

IN MEMORIAM

Bob Shepherd Remembered for his Pastoral Ministry and Service to Gardner-Webb and School of Divinity

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON MAY 2, 2023



▲ In 2020, Bob Shepherd was recognized as a Trustee Emeritus by the Chair at that time Jennifer Marion Mills.

Former University Vice President of Development and Trustee Passes Away on April 30

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Bob D. Shepherd, a pastor and former vice president for development at Gardner-Webb University, passed away on April 30. Shepherd, 93, touched and enriched countless lives through his work in ministry for over 60 years. He also served two terms on the GWU Board of Trustees, 2011-2014 and 2016-2018, and was recognized as a trustee emeritus in 2020.

Shepherd made history at Gardner-Webb in 1998 when the Bob D. Shepherd Endowed Chair in Biblical Studies was established and named in his honor. The endowment was the first of its kind at Gardner-Webb. Its purpose was to provide professional development expenses for the person serving in that role. Shepherd wanted to ensure that students in the School of Divinity had the same opportunities he had to study Christian theology and serve in ministry. The Chair was endowed by Shepherd's family, friends and the churches he served.



▲ Bob Shepherd

School of Divinity Dean and Professor of Christian Theology Dr. Robert W. Canoy noted that Shepherd's presence at Gardner-Webb had been missed over the last few years. He described him as "one of the moving forces in the early life of the School of Divinity."

Canoy continued, "He and Delores were faithful participants in all things Gardner-Webb and the School: Convocation Luncheon, Graduation Luncheon, Christian Service Organization, and the namesake of the Shepherd Chair of Biblical Studies (currently occupied by Dr. Jim McConnell)."

McConnell, professor of New Testament interpretation, expressed his honor to hold the Shepherd Chair. "I am thankful for Dr. Bob and Delores Shepherd's generosity in establishing the chair," McConnell reflected. "By doing so Bob and Delores have invested in the work of the School of Divinity and demonstrated their commitment to its work. We will miss Bob, but through the Shepherd chair his legacy will live on in the lives of countless future students."

Throughout his life, Shepherd served in over a dozen churches, primarily as a pastor or interim pastor. In 1994, he retired from First Baptist Church Morganton where he was named pastor emeritus. After retirement, he continued to serve as an interim pastor for several churches in the community.

At the request of his children, he published a book about his experiences as a pastor and working at Gardner-Webb. Appropriately titled, "A Shepherd's Joys in Fields of Service," the collection features entertaining, heartfelt, and humorous stories of his firsthand accounts.

Canoy observed, "Dr. Shepherd's laugh and sense of humor were infectious as was his unwavering love for the church. In North Carolina Baptist life, particularly the western part of the state, Bob and Delores are role models. He was a man of deep wisdom, a wonderful communicator, and a friend to everyone. I cannot remember a time when he wasn't smiling."

Shepherd also served three terms as chairman of the General Board of the Baptist State Convention and also chairman of the Executive Committee. He served eight years as trustee at Wake Forest University. Among many awards, Shepherd was honored as Morganton's Man of the Year, and was

awarded an honorary Doctor of Ministry degree from the School of Divinity at Gardner-Webb. He was also a member of his Rotary Club for 60 years and was named a Paul Harris Fellow.

He is survived by his wife of 71 years, Delores, four children, six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. The family will receive friends from 12:30 to 2 p.m., on Saturday, May 20, in the parlor of First Baptist Church, Morganton. A celebration of life will follow at 2 p.m. in the church with Dr. Thomas A. Bland Jr. officiating.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be sent to First Baptist Church in Morganton, 502 W. Union St., or to Gardner-Webb School of Divinity for the Bob D. Shepherd Chair, address: Gardner-Webb University, c/o Advancement, P.O. Box 997, Boiling Springs, NC 28017.

Gardner-Webb University is North Carolina's recognized leader in private, Christian higher education. A Carnegie-Classified Doctoral/Professional University, GWU is home to nine colleges and schools, 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](https://gardner-webb.edu/) (<https://gardner-webb.edu/>).