

Gardner-Webb University

Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University

Gardner-Webb NewsCenter Archive

Gardner-Webb Publications

2-24-2016

For 40 Years, Gardner-Webb University Instructor has Offered Students Keys to Music Success

Office of University Communications

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/gardner-webb-newscenter-archive>

For 40 Years, Gardner-Webb University Instructor has Offered Students Keys to Music Success

 webpublish.gardner-webb.edu/newscenter/for-40-years-gardner-webb-university-instructor-has-offered-students-keys-to-music-success/

Office of University
Communications

February 24, 2016

Betty Bennett Finds Lifetime of Satisfaction in Playing and Teaching the Piano

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – At age six, Betty Bennett began playing the piano alongside her church's choir. That was nearly six decades ago, and Bennett has continued to play the piano and teach others ever since.

She started teaching at Gardner-Webb in the fall of 1976 after deciding it was time in her life to switch jobs. She identified possible employment locations close to Charlotte, N.C., where she worked at the time, and Greenville, S.C., her hometown.

“My first application was to Gardner-Webb because it was in the middle of those two cities. One week later, I had a job teaching the ‘overload’ of organ and piano students,” Bennett recounts. “I was only promised one year because Dr. George Cribb, the chairman of the music department at the time, was unsure that there would be enough students for the next year. After my first year, the other teacher left and I have been here since then. This is my 40th year.”

Bennett has taught piano, organ, basic music theory, piano pedagogy and music appreciation at Gardner-Webb. Currently, she works with students two days a week, and she serves as organist and associate director of music at First Presbyterian Church in Greenville on the other days of the week. She also regularly accompanies several ensembles in the region, including the Greenville Chorale, the Herring Chamber Ensemble, and the Piedmont Men's Chorale. And she offers her expertise as a consultant for churches and universities that have plans to purchase pipe organs.

A lifetime experience with the piano started when Bennett's older sister began taking lessons with the instrument. A teacher recommended that Bennett, already studying the piano with her sister and playing by ear, learn how to read music. So she joined her sister in taking lessons when she was five years old.

Now a longtime teacher herself, she has developed a deep appreciation for the journey of music students. “Some of my favorite students struggled, and it was so rewarding to be able to see them make the necessary progress and end up in successful music careers,”

Bennett shares. “Many of my former students are music educators, church musicians, music therapists and performers. I continue to keep up with many of them on a regular basis, which is made much easier by Facebook.”

Bonnie Scruggs, a 2015 GWU alum who now leads the band program at Crest High School in Boiling Springs, studied piano with Bennett during middle and high school, in addition to her time at Gardner-Webb. “Not only did she help me grow as a musician, but she was there as a friend to help me with all life decisions,” Scruggs credits. “She was always willing to listen and be there for me. I will forever be grateful for her.”

Even with a 65-mile drive to campus from her home in Greenville, Bennett has no plans to slow down in her adjunct teaching at Gardner-Webb. She finds satisfaction in helping her students set goals and achieve success, and she continues to enjoy being part of the GWU family.

“Gardner-Webb provides a wonderful Christian environment in which to receive a college education. Students are surrounded by people who care, and what a difference that makes,” Bennett explains. “I want my students to be the best musicians they can be, but I also try to help them determine what the best career choice is for them. I try to encourage dependability, hard work and taking the consequences for their actions. I am extremely thankful that my students feel free to confide in me, and hopefully all of them know that I am always willing to listen and help.”

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).