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CELEBRATING A MILESTONE

REFLECTING ON OUR FIRST TEN YEARS
AND ENVISIONING OUR FUTURE

‘HE SAW IT IN HIS DREAMS’

Webster’s Dictionary defines the word “milestone” as a significant point in development. 2017 indeed marks a milestone in the life of the Stegall Seminary Scholarship Endowment Foundation as we celebrate ten years of supporting seminary students through your gifts. While reaching this milestone calls for a time of thanksgiving, it also calls for a time of renewed focus on our ultimate mission: to provide full financial support for our seminary students in the years to come.

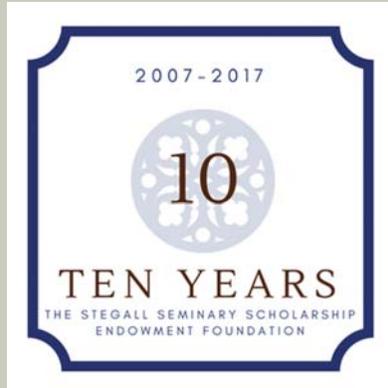
Reflecting on the 2007 beginnings of the foundation, Dr. Karl Stegall, volunteer president, says “I will be forever grateful to the members of First United Methodist Church of Montgomery for honoring Brenda and me upon my retirement by giving \$1,675,000 to create our Scholarship Foundation. That initial gift enabled us to begin immediately making a difference in the lives of our seminary students and their respective families.”

The foundation began among a time of economic recession in the U.S. Yet, the foundation donors continually expressed in word and deed their belief that supporting seminary students was a worthy cause. “During this time, I was reminded of the words of Hubert Taylor, who said ‘God’s things done in God’s way will not go lacking for God’s support,’” says Stegall.

At its beginning, the foundation awarded each seminary student an annual minimum of \$1,000. Over the past ten years, the award has increased incrementally to today reach an annual minimum of \$10,000 for each full-time student. In 2016, the Foundation reached its initial goal of raising \$5 million, and in April 2017 surpassed \$6 million in assets. “While we celebrate each of these milestones, we have become increasingly aware that our funds are not yet sufficient to cover all of the financial needs of our seminary students, which today number almost 50,” says Stegall.

One of those students was Rev. Emily Kincaid, who presently serves as the Executive Minister at Orange Beach (Ala.) UMC. “Words cannot express how grateful I am for the support I received from the Stegall Foundation,” says Kincaid. “To know that so many people were praying for me and cared enough to support me finan-

cially through seminary made all the difference. In retirement, the Stegalls have chosen to continue ministry, making an eternal impact for the Kingdom of God by equipping pastors for churches for decades to come. What a gift to the church!”



To celebrate the 10-year anniversary and in response to the continued need of seminary students, the foundation’s Board of Directors has now adopted a goal of raising \$10 million in cash and pledges within the next 12 months. “If we can reach this goal, we can envision the day when we will be able to pay in full the costs of seminary for so many of our seminary students and their families that struggle financially,” says Stegall.

One of the board members leading the charge toward the \$10 million goal is Dr. Jeremy Pridgeon, Senior Minister of First United Methodist Church of Montgomery. “It is an honor to be associated with the foundation, both as a former recipient of the Faith Promise program that preceded the establishment of the foundation, and as a current board member,” says Pridgeon. “Having served as a District Superintendent, I have witnessed firsthand the challenges facing our candidates as they struggle to meet the requirements for ordained ministry in The United Methodist Church. The support these students receive from the foundation is critical in helping them begin their ministry with a more secure financial footing. I am excited about the possibilities for the future, for our candidates and for the church, as the Stegall Foundation board works diligently to increase the support available to those who desire to answer God’s call to serve the churches of the

Alabama- West Florida Conference.”

The Foundation owes a deep well of gratitude to the donors who over the last ten years have turned a vision into reality. Now, the board invites the donors to partner with them to take the next step in supporting our seminary students. “Just as Bishop Paul Duffey prophesied that he could envision, without any reservations, the day when we would reach our initial goal of \$5 million, I now envision the time in the not too distant future when we reach our next goal of \$10 million,” says Stegall.

“I never shall forget reading about what happened on the day the dedication and opening of Disney World was held,” says Stegall. “The emcee said, ‘It is sad that Walt Disney never lived to experience this moment and see the opening of this beautiful Disney World.’ The speaker said, ‘Walt Disney did see it! He saw it in his dreams!’” With God’s grace and the prayerful support of faithful donors, dreams like those of the Stegall Foundation do turn into reality.

- Meredyth K. Earnest



STEGALLS HONORED WITH HUNTINGDON'S SULLIVAN AWARD

Huntingdon College President J. Cameron West and the College’s Board of Trustees recently honored Karl and Brenda Stegall with the Mary Mildred Sullivan Award.

The full article is on our website at www.stegallscholarship.com.

Photo by Su Ofe, Huntingdon College

The Stegall Seminary Scholarship Foundation is a 501(C)(3) non-profit foundation, and all gifts are tax deductible. Gifts for our Seminary students should be mailed to Dr. Karl K. Stegall, Seminary Scholarship Foundation, P. O. Box 241661, Montgomery, Alabama 36124-1661.

'I WILL BE WITH YOU'

BY PATRICK CRAIG, MAY 2017 GRADUATE OF DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL

In August 2014, I packed up as much as I could possibly fit into my vehicle and left my hometown of Montgomery, Ala. As I drove away, I left behind the comforts of friends, family, and a job I enjoyed to venture off into the foreign world of divinity school. The experience felt like something akin to the moment in Genesis 12 when God commands Abram to leave his country, his kindred, and his father's house and journey to an unknown land. Abram follows God's call, casting himself on the impossible possibility that the grace of God is going before him and that there is an element to the faithfulness of God waiting on him in a land he has not yet seen or discovered.

For three years now I have clung to this story. Having learned ancient Greek, attended early morning classes, and written countless papers, I have now graduated with my Master of Divinity from Duke Divinity School. My time at divinity school has proven to be some of the most rewarding years of my life. Countless times I've had my eyes opened to new ways of thinking about God, reading the Bible, and imagining the church. I have cultivated close friendships with people from all over the country, and across denominational lines. While at Duke I even met my fiancée, Kelli!

I spent my summers working at large membership churches in Mobile, Ala., and Birmingham, Michigan, and during the academic year I worked for a new church start in down-

town Raleigh, N.C. At each of these places, I witnessed God do incredible things and I have been spiritually formed by talented pastors and mentors.

As my final class at Duke came to an end, we were fittingly reminded that when God calls Moses and Moses asks God, "Who am I that I should go?" God does not answer Moses' question. Instead, God responds "I will be with you." This has certainly been true of my own life and of my time in divinity school. One way in which I know that God has been with me is because as donors to the Stegall Foundation, you, as the body of Christ, have been with me every step of the way. As I opened my final check from the foundation, I sensed an ocean of sacrifice, prayer, hope, and love – signifying all of the people who have given and prayed me to this point. Your prayers and financial giving have sustained me during



this season of life, which has been trying, difficult, stressful, and yet still life-giving. I truly could not have completed this good work without your support. I feel as though my graduation is as much your accomplishment as it is my own.

As I make plans to move back to Alabama and begin my first appointment at First United Methodist Church in Opelika, I will once again take with me the promise that I've learned from Abram's journey, Moses' calling, and your generous support: God goes before me and will be with me every step of the way. Thanks be to God.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR SPRING 2017 GRADUATES



TAYLOR BEAN
Candler School of Theology



PATRICK CRAIG
Duke Divinity School



BRAD GOODE
Asbury Theological Seminary



DAVID MARNELL
Candler School of Theology



KIPP NELSON
Wesley Theological Seminary



JARED PARKER
Asbury Theological Seminary



JACK ALLEN
Candler School of Theology



MARY KATHRYN ALLEN
Candler School of Theology



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Our website accepts online donations.



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REFLECTIONS

It was in early spring 10 years ago when I received a telephone call from John Bullard, Chairman of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee at First United Methodist Church of Montgomery. He told me that he and Mary Ellen would be hosting a luncheon for our Pastor-Parish Relations (PPR) Committee in their beautiful home, and he invited Brenda and me to join them on that occasion. Somewhere during the course of the meal that day, John shared with us that the PPR Committee was very much aware of my pending retirement, and they wanted to do something to honor both Brenda and me. Knowing of our great passion to provide financial assistance for our seminary students, John shared with us that the PPR Committee had made a unanimous decision to raise money to establish a seminary scholarship foundation in honor of us. Nothing could have thrilled our hearts more than to hear this exciting news! They set the initial goal at \$300,000, amended it to \$1,000,000, and they ultimately raised \$1,675,000 among the members of First United Methodist Church. John also told me of their desire to put these monies in a 501c3 non-profit scholarship Foundation and asked me to serve as the volunteer president.

What has been my motivation over these past 10 years? I can still remember my days as a district superintendent when many of our seminary students could not even pay their basic expenses of housing, meals, travel, and shoes for their children, much less their seminary tuition. I can still hear the voice of the student who called me in the middle of the night to share that his young son was hospitalized with a seizure. I can still hear the voice filled with panic of a married student who called and asked if



I could send his check early because his family did not have money for food. I can still see the face of the young man who said, "The financial pressure has been just too much on my wife, and she has made the decision to leave." When you have observed firsthand the financial struggles among our most promising young seminary students, you want to do all that you possibly can to help them.

Thanks be to God, over the past ten years, you as donors have been there to make a huge difference! Today our students are greatly encouraged. Your continued gifts will go a long way to ease the financial strain of those who are preparing for a lifetime of service to Jesus Christ and the church!

Gratefully,
Karl K. Stegall