

Florida Baptist Historical Society Biography Collection

This link provides the specific resource information which documents and undergirds the biographical resource information on a specific Florida Baptist pastors, church staff or significant laity leaders.

The link you have chosen connects to the specific individual's resource files that provide the basis for information which the Historical Society has used to develop the respective biographical profile. The sources attached may include copies of articles gleaned from back issues of the *Florida Baptist Witness* and other news publications. Other resources include books, historical journal articles and church histories that are cited as documentation for the biography.

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Smith, Bryan graduated from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He served as pastor of Innerarity Point Baptist Church.

Details: 932-0129.

Innerarity Point Baptist

The Rev. Bryan Smith will lead a church site dedication service Sunday at 1 p.m. at Innerarity **Point Baptist, Innerarity Point** Road, Pensacola.

Details: 492-1545.

Innerarity Point (Pensacola Bay)

adopted the church as her family after Doc. Ishler passed away and she made everything at the church a priority. She continues to love and support the church at the young age of 80-something.

"One of the things I remember most," Danny said, "was having a good time at people's houses after the Sunday night service. We'd laugh and sing while Clarence and Elizabeth picked the guitar." Fun has always been a big part of the fellowship here at IPBC. You might recognize some of these fun-loving people.

Danny's dreams for us were carried over into the ministry of our next pastor, **Bryan Smith**. Bryan began at Point Baptist as a summer intern in Youth and Music in 1983. Bryan's zeal added a new dimension to the Youth Ministry. Kids began to find out who they were, but most importantly they learned about who Christ could be in their lives. It was during his first summer that Point Baptist sponsored the first Mission Trip with 21 kids headed to Cherokee, N.C. Not only a first for us, but this was the first time the government allowed VBS in the Smokey Mountain National Park. Nine mission trips later, Lavenia and Tom Holly still encourage the Youth of IPBC to serve the Lord through Missions.

Bryan described the church during this time as having an exciting and free spirit of worship balanced with family - not a closed family, but a family open and willing to reach out to others. He recalled how he and the church "grew up" together. "They saw me graduate college, licensed into the ministry, date, graduate from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, become engaged, get married, and announce the birth of our first child." Bryan described his relationship to the church as that of Paul to the church at Philippi - "they knew I loved them and wanted God's best for all of us. I'll always be indebted for their confidence, trust, and forgiveness," he said. In pursuing God's best, Bryan led the church to consider a 5 acre piece of land located on the south side of Innerarity Road. The church voted unanimously on November 1, 1987, to purchase the property. Bryan's vision for IPBC to relocate and develop new ministries was beginning to become a reality.

Next, the wise "old statesman" stepped in. In October, 1989, Felton Griffin came from Anchorage, Alaska, as Interim Pastor and shared with IPBC what he calls, "The best six month of my life." He continued to encourage the people to "build a church up the road where people could see it." "Two things will build the church. (1) Fire in the pulpit, and (2) People getting involved in the evangelistic effort...be busy."

As openness and enthusiasm for growing the church had invaded the hearts of the people, however, the church was again needing to expand its facilities. The next pastor, Phil Rowan, led the church through this time of decision and ground was broken in 1991 for a new Sunday School addition. Shortly thereafter Bro. Rowan returned to pastor in Kentucky.

Once again, the people of IPBC saw in their own congregation a young minister that could help get them through this difficult period without a pastor. Ron Banta stepped in to assume the duties of "being all things to all people"...music, youth, Sunday School, and now preaching. He became the fifth pastor in the history of IPBC.

All the dreams of the past, some that have come true and some still to be fulfilled, are important to Ron, and to all of us. We've found that there truly is "Love Worth Finding at IPBC!" Happy 32nd Anniversary, 1995!