

The next generation of clergy families

LEGACIES

The Stegall Seminary Scholarship
Endowment Foundation

Winter 2017



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LEGACIES

The next generation of clergy families prepare to serve the AWF Conference

The holidays allow us to reflect on family traditions, and one family tradition alive and well in the Alabama - West Florida (AWF) Conference is that of pastoral leadership. Currently, the Stegall Foundation supports seven seminary students with a clergy parent(s): Chris McCain, son of Rev. Freddie McCain; Riley Newton, son of Rev. Allen Newton; Mary Ann Pickard, daughter of Rev. Jamie Pickard; Joel Sigler, son of Rev. Ralph Sigler; Harden Spencer, son of Rev. Lester Spencer and Rev. Janeese Spencer; Katie Wachob, daughter of Dr. Wesley Wachob; and Kristen Curtis Wright, daughter of the late Rev. Joe Curtis.

Growing up a “Preacher’s Kid” often means that children learn from an early age about a life of service to God and others. “Some of my favorite memories are of being extremely involved in the church as a child,” says Kristen Wright. “I always felt like the church my dad was serving was my second home and I actually enjoyed moving every few years, as my mom taught my sister and me from a young age that God and friends are found everywhere.”

Joel Sigler remembers special times of waking up early with his father on Sunday mornings in order to accompany him to church to open doors and turn on lights.



Joel Sigler and his father, Ralph

“When Harden was in First Grade, we took him on his first mission trip to Venezuela,” says Rev. Lester Spencer. “We were amazed at how eager he was to connect with people of other cultures and faith backgrounds and believe this was the beginning of his love for the poor and marginalized.”

Rev. Jamie Pickard remembers how his daughter, Mary Ann, enthusiastically participated in the music and drama ac-

tivities at church. “She is a true Methodist, singing passionately!” he says. “She kept our family singing the Vacation Bible School songs all year long, and when she was 10 or 11 she even wrote our children’s Christmas pageant.”

These seminary students say that both parents played a vital role in modeling Christian leadership and values. “My mother exhibits many traits that are central to ministry,” says Joel. “She’s never bitter about my dad’s unusual and, often, inconvenient, ‘work hours.’ She consistently sacrifices her own desires for the Lord’s will.”

These future clergy hope to honor their parents by emulating their pastoral attributes. “My dad was amazing at pastoral care,” says Kristen. “He was known for going ‘above and beyond’ to be present with people who were not only sick and hurting, but also joyful and celebrating. He had a way of authentically connecting with people and extending the love of Christ through his interactions. I hope that I can emulate his empathy and deep compassion for people in my own ministry.”

“My father is an authentic and humble leader,” says Joel. “(Growing up) I saw that he was consistent whether at home or in the pulpit. This showed me the real,

practical impact of the Gospel and how following Christ is not merely an ideal that we strive for, but one we can joyfully live out. “

“The traits I admire most about my Dad are his love for others, integrity, and strong conviction to view all people as beloved children of God,” says Mary Ann. “I hope to be able to embody his kind spirit and passion for walking closely with God in my everyday interactions with those around me.”

As the students prepare themselves through this time in seminary, the parents have hopes and dreams for these future pastors. “My wish for Joel is that he would continue to grow in his relationship and commitment to God and continue to be transformed into all God wants him to be,” says Rev. Ralph Sigler. “I am so proud of his decision to take this time to be equipped so that he may bear much fruit for the kingdom of God.”

One way in which the legacy of family service continues is through gifts to the Stegall Foundation. Without the prayerful and financial support of donors, many of these students would not be able to follow in the footsteps of their parents,



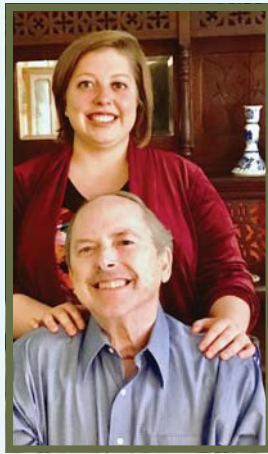
Kristen Curtis Wright and her late father, Joe, in 1996 at Citronelle UMC

and come “home” to serve the people and churches of the AWF Conference.

“I am deeply grateful that the Stegall Foundation has helped alleviate financial burdens, and allowed me to focus on my studies in a manner which I hope honors my family’s legacy and history within the United Methodist Church,” says Harden Spencer.

“Just as Rhonda and I were also blessed with support from Dr. Stegall’s church when we were in seminary, the Stegall Foundation is now encouraging Joel and Olivia,” says Ralph. “This legacy of support has enabled Joel to focus on his new marriage, his studies, and community ministry among other students. Because of being able to concentrate on schooling rather than oppressive financial responsibilities, he is gaining the most from this wonderful opportunity to prepare for a lifetime of ministry.”

“The Stegall Foundation has made it possible for me and my husband, Micah, to answer God’s call on our lives debt free,” says Kristen. “Without the generous support of so many donors, it would not be possible for us to both be full-time students at Candler School of Theology. It means the world to me



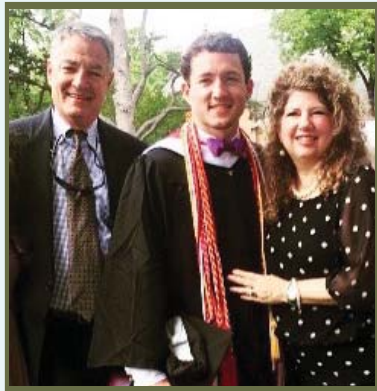
Mary Ann Pickard and her father, Jamie

to be able to continue my family’s legacy of service to Christ and the church alongside Micah.”

Rev. Pickard also sees another continuing “family” tradition: “It touches my heart that Mary Ann gets to see what I already know: The Alabama-West Florida Conference is truly committed to supporting future leaders in the church!”

This Christmas, as you spend time with your own family, please re-

member our seminary students and their faithful efforts to continue this legacy of service to others.



Harden Spencer and his parents, Lester and Janeese

**HAVE YOU CONSIDERED INCLUDING
THE STEGALL SEMINARY SCHOLARSHIP
FOUNDATION IN YOUR WILL?**

A WAY TO GIVE: *Tax Planning Opportunities for Senior Adults*

BY TERRY MITCHELL, CPA, PPM

Senior individuals with retirement accounts (IRAs, etc.) are required to generally take annual withdrawals from these accounts based on the amount in these accounts and participant age. These annual distributions begin once you reach the age of 70 ½ and continue every year thereafter. These annual distributions are generally included in your taxable income. Failure to take these required withdrawals can result in a penalty of 50% of the amount not withdrawn.



*Terry Mitchell,
Photo courtesy of
Paul Robertson.*

There is some good news because of some tax planning opportunities with these required annual distributions. You are permitted to make annual cash donations to IRS-approved public charities directly out of your IRAs. These donations are known as Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD’s). The maximum annual amount that can qualify for a QCD is \$100,000. This applies to the sum of QCD’s made to one or more charities. If, however, you file taxes jointly, your spouse can also make a QCD from his/her own IRA within the same year for up to \$100,000.

If you would like to make a contribution to the Stegall Seminary Scholarship Foundation and you are currently required to take these required annual withdrawals from your retirement accounts (IRAs), this tax-planning opportunity provides a significant tax-saving opportunity. Rather than take the annual distribution and pay income tax on the funds, you can direct the funds to the Foundation and not have to pay income taxes on the amount donated. This means you can donate all or part of your required annual distribution and convert taxable required distributions into tax-free QCD’s.

Please contact either us at stegallscholarship@gmail.com, or your tax professional for information on this significant tax-saving opportunity. Thank you for your continued prayers and support.



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Our website accepts online donations.



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“ANGELS AMONG US”

One of the great encouragers in my life is Diane Mitchell who was born and reared in Fort Payne, which also happens to be the hometown of the popular musical group, “Alabama.” Diane’s sister serves as the attorney for Randy Owen, their lead singer. Knowing of my great love for country music, Diane recently showed up at the front door of our home with a gift package from Randy Owen, containing all of his recordings and his autographed picture. In light of this, I have gained a new appreciation for his lyrics in “Angels Among Us.”

“I was walkin’ home from school on a cold winter day. Took a short cut through the woods and I lost my way. It was gettin’ late, and I was scared and alone. Then a kind old man took my hand and led me home. Mama couldn’t see him, but he was standing there. And I knew in my heart that he was the answer to my prayer. When life had troubled times and had me down on my knees, there’s always been someone to come along and comfort me, a kind word from a stranger, to lend a helping hand, a phone call from a friend, just to say, ‘I understand.’ Now, ain’t it kind of funny at the dark end of the road, some-

one lights the way with just a single ray of hope. Oh, I believe that there are angels among us, sent down to us from somewhere up above. They come to you and me in our darkest hours to show us how to live, to teach us how to give, to guide us with the light of love.”

Like Randy Owen sings so beautifully, I, too, believe that there are “angels among us.” Down through the years, I have discovered that even seminary students can get scared and face the darkest of hours. These dark days may come when they find themselves nine hours away from home and their funds are exhausted. Dark days, also, may come to them when they experience unexpected emergencies as their children are hospitalized resulting in unanticipated expenses. Dark days come for a few of our students, even at Christmastime, when they would love to come home for Christmas, but they cannot get away from their much needed part-time jobs. Yet, in the midst of their darkness, the light of Christ always shines the brightest.

God’s timing is always perfect! I receive in the mail a surprising check from a small rural church, or a Sunday School class in a county-seat town, or a mission committee in a large mem-



BRENDA AND KARL STEGALL

bership church, or some generous individual. There are notes attached to these checks that say in various and sundry ways, “We just wanted to help ease the burden and make a difference in the life of a seminary student.” With each of these unanticipated gifts that come our way, I always pause and say a prayer of thanks for each donor, being reminded that there are still “angels among us” to show us how to live, to teach us how to give, and to guide us with the light of love.

On behalf of all of our 51 seminary students, Brenda and I wanted to thank you for being “angels among us” and wish for each of you a very Merry Christmas!

Karl K. Stegall