

RECORD NUMBER OF STUDENTS SUPPORTED
\$10 MILLION GOAL REALIZED

MILESTONES



FALL 2018

Foundation Celebrates Milestone: \$10 Million Goal Realized!

Record number of students supported



Pictured on August 9, 2018 are some of the 53 seminary students the Stegall Foundation will support during the 2018-2019 school year. Pictured with the students are: Bishop David Graves (front row, middle), and Dr. and Mrs. Karl Stegall (back row, right).

Mr. George T. Goodwyn is the 2018 recipient of the "Spirit of the Foundation Award."



On Thursday, August 9, 2018, the Stegall Seminary Scholarship Endowment Foundation celebrated its 11th year in ministry at the annual Dinner of Celebration. The banquet, held at the Renaissance Hotel in downtown Montgomery, welcomed approximately 425 students, alumni and supporters. Including those in attendance were some of the 53 seminary students being supported by the Foundation during the 2018-2019 school year. These 53 seminary students, in addition to 10 local pastors completing the advanced course of study, sets a new record of 63 individuals receiving foundation support.

Each year, two extravagantly generous donors underwrite the entire cost of the banquet, ensuring that donations made to the Foundation are allocated for scholarships. Rev. Anthony J. McCullough, senior pastor of Prattville (Ala.) First United Methodist Church, served as the evening's Master of Ceremonies. The invocation was given by Rev. Robin C. Wilson, senior pastor of Opelika (Ala.) First United Methodist Church.

One of the most exciting parts of the evening was the announcement that the foundation had reached a new milestone. "Last year, when our Dinner of Celebration was held in this same ball-

room, it was announced that we wanted to raise over \$10 million for our scholarship foundation, through present assets and promised bequests," said Dr. Karl K. Stegall, volunteer president of the foundation. "I give thanks to God, and to all of you tonight, that we have now exceeded our \$10 million goal. To God be the glory!"

Bishop David W. Graves, resident bishop of the Alabama - West Florida Conference (AWF), shared episcopal greetings with those assembled. Speaking to the donors he said, "I give you thanks for all that you are doing...we need clergy to be called from our local churches, we want to be a place that has excellent clergy, and we want to develop a call not only for clergy but for laity, as well. God has called us all to present the good news of Christ."

Mr. Lee Jackson performed a solo of "You Raise Me Up." Later in the program he also sang "Here I Am, Lord."

A highlight of the annual banquet is the ability for donors to hear firsthand from current seminary students. This year, three students shared words of thankfulness to donors.

Mr. Hunter Bethea, a second-year student at Asbury Theological Seminary, is from Shalimar, Fla. During his witness, Bethea said "I'm a firm believer

that I stand on the shoulders of giants. Giants like my parents who taught me the unconditional love of God and encouraged me to experience that love for myself. Giants like Wayne Walker, my former youth director who God used to reveal to me that he was calling me into ministry. Giants like Jonathan Hart and Christina Shaver, both of whom were Stegall Seminary scholarship recipients, who have been mentors to me as I walk through this process to become a pastor. And, Giants like you, who have sacrificed so much to make all of this possible," he said.

Miss Bria Rochelle, a first-year student at Duke Divinity School, is from Eight Mile, Ala. Rochelle thanked donors for their support, telling them: "It is because of you that I will be able to delve deeper into what I feel God has called me to do; to go into unfamiliar places, to make a home, and truly illustrate what God's kingdom is meant to look like and to be like," she said. Although she didn't begin her college career thinking about ministry as a vocation, "I am glad that this exercise science graduate decided to let go of her own life and allow God's will to be done in it."

Mr. Ryan Runager, a second-year student at Candler School of Theology, and native of Moulton, Ala., spoke about

All photos courtesy of Luke Lucas

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.

his late mother, who died during his freshman year at Huntingdon College. “She is the reason I switched my major to religion, and she affirmed the vague nudge to ministry that I felt,” he said. “She knew something about me that I never did; that I was called.” Runager said he thanked God that faith “takes a community,” and recognized the donors for their endless support. “Thank you all for giving me a community; one where I feel loved, where I am accepted and my call to ministry is continuously affirmed; a community where I will be proud to serve in the future,” he said.

Dr. Paulette Thompson, on behalf of the Stegall Foundation Board of Directors, presented the ninth annual “Spirit of the Foundation Award” to Mr. George T. Goodwyn. This award is presented annually to honor a donor who has shown faithful commitment to the mission of the foundation. In presenting the award, Thompson said, “As the ripples from a pebble dropped in a still



Miss Bria Rochelle speaks to supporters on August 9.

pond flow outward, so do the many acts of kindness, insightful guidance and generosity of this man.”

In response to his receiving of the award, Goodwyn said: “The Stegall Foundation has certainly been a ministry that recognizes God and develops young people; it has been a blessing to me to be involved in this program.”



Bishop David Graves speaks at the August 9 “Dinner of Celebration.”

A Word from Bishop David Graves

“The Stegall Seminary Scholarship Endowment Foundation is one of the vital ministries of the Alabama-West Florida Conference, as they provide financial resources for future clergy to serve our churches. The Foundation is paving the way for our future clergy to graduate from seminary or course of study without incurring debt. It is a wonderful partnership of both clergy and laity sharing resources to insure vital congregations throughout the Conference. This ministry allows those called into ministry to proclaim Christ throughout the Alabama-West Florida Conference and to the ends of the earth for generations to come.

Your gift large or small contributes to the growing endowment which will keep on giving long after you graduate to Heaven. I thank all of those who have given to the Stegall Foundation and encourage each person and church in the Alabama-West Florida Conference to give as he or she is able. Through your gifts, you join one of our Conference priorities in creating a culture of call to ministry.”

Previous recipients of the “Spirit of the Foundation Award” were: Mr. Boyd Goddard; Bishop Paul A. Duffey; Mr. John Bullard; Mr. Temple Millsap; Mr. Wayne Russell; Mr. Dan Lindsey, Sr.; Dr. Paulette Thompson; and Rev. Arthur Carlton, Sr. (posthumously).

Also on behalf of the foundation’s board of directors, Dr. Jeremy K. Pridgeon then presented the second annual “Church Appreciation Award” to Lillian UMC in Lillian, Ala. The award recognizes a congregation who faithfully supports the mission of the foundation.

Present to receive the award on behalf of the church was their pastor, Rev. Daniel Randall. In his acceptance speech, Randall said: “I want to challenge every pastor here tonight to make it a goal to fully support a seminary student, as we can all do our part.”

The first recipient of the “Church

Appreciation Award” in 2017 was Fort Davis (Ala.) UMC.

As a challenge to those attending the Dinner, Mr. David E. Housel shared a video message, as he was unable to attend in person.

Dr. Karl K. Stegall, volunteer president of the foundation, personally offered a word of appreciation to donors at the conclusion of the banquet. “One of the lessons that God has taught me over these past 11 years is how God can take something very small and use that small gift for His glory,” he said. “I believe so strongly in what we are doing that I am not bashful to ask for your continued support, remembering that we now support 63 individuals.”

Dr. Stegall then invited all seminary students present to come forward as Bishop Graves offered a blessing over the students as a sending forth for the evening.





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Surrounding a Seminary Student with Love and Support

It is a long, long way (617 miles; 9 ½ hours) from Newbern in rural Hale County, Alabama to Duke Divinity School in Durham, North Carolina, but that is the journey that Elizabeth Hinton embarked upon two years ago. Following her graduation from Southern Academy in Greensboro, Liz enrolled at Judson College in Marion, 20 miles to the east.

Just as Liz had been very active as a child and teenager at the First United Methodist Church of Greensboro, she became very active as a college student at First United Methodist Church of Marion. After graduating from Judson, Liz became the youth director at Asbury United Methodist Church in Birmingham.

It was while serving at Asbury that Liz answered the call of God upon her life to become an ordained minister. She stepped out in faith that somehow, someday, God would help her find a way. Upon being accepted at Duke, Liz was offered a position on campus as a graduate resident among freshman students. Before she left home, her pastors at that time, Misty Barrett in Marion and Nathan Elliott in Greensboro, called me and told me of the excitement that their congregations felt in having been given the privilege of being in partnership with Liz on this journey.

The good members in both Greensboro and Marion responded overwhelmingly with their generous gifts for Liz, channeling thousands of dollars through our Scholarship Foundation. Soon thereafter, the Betty Jean Barton Circle of the United Methodist Women, as well as the Elizabeth Stewart Circle of United Methodist Women at First United Methodist Church of Marion, joined in and said, "We want to help!" The members of the Excelsior Sunday School Class at First United Methodist Church of Greensboro, said, "We want to be a part!" Then one day when Brenda and I

stopped by the popular Pie Lab in Greensboro to eat lunch, a generous couple walked over to our table and said, "We want to give you a check to support Liz!"

Now Liz is entering her third and final year at Duke and is preparing to graduate and return to our Ala-



BRENDA AND KARL STEGALL

bama-West Florida Conference next July. The story of Liz is a beautiful story of what happens when someone answers God's call upon her/his life and is surrounded by the love and support of their congregations back home.

We often emphasize the financial needs of our students, and they are real, but oftentimes, we overlook their emotional needs. Even though Liz is 617 miles and 9 ½ hours away from her home in Newbern, Alabama, every single day as she walks across the beautiful campus at Duke, she is aware that she is not walking alone, but she is surrounded by the prayerful, financial, and emotional support of the good members back home in Greensboro and Marion who are walking beside her every step of the way.

Is there someone out there today from your church or your area with whom you would like to partner and provide some financial and emotional support through our Scholarship Foundation? If so, just remember that you can make a huge difference!

Karl K. Stegall