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Communications

May 7, 2016

Frank Beam Receives Doctor of Humane Letters Degree During Ceremony

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – Gardner-Webb

University bestowed its highest recognition of merit, the Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree, to Franklin “Frank” Beam (Shelby, N.C.) during its Spring Commencement ceremonies on Saturday, May 7.

GWU President Dr. Frank Bonner explained that the awarding of an honorary doctorate degree affirms the University values, honors individual achievements, and recognizes the recipient’s embodiment of Gardner-Webb ideals of caring and Christian service. “These guidelines are exemplified to the fullest degree by Frank Beam in his personal, professional, church, and civic life, and in innumerable leadership roles,” Bonner shared. “The common denominator in all of these areas is a firm commitment to service, consistent with strong Christian faith.”

Beam is a native of Cleveland County, N.C., and in 1963, he co-founded a business that later became Quality Insulation and Siding in Shelby. More than 50 years later, he is still a co-owner. In the 1970s, he stepped into a corporate role at Lowe’s Company, Inc., where he served for more than 40 years. When he retired from Lowe’s as regional vice president of operations, Beam directed senior management and all store operations in the southeast, and was responsible for more than 15,000 employees.

In addition to his lengthy career at Lowe’s, Beam has remained an active member at First Baptist Church in Shelby, and has been involved in the community as a board member for several organizations, including the Cleveland County Chamber and HomeTrust Bank. He is chairman of the HealthCare Foundation of Cleveland County, and is a longtime member of the Gardner-Webb University Board of Trustees.

“As stellar as Frank’s professional and civic life has been, his devotion to Gardner-Webb is just as noteworthy,” Bonner reflected. “He really loves this University, encouraging others and serving tirelessly as a trustee and committee chairman.”

Beam has been married to his wife, Mary, for 58 years. The couple has two children: David and his wife, Ann, and Betsy and her husband, Guy. They are also proud grandparents to Mary Catherine and Victoria.

Since 1971, Gardner-Webb University has presented honorary doctorates to more than 60 deserving individuals, including O. Max Gardner, Fay Webb Gardner, Johnny Cash, Earl Scruggs, and more. The practice of awarding honorary doctorate degrees dates back to the 15th century. In the latter part of the 16th century, the practice became common at Oxford and Cambridge universities in England. At GWU, the Doctor of Humane Letters is given in recognition of achievements in the humanities and for philanthropic work.

Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University's purpose is to advance the Kingdom of God through Christian higher education by preparing graduates for professional and personal success, instilling in them a deep commitment to service and leadership, and equipping them for well-rounded lives of lasting impact, Pro Deo et Humanitate (For God and Humanity).