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**CHRISTIAN SERVICE**

## Keesee Educational Fund Continues Ongoing Support of GWU Divinity School with Latest Gift

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON JANUARY 21, 2022



▲ The M. Christopher White School of Divinity graduating class of December 2021 and their professors pose after the recognition ceremony.

### For 15 Years, Keesee Has Supported Numerous Students and Provided Academic Enrichment Opportunities

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Since the fall of 2006, the Charles B. Keesee Educational Fund Inc. has been a valued and committed partner to the M. Christopher White School of Divinity at Gardner-Webb University. The fund provides scholarships to numerous individual students who are preparing for church-related ministry, and the Foundation has presented grants to the divinity school for hands-on programs and academic enrichment opportunities.

“There is no way to express adequately how great an impact Keesee’s contribution to Baptist churches in Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, South Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky and West Virginia has been in the southeast,” noted School of Divinity Dean Dr. Robert Canoy. “Both master’s and doctoral students have benefitted from need-based financial grants provided by Keesee.”

Recently, the Keesee Foundation affirmed its support of the GWU School of Divinity by presenting a \$75,000 grant for Bible land travel and digital libraries for students. This gift renews a gift the Foundation made to the school in 2014 for the same programs.

The Foundation’s Vice President Doug Ramsey said the organization values the partnership with Gardner-Webb. “The Keesee Educational Fund has been honored these last 15 years to partner with the GWU School of Divinity in the theological education of its students,” he affirmed. “We have enjoyed the

relationship with the Office of Financial Aid and Dean Canoy who have been very helpful. We look forward to continuing to award grants that will benefit students as they contemplate their future in the Baptist ministry.”



Over the last seven years, Keesee has presented two additional grants, totaling \$165,000, for technology upgrades, mission projects, spiritual formation, and pastor in residence, where a pastor spends a week or more sharing with students and professors in School of Divinity classes.

Moreover, the Foundation chose to present one of its single largest scholarships to a divinity student from Gardner-Webb. Avery Woods received the new scholarship, named in memory of the late Vernie W. Lewis, who served for 50 years as the Foundation’s office manager and secretary-treasurer.

“Without the Keesee Foundation’s commitment, our school and its students would not be what we are today,” Canoy asserted. “Hundreds of students have been afforded a theological education as well as additional educational and ministerial experiences in Israel, Egypt, Greece, Turkey, Asia, the Pacific Rim, Africa, Cuba, and other places. “Moreover, each graduate leaves the School of Divinity with a digital technology library from LOGOS that is theirs for a lifetime.”

[About the Keesee Foundation \(https://cbkeesee.com/index.asp\)](https://cbkeesee.com/index.asp)

*Established in 1941 by Charles B. Keesee, the foundation has assisted thousands of qualified students going into the Baptist ministry or religious work in the Baptist denomination at 11 seminaries or divinity schools. Keesee and his wife, Olivia Helms Simmons, had no children of their own and desired to help worthy young men and women obtain an education at Baptist institutions. Charles provided in his will for the establishment of an educational fund, and when Olivia died in 1944, she left the major part of her estate to the fund.*

[About Gardner-Webb \(https://gardner-webb.edu/\)](https://gardner-webb.edu/)

*Gardner-Webb University is North Carolina’s recognized leader in private, Christian higher education. A Carnegie-Classified Doctoral/Professional University, GWU is home to six professional schools, 14 academic departments, more than 80 undergraduate and graduate majors, and a world-class faculty. Located on a beautiful 225-acre campus in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb prepares graduates to*

*impact their chosen professions, equips them with the skills to advance the frontiers of knowledge, and inspires them to make a positive and lasting difference in the lives of others. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.*