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### **Former Gardner-Webb University Vice President to Release Humorous Book**

Office of University Communications

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# Former Gardner-Webb University Vice President to Release Humorous Book

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Office of University Communications

September 25, 2013

## *Pastor Bob Shepherd Shares Real Life Stories from Decades of Ministry Experiences*

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – Bob Shepherd has touched and enriched countless lives through his work in ministry—which includes a lengthy relationship with Gardner-Webb—for nearly 60 years. When his kids requested he compile his experiences and write a book, he didn’t hesitate. The result is an entertaining, heartfelt, and humorous collection of his firsthand accounts appropriately titled, *A Shepherd’s Joys in Fields of Service*.

“My children requested that I write about some of my experiences, including my days at Gardner-Webb as vice president,” said Shepherd. “All stories are true with minor embellishments. Except for family names, all names are fabricated.”

Shepherd’s association with GWU began when he served as vice president for development in the 1980s and 90s. During that time he was responsible for fundraising, alumni relations, denominational relations, public relations, and sports information services departments. Shepherd helped make history at the University when the Bob D. Shepherd Endowed Chair in Biblical Studies was established and named in his honor in 1998 (the first of its kind at GWU). The endowment fund helps underwrite professional development expenses for the person serving in that role, and the philosophy is to offer financial support for the faculty member in his/her research or engagement with the community. Its main purpose is to ensure that students in the School of Divinity have the same opportunities Shepherd had to study Christian theology and serve in ministry. The current chair is Dr. Gerald Keown, who also serves as associate dean for the School of Divinity and professor of Old Testament. Today, Shepherd also serves as a GWU trustee.

“I loved working at Gardner-Webb. I’m also proud of the dedication and contributions over the years to those who have made the endowed chair possible,” said Shepherd.

Throughout his life, Shepherd has served in over a dozen churches, primarily as a pastor or interim pastor. In 1994, he retired from First Baptist Church Morganton (N.C.), where he was named pastor emeritus. His experiences within the church constitute most of Shepherd’s stories within the book.

Humorous reflections include “Commode Counseling,” where Shepherd shares about asking for permission to enter the ladies restroom at a church to help talk a distressed bride into going through with her wedding just prior to the ceremony. His account in “Get The Fly”

reveals an extremely awkward moment for Shepherd when he was told—just moments before delivering a message at the North Carolina Women’s Ministry Union (WMU) meeting at Ridgecrest, N.C., that he needed to “get the fly.” Thinking that the fly/zipper on his pants was down, he quickly discovered that the only thing between him and the audience was a flimsy music stand. He breathed a sigh of relief when he learned that he had maintained his integrity, and his main concern was to beware of a pesky insect flying around the stage.

“Shepherd’s musings will leave you with lots of smiles,” said Keown. “Like Bob himself, they reflect a love for the church, love for his people, and love for God. Bob Shepherd has devoted his life to shepherding all who cross his path with genuine care and good humor.”

The book also includes hand drawn companion sketches for particular stories. There is even one of a fly buzzing around Shepherd’s head while he is trying to preach. *A Shepherd’s Joys in Fields of Service* is being published by Biltmore Press and will be available for purchase in the near future at various locations, including the GWU Campus Shop.

*Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University offers a comprehensive academic experience that introduces students to the diverse world of ideas and to the people who think them, preparing them for professional success and for productive citizenship.*