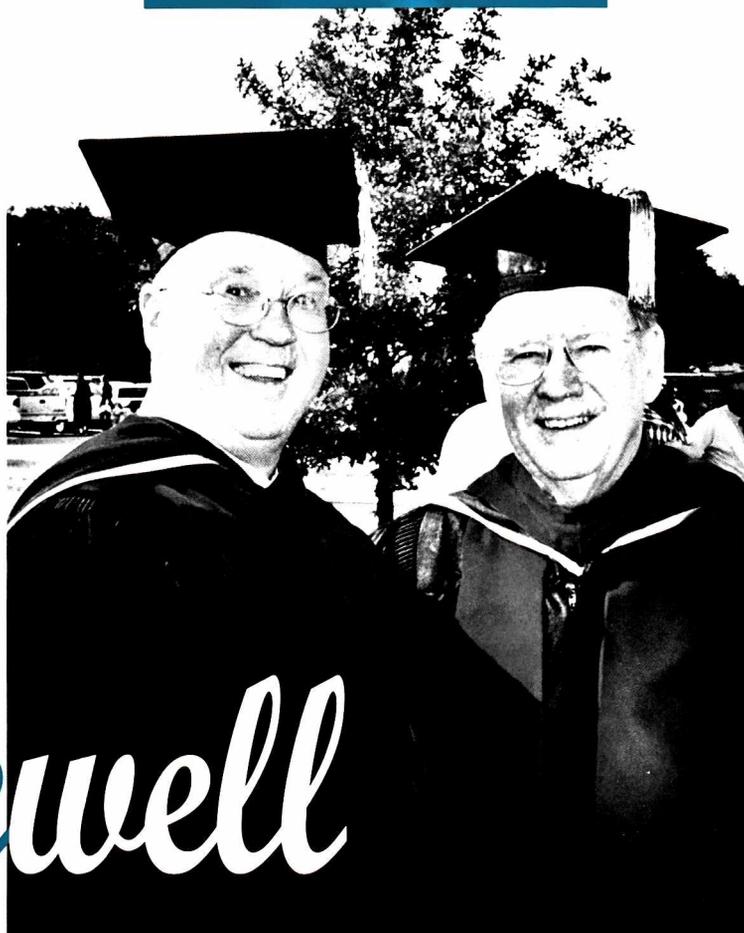


The man who says he never intended to attend college retires with 34 years as a professor at BCF.

Richards

bids BCF Farewell



Pictured, from left, Dr. Wiley Richards and Dr. J.W. Lee

By Hope Sever
BCF Junior

"There will be no one who can take his place, but he has left a strong foundation on which others can build," BCF President Dr. Thomas A. Kinchen commented about long time friend and colleague Dr. Wiley Richards.

Richards began his service at the Baptist Bible Institute 34 years ago and has left an impression that will forever change the school. Since his arrival at the Baptist College of Florida over three decades ago, Richards has taught a variety of subjects ranging from English, church history, cults, philosophy, and theology.

In 1995 Richards published his fourth book entitled *Telling the Story of Jesus: The Golden Anniversary of Florida Baptist Theological College*. In this book Richards recorded the history of the college from its earliest beginnings in the 1940's.

During his years of service at BCF Richards has acquired many honors and awards. This year alone he was the distinguished recipient of the Sullivan Leadership Award presented by the Florida Baptist Convention.

Since his arrival at the Baptist Bible Institute 34 years ago Dr. Wiley Richards has seen many changes come to the institution, some of which he has brought about. In honor of his extended service

Dr. Kinchen has announced the naming of a classroom in Solomon Hall "The Richards Room."

Dr. Richards'

legacy will live on in years to come for his service and devotion to the Lord and the Baptist College of Florida.

Kinchen explains Richards' service to BCF stating, "During my period of service at the college Dr. Richards has been a

true friend and a strong source of support."

"Dr. Wiley Richards represents the finest in Baptist higher education. He has a scholar's brain and a pastor's heart. He blends strength of conviction with true compassion," concluded Kinchen.

"Dr. Wiley Richards represents the finest in Baptist higher education."

--Dr. Thomas A. Kinchen

In His Honor

Would you like to honor Dr. Richards on his retirement?

If so, simply write a letter of appreciation on letterhead stationary to be included in Dr. Richards' book of remembrance. Please limit letters to one page.

Mail your completed entry to: Dr. Jerry Windsor, 5400 College Drive, Graceville, FL 32440-1898.

Lantana Remembrances

Recalling events as a way of honoring a church's homecoming celebration is always an honor for me. I, W. Wiley Richards, served as pastor September 20, 1964, until August, 1968. I had served the Galilee Baptist Church, Zachary, Louisiana, 1961 to July, 1964. I had completed my Doctor of Theology degree at the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in 1964. Following eleven years of higher education, I was ready for a change.

First Baptist Church, Lantana, provided my opportunity. The church extended a call to me to serve as their pastor by a vote of 84-3. I assumed the position on August 30, 1964, and served through July 1968 at which time I joined the faculty at the Baptist Bible Institute, now called the Baptist College of Florida, where I served until retiring in June, 2002. My wife, Betty, and I still reside in Graceville, Florida, where the school is located.

I have kept a daily diary since January 1, 1957. As I waded through some of my entries, I pulled out some events I thought would interest you. Let's begin with soul-winning. I see the names in my records of about 80 people I baptized in the first two years. My wife and I worked diligently in outreach visitation. She served as my partner to intercede while I was sharing the gospel. If the other family had an interfering wife, for example, Betty would ask for a glass of water and would then follow the woman to the kitchen.

On one occasion, we were visiting a man in Seminole Heights. He made a profession of faith, attended church the next Sunday, and desired Baptism. However, he wanted to be baptized in open water like Jesus did. He, his daughter, and another man

met on the banks of Lake Osborn for a public testimony. While skiers zoomed off the ski jump, cars stopped along the highway to watch an old-fashioned baptismal service. It was a glorious experience.

Another baptism stand out. A man named Smith was saved, but he had a physical problem. He had arthritis so bad he could not stand, but he wanted to be baptized. On the appointed time, we placed him in a straight-backed wooden chair. A couple of strong deacons somehow got him to the top of the stairs and into the baptistery. When it came time to immerse him, the deacons leaned him back until he was almost under water. I then pushed his head all the way under. That was another wonderful moment.

God worked in mysterious ways. A woman in the church gave me a check for the church in the amount of \$7,500.00. We put the money in a parking lot purchase fund. You see, we couldn't build on the land next to our church because there was an easement across our property alongside the church. I can't remember the details, but Bob Whitaker and I made an appointment with a lawyer to see about sifting the easement to the east of our present property. It all worked out to our advantage.

God was working in another way. I conducted a class for new members and anyone else who wanted to attend. As a result of our talking about tithing, Jean Weis wrote a check for \$15,000.00, which was used as seed money for the new educational unit. We had the groundbreaking for the building on May 7, 1966, with Gene Ebersold serving as the general contractor. We did much of the work ourselves. I served as Junior Eason's helper, but many others plastered and painted. We dedicated the new building October 23, 1966.

Someone donated some palm trees to the church. We dug up six of them, hauled them to the church and planted them. To keep the trees alive, Brother Lowder would go to the church everyday and water the trees. All six lived.

I could write several pages, but I'll close with a humorous event. One of our brotherhood men led a hymn at a dinner meeting. Without a piano, he started singing the hymn. However, he began singing "Christ Receiveth Sinful Men" to the tune of "Rock of Ages." As a result, we finished the notes long before we ran out of words. By that time, we were laughing uproariously . He had no choice but to join in.

To the people of First Baptist Church, thanks for the memories.



Here & Now

Vol. 6

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

No. 3

March, 2014



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

No one can be saved without receiving the gospel. They must read about Jesus or hear about Jesus to be saved. We cannot live lives so pious and pure that they can see enough gospel in us to be saved. Someone has to tell them.

And that is where preaching comes in. As a child I was taught to love and respect preachers. They had status in the church, in the community and in our home. However I learned rather soon that some preachers had more opportunities and influence than others. By my teenage years I realized that came from perception, trust and faithfulness. And when I think of those qualities three remarkable preachers come to my mind. Two of them I have written about before and the third one is my subject for this writing.

Carlton Watson Todd (1916-1998) was pastor of four different Baptist churches, in three different states (Florida, Georgia, Alabama) for an average of 50 years each; at the same time. Can you imagine?

Ben Jones (1924-) was pastor of West Park Baptist Church in Jacksonville for 58 years. Ben saw children and grandchildren of church members saved. He was gracious, kind and a loving pastor. Ben is now 90 years old and retired in Jacksonville.

Carlton Todd had the broad ministry. Ben Jones had the deep ministry. Now let me tell you about one who has had a wide ministry.



Walter Wiley Richards was born June 25, 1932, in the Pleasant Grove community near Pensacola, Florida. He was one of six children and he graduated from Pensacola High School in 1950. He served in the United States Navy and married Betty Hargrave Richards and they have four children (Glenn, Roger, Regina and Charlene). Wiley graduated from Howard College, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (B.D., Th. D.) and Florida State University (Ph. D.).

Carlton Todd served broad. Ben Jones served deep and Wiley Richards served wide. In his preaching and teaching ministry Wiley Richards served 50 different interims. Todd and Jones have preaching records but so does Richards. Wiley is the only preacher I have ever heard of who served 50 interims (1955-2014). These interims came about primarily in his preaching ministry while serving 34 years as a professor at The Baptist College of Florida (BBI, FBTC, BCF). He taught by day and preached by day and night.

Wiley has four basic rules as an interim pastor. (1) First come first served. He has chosen not to compare churches. He chose to serve in the first church that called him regardless of the size of the church. (2) The church set the pay. Wiley never demanded or told a church what he should be paid as an interim. He felt he could trust God and Baptist churches. (3) He felt responsible for



Wiley Richards-1975

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all pulpit guests and speakers when he was interim. He made the request that he be allowed to choose pulpit guests without congregational vote. (4) He also had the rule that he would not be a candidate for the pastorate in a church where he was called to an interim ministry. These four basic rules may seem simple and not important but I would contend they are at the heart of the success of the historical record set by Wiley. He saw ministry as a calling and undertook it with a servant's heart. This authentic and humble approach was the foundation of an interim ministry that has included 50 interims in three different states.

V. L. Stanfield advised preachers to "write out your sermons." Wiley took that to heart and has fifteen books of sermon manuscript material that he has written out by hand since the 1962 Stanfield admonition. Since childhood Wiley has had a love of the scripture and his favorite preaching books have been Romans, John and Revelation. Roland Q. Leavell modeled a "soul winners heart" and Clayton Waddell emphasized family and morality. Therefore Bible, evangelism, ethics and theology have been focal points in his preaching and teaching.

Wiley said of his 50 interims the longest was four years and the shortest was six weeks. He attends a Sunday School class where he preaches and feels a need to be pastor to all and especially to those who are infirmed, grieving and hurting. He has chosen to be a friend to the lost and a leader for the saved.



Wiley and Betty Richards

In his record setting interim ministry one stands out to me. In 2006-2007, he was interim at First Baptist Church, Graceville where he and Betty are members. Therefore my friend became my pastor for an interim period. They served as a team and did a wonderful job leading our church.

It is my belief that Todd, Jones and Richards never set out to make Kingdom records. Yet in their faithfulness their ministry impacted thousands of people in their unique ministries that were broad, deep and wide.

Honoring those who honor Christ,

Jerry M. Windsor
Secretary-Treasurer
Matthew 6:33