



Here & Now

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An update for Florida Baptist Historical Society Board of Directors and Friends

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Jerry Windsor
Sec. Treas.



Penny Baumgardner
Administrative Assistant

Dear Board Members and Friends of the Florida Baptist Historical Society,

In my fourteen years of employment with the Florida Baptist Historical Society there has been a growing appreciation and gratitude for the wonderful ways events have progressed. It was 25 years ago that I started serving on the FBHS Board of Directors and Dr. Earl Joiner was the leader of our organization at that time. Through the work of Dr. Joiner and Dr. Rathel I had a deep appreciation for the work and accomplishments of our historical society.



Earl Joiner

As I close out my work with the FBHS I want to personally make some observations about the future of our history. I want to do this by making eight general organizational observations and then eight different glowing opportunities.

Some observations. The Florida Baptist Historical Society is a spiritual entity. It has spiritual origins, goals and dreams. My first observation is we need to be vigilant to maintain rich trust levels with all of our peers in the Florida Baptist Convention. Good working relations is essential for our five entities to work together. The FBHS is tied to the Florida Baptist State Convention, the state associations, the Sate Board of Missions, the Baptist College of Florida and Lake Yale. Mutual trust must be maintained and these "trust funds" have to be massaged on a regular basis. My observation is that physical presence is essential to building trust and fellowship. The FBHS needs the support of each of these five ministries to thrive.

My second observation is that the "collection" must be guarded. Down through the years things change. There are changes in personnel, philosophies and priorities. As long as the trust level is intact the FBHS should be able to make suggestions as to how to enhance, protect, share and use the wonderful FBSC book, artifact and manuscript collection. There are no substitutes for Christian kindness, professional courtesy and wise stewardship of valuable holdings.



Jerry Mae Windsor and Eloise Green were our first two lifetime members

A third observation is that our lifetime memberships could be honored and enlarged at the same time. We owe much to those who paid and stayed. The lifetime membership money helped us publish volume one of *Favored Florida*. Lifetime members also gave us a reservoir of people interested in the work.

A fourth observation is that good relations with SBC historical groups is a great help in setting Florida means and ends. Elizabeth Wells (AL), Laura Botts (GA), Bill Sumners (SBC), Lonette Berg (AL), Taffy Hall (SBC), and Arlette Copeland (GA) have been more than Baptist history scholars. They have been friends of the FBHS and personal friends to Jerry Mae and me.

A fifth observation is that the FBHS must work hand in hand with the Baptist College of Florida on all projects, works and endeavors. The collection is under the stewardship of the college, and the BCF publicity and good name are enhancers for the FBHS to constantly maintain and cultivate.

A sixth observation is the need for continued employment of committed and skilled employees. Earl Joiner, Mark Rathel and Jerry Windsor would have accomplished very little had it not been for the professional hard work of Pat Nordman, Jan Cunningham, Melissa Campbell, Penny Baumgardner, and Laura Garner. These five people were all part time, under paid, under recognized and over the top in their work for the FBHS.

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A seventh observation is the need for us to push on through for the publication of volume II of *Favored Florida*. The state convention, State Board of Missions and the FBHS must partner up and pony up, for this vital work to be completed. This is a 25 year project. It will probably be 25 more years before a new perspective of Florida Baptist history is written. Let's do it.

An eighth observation is the continued need for quality board members for the FBHS board of directors. Since 1950 there has been a sincere desire and effort to find the exact type and number of board members to see that the FBHS work is superbly done. Reading the list of current and former board members is like reading a list of the best and brightest. A professional, spirit led board is what brings quality and excitement to the organization.

Now for the eight important opportunities I see on the horizon.

The first opportunity before the FBHS is the collection of annual associational minutes. Electronics has made this more difficult, but the local associational minutes are the life blood of the Florida Baptist Historical Society.

Maintaining an updated, interesting website is vital in this day of instant gratification. Baptists that want information want it now. Our FBHS website is a good way to provide the facts about what we are doing and what we have done.

Thirdly, statewide involvement is a great opportunity before us. We are not the north Florida historical society or the Miami historical society. Being even handed with service, research and writing is a great way to keep our organization on a statewide alert.

Fourth, is space for our collection. A great opportunity exists to put all of our materials in one place. This possibility has all kinds of research, security and stewardship ramifications.

Fifth, is the collection of personal papers. There are some great Baptist Christian leaders with Florida connections and the opportunity is there to request, research and publish their papers.

Sixth, is an ongoing practice of printing our emails. Correspondence now is electronic and professional and personal emails need to be printed out to maintain historical perspective and integrity.

Seventh, is the opportunity to build up and maintain a reservoir of retrieval systems. We have access to 8m, 16m, Beta Max, video discs, cassette tapes, CD's, slides, overhead, 33 RPM, 45 RPM, 78 RPM, power point, reel to reel and disc information. Now is the time to maintain equipment to retrieve what is available in these different formats.

Eighth, we always have an ongoing opportunity to cultivate new friends for the FBHS. People like Gene and Geraldine Stokes were always friends with information and mercy. Dr. John Sullivan was a quiet promoter of our historical society, and Don Hepburn was a guardian angel. New days require more friends who have a heart for Baptist theology, Baptist ecclesiology and fellowship.

My 25 years of service (1991-2016) with the Florida Baptist Historical Society has been a calling and labor of love. Jerry Mae has ridden every mile, walked every step, and attended most every meeting with me. For that I am indebted and grateful.

Our future is as bright as the promises of God and may God's will be our peace.

Honoring those who honor Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerry Windsor", written in a cursive style.

Jerry M. Windsor