consistently strive to restrain narrow sectarianism in all its forms," he says.

In 2006, Wofford also strengthened its department of religion. Dr. Byron McCane, chair of the department, was appointed as the Albert C. Outler Professor, and a fourth full-time teaching faculty member was added. Now available are a number of new offerings in world religions that will prepare Wofford graduates to play a greater role on a shrinking planet. Majors in religion, such as junior Matt Watts of Lugoff, SC, continue to represent the college well. In 2006, he received a prestigious Lilly Fellowship for undergraduates pursuing a career in ministry. He also has completed mission work and studied abroad in Kenya.

In 2006, Wofford named its first Bauknight Scholar, junior Stephen Harris of Cayce, SC. He is exploring vocation, leadership and service opportunities, and participating in a guided discernment process that includes spiritual direction, mentoring and internships. The Bauknight Family Endowed Scholarship celebrates the ministry of the late Rev. Heber Felder Bauknight '37, and his sons, the Rev. John Michael Bauknight '69, and the Rev. David Derrick Bauknight. Two other sons, the late Heber Felder Bauknight, Jr. '60 and Dow Napoleon Bauknight '71 were also graduates of Wofford.

Placing emphasis on making connections through service learning, studies abroad and understanding world cultures are only a few aspects of academic innovation at Wofford. Some other examples from 2006 include the rapidly developing program in Chinese language, which will become a major in the fall of 2007; the "War Year," a campus-wide learning community examining ethical issues of war and peace; the on-going "Cornbread and Sushi" exploration of Southern life and letters; the "Community of Scholars," a summer undergraduate research collaborative involving several dozen faculty and staff working on interesting projects; and the Success Initiative, a scholarship-based exercise in creativity involving real-world problem solving. The Wofford Village has created a "new urban" neighborhood on the northern border of the campus. Almost 80 seniors have been living in the new community since late September 2006, and another 105 beds will be added by the fall semester 2007.

Wofford's trustees understand that a program of managed enrollment growth will necessitate even more effective programs of financial assistance for deserving students. For example, a survey of 220 Methodist students shows that they are receiving \$4.6 million in aid of all types. The Senior College Fund of the South Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church remains as critical as ever to the success of that endeavor.

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