

CAMPUS NEWS

Gardner-Webb Celebrates Leaders of the Past on Founders Day, Dec. 1

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON NOVEMBER 16, 2022



▲ The Huggins-Curtis Building

Activities Begin with Morning Convocation and Include Presentation of Inaugural Founders Medal

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—From Gardner-Webb University’s origins as a high school through its evolution into a nationally-recognized university and leader in Christian higher education, each chapter of institutional history has been penned by men and women of profound vision and relentless dedication. Those who helped build GWU into what it is today gave generously of their time, talents and critical financial support. On Dec. 1, the Gardner-Webb community will come together on Founders Day to honor the names and legacies of persons and groups that played formative roles in the University’s development. The day of celebration will be highlighted by the presentation of two inaugural Founders Medals.

Gardner-Webb University was established in 1905 as Boiling Springs High School. Formed by the Kings Mountain and Sandy Run Baptist Associations, the school’s purpose was to educate and equip young men and women to invest, improve, and build up the communities in which they lived. In 1928, Boiling Springs High School was accredited as a two-year junior college, and in 1942 it was renamed Gardner-Webb College in honor of the support of N.C. Governor O. Max Gardner and his wife Fay Webb. In 1993, leaders elevated the institution to its present status as Gardner-Webb University.

“Great universities are not built overnight, and the GWU that we know and love today is the product of hard work and persistence by so many people over the course of more than a century,” observed

Gardner-Webb President Dr. William Downs. “Our founders—those distant in time as well as those who have made their marks in recent years—deserve our recognition and our gratitude. To that end, I am delighted that we are reviving a Founders Day tradition that hasn’t been honored here for decades. With this revival, we commit to celebrating our rich heritage each and every year so that we may never forget the efforts of those upon whose shoulders we now stand.”



The Founders Day celebration begins at 9:25 a.m. with a convocation in Dover Chapel. Leah Clevenger, director of Alumni Relations, said the program will be led by University Archivist Dr. Natalie Bishop. The presentation will be an opportunity to learn more about the University’s founders. “Her 30-minute presentation has been creatively designed for the purpose of engaging students, but will appeal to the broader audience of faculty, staff, and community members,” Clevenger affirmed.

At 4 p.m., the Historical Marker ceremony will take place on the site of the Huggins-Curtis Building. The Huggins-Curtis Building served as the main campus building for over 50 years. Built in 1907 by founding trustee and Boiling Springs carpenter John F. Moore, Huggins-Curtis held the school’s classrooms, student housing, library, cafeteria, and chapel. The Huggins-Curtis burned in a fire in 1957. In its place today sits the Dover Campus Center, a new symbol of welcome to those joining the Gardner-Webb community.

The brick pedestal marker will be placed in the flower bed between Dover Campus Center and the E.B. Hamrick Memorial Hall. The plaque will read:

Here stood the Huggins-Curtis Building

A symbol of love & deep devotion by our Founders

Erected 1907 – Burned 1957

A formal presentation of the inaugural Founders Medal will be at 5 p.m., with a ceremony and dinner in Tucker Student Center. This award recognizes individuals who have contributed significant and distinguished service to the University. Founders Medal recipients will receive a medallion, a lapel pin for everyday wear, and a portrait which will hang in the Dover Library for one year. This year, the Founders Medal will be awarded to two couples—one recognizes a couple from the early days of the

institution and will be awarded posthumously, while the other medal will be given to a couple for their continuing support and service. Registration for the dinner and ceremony should be received by Nov. 27. Guests may register [here](http://gardner-webb.edu/event/founders-day/) (<http://gardner-webb.edu/event/founders-day/>).

After the presentation, everyone is invited to the annual [Festival of Lights](https://gardner-webb.edu/news/2022-festival-of-lights-is-dec-1/) (<https://gardner-webb.edu/news/2022-festival-of-lights-is-dec-1/>) at 7 p.m. in Dover Theatre, followed by a reception in Tucker Student Center. A beloved Christmas tradition since 1984, the program will include all the favorite activities that area families have enjoyed in the past—reading of the Christmas story, singing carols, musical presentations, luminaria-lined walkways, and lighting of the Christmas tree.

Auxiliary aids will be made available to persons with disabilities upon request 10 working days prior to the event. Please call 704-406-4270 or email disabilityservices@gardner-webb.edu with your request.

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.