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### Gardner-Webb President Announces Plans to Retire in January 2019

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# Gardner-Webb President Announces Plans to Retire in January 2019

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Office of University  
Communications

January 30, 2018

## *Dr. Frank Bonner Has Served Nearly 32 Years with the University*

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Gardner-Webb University's 12<sup>th</sup> President, Dr. Frank Bonner, has announced his plans to retire in January 2019. At that time, he will have served Gardner-Webb for more than three decades in total and as president for nearly 14 years.

Photo of Dr. Frank Bonner

“One year from now, it will be very difficult for me to cease doing what I love,” Bonner shared. “However, my wife, Flossie, and I look forward to more time together, more travel, and more time with six wonderful grandchildren who are growing up before our eyes.”

Bonner joined Gardner-Webb in 1987 as vice president for Academic Affairs. His role later evolved into vice president for Academic and Student Affairs and then provost and senior vice president. In May, 2005, he was named president and took office on July 1. Prior to GWU, he was a faculty member and associate dean for Special Programs at Anderson College in Anderson, S.C. A 1969 graduate of Furman University in Greenville, S.C., with a bachelor's degree in English, Bonner earned his master's degree from the University of Georgia in 1971 and his doctorate from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1977.

In his inaugural address in 2006, Bonner identified his goals for the University, including improving academic quality, committing to a Christian foundation, striving to be student centered, strengthening athletic programs, and continuing to foster campus life and community.

Bonner envisioned Gardner-Webb “as a highly respected leader in Christian higher education and even widely regarded as one of the finest Christian universities in the nation. Our graduates must be people who are fulfilled as persons; they will be people who exemplify genuine caring and citizenship, respect diversity, relate effectively to persons of all backgrounds, are at peace with themselves, at peace with their maker, and thus face successfully the challenges of life.”

Some highlights of his tenure include leading the University's largest-ever capital campaign raising \$46 million, receiving gifts for the Hunt School of Nursing and Godbold School of Business, starting new doctoral programs in education and nursing, launching a Physician

Assistant Studies Program, building the 110,000-square-foot Tucker Student Center, purchasing and renovating the former Crawley Hospital for the College of Health Sciences, adding a science lab annex facility and joining the Big South Conference as a full member for athletics. Bonner was also instrumental in developing several programs of academic enhancement and building state-of-the-art athletic facilities.

Gardner-Webb Board of Trustees Chair Frank Stewart praised Bonner's tenure and impact. "During his time as President, the University has experienced tremendous growth in infrastructure, faculty enhancements, student research and engagement. Working with Dr. Bonner has been amazing; he is a Godly man with great love for the University and the students."

*Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university that prepares students to become critical thinkers, effective leaders and compassionate servants in the global community. Emphasizing a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics, Gardner-Webb ignites learning and service opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.*