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Guitarist's Talent Offers his Testimony

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Office of University
Communications

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Doyle Dykes Shares his Story with the Gardner-Webb Community

***By Mariana Mellado, intern for University
Communications***

Doyle Dykes had no idea his life would change the day his mother invited a sailor named Barry Lackey to dinner in his Jacksonville, Fla., home. He credits where he is today musically to that moment from his childhood when Lackey introduced him to different finger stylings for guitar.

Dykes comes from a musical family. His father was a guitarist and gospel music aficionado. As a 3-year-old, Dykes and his talented brother would sing with the family in front of their church on Sunday mornings. Prior to the time Dykes received the monumental lesson on fingerpicking from Lackey, he became a Christian and gave his heart to Christ at age 11 while attending a youth group gathering in church. "That was the ultimate decision in my life," says Dykes.

After enhancing his guitar skills for about a year, he played his first solo in front of an audience. In the 9th and 10th grades, Dykes entered a talent show where he won a trophy that he still treasures in his office today. Dykes once prayed, "God, give me a job to do and I'll always tell people about you." He has kept his commitment to God as he has consistently used his talent to glorify God. Dykes recently visited Boiling Springs, N.C., to share this testimony at Gardner-Webb University.

Dykes effortlessly transitions from one song to the next in his vast array of medleys on his custom Olson guitar. He tactically places his left hand along the fingerboard, while the right hand strums the strings of his guitar to create layered sounds formed from blended low and high notes. He is not your typical rock 'n' roll star. Dykes incorporates various genres including country, folk, bluegrass, and Christian worship music and hymns into his music. His primary influences are Merle Travis and Chet Atkins.

"I always thank the Lord for the doors he's opened through music," says Dykes. In his journey, Dykes has met familiar names like Don Felder from The Eagles and Van Halen. He's hit the road numerous times to play in many different countries. "Anywhere in the world that I have been, I have felt His presence. I've done things in China. I've done things

in South Africa. I've done things in Australia and New Zealand, all over Europe, you know, and sometimes by myself I'd be with people I didn't know. But when I lay my head down at night, I always knew that I had a Friend," he says.

Dykes has performed in renowned venues like the Grand Ole Opry. While playing at Liverpool's Cavern Club—the birthplace of the Beatles—Dykes shares that he played the Christian song, "How Great Thou Art" in a secular setting. The staff at the time took note and thought it was an uncommon act that was worthy of recognition. Thus, Dykes was appointed to the Cavern's Wall of Fame with his very own brick. In 2014, he was inducted into the National Thumbpickers Hall of Fame at the Merle Travis Music Center in Kentucky.

In the midst of the many triumphs Dykes has had in his lifetime, he has also had to overcome some obstacles. "I had a brain tumor, it actually wasn't malignant but it was in a very strategically dangerous place where it had to be removed. It took my hearing on the right side," he explains. Dykes' life is reflective of his love for ministry, his passion for the guitar and his mission to merge the two in using his talent for God.

Aside from playing onstage with renowned artists, Dykes also gives special guitar lessons and speaks to groups. At Gardner-Webb University, he encouraged students to be instruments of God as he exclaimed that, "Whether it's through sports, whether it's through literature or writing, whether it's through art, God can use those gifts that you have, scholastically, it doesn't matter. God can use you. He'll open doors that no men can show."

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).