

The Oklahoma Baptist Chronicle



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Restoration work begun on 1613 King James ‘He’ Bible

by Bob Nigh, Oklahoma Baptists’ Historical Secretary and Director of History

Conservators have begun the work of repairing/restoring a 1613 King James Version “He” Bible, which recently was donated to the J.M. and Helen Gaskin Baptist Historical Library and Archives at Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU) by members of Oklahoma City, Shields Blvd. last year. OBU has contracted with officials at the Museum of the Bible in Oklahoma City to perform the restoration, which began in July and is expected to take six months to complete.

The “Great He Bible,” refers to a typographical error in the third chapter of the Old Testament book of Ruth, verse 15, which uses the incorrect pronoun “he,” instead of the correct pronoun “she.”

The actual text reads: “he (Referring to Boaz) measured sixe (six) measures of barley and laide (laid) it on her; and *he* went into the citie (city).” The correct text should read “and *she* went into the citie.”

The Bible was donated several years ago to Shields Blvd. by Linda L. Drabik, who obtained it from the private collection of Mr. and Mrs. David C. Sprague of Oklahoma City. The Spragues procured it from the late W.A. Stewart, a collector in Pittsburgh, Pa.

The Bible’s title page shows that it contains “the Old testament and the New: Newly translated out of the original tongues: and with the former translations diligently compared and revised, by his majesties special commandment. Imprinted at London by Robert Barker, printer to the king’s most excellent majestie. Anno 1613.”

Barker was one of three printers—along with Bonham Norton and John Bill—authorized to print the 1611 King James Bible, a task that actually took three years to complete.

The Bible was picked up on July 21 by Christopher Price of the Museum of the Bible. Price packed it safely in a secure box, and it was delivered to the restoration area of the Museum of the Bible offices in Oklahoma City.

When the restoration work is completed, the Bible will be on display in the OBU library.



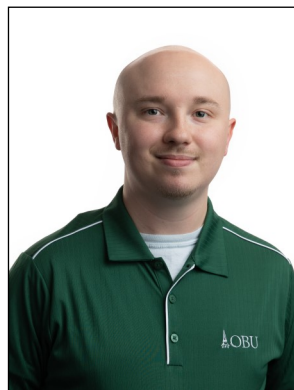
Careful packaging was essential to delivering the Bible safely to the offices of the Museum of the Bible in Oklahoma City.

Mackey new collections librarian, archivist at OBU

Joshua Mackey joined the staff of the Mabee Learning Center at Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU) on Aug. 18 as Collections Librarian. As such, he will be working with the J.M. and Helen Gaskin Baptist Archives and relate to the Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission and Bob Nigh, Oklahoma Baptists' Historical Secretary and Director of History.

A native of Copan, he is a 2018 graduate of the OBU, and has a background in public history. He succeeds former archivist Rachel Walker, with whom he worked as a student several years ago, and who recommended him for the job.

"I was one of Rachel's student workers, and have since finished my master's degree in Local and Community History from Wichita State University (WSU)," Mackey said. "The day after I submitted my thesis, Rachel reached out and encouraged me to apply, and it is an honor and a blessing to get to serve OBU and Oklahoma Baptists in this stewardship role.



Joshua Mackey

"Public historians are simply historians trained to work between the academic and public world," he added. "From museums and archives to the National Park Service and beyond, public historians combine a love of history and a love of people to tell their communities' stories. As a public historian, I am enthusiastic about bringing fresh perspective to the collection in the archives and working with university and denominational stakeholders to utilize the collection. I also aim to be deliberate in collecting, preserving, and sharing the stories that define people's experiences at OBU."

While in Wichita, Mackey served as a docent for the Pizza Hut Museum, as a public relations intern in the WSU admissions office, as a collections assistant for a private local history collector, and finally as the curator at the Kansas Aviation Museum. He also assisted in planning a digital exhibit and collections project for Wichita's Latino community titled *Somos de Wichita*.

"I am very excited to have him at OBU," commented Julie Rankin, OBU's director of library services. "He is getting acclimated and familiar with the archives and library, and I know Josh looks forward to working with the Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission!"

Oklahoma Baptist Hall of Fame

Teala Mae Goddard

1902—1997

Inducted 2021

Teala Goddard always claimed that cooking was her calling, and she answered that call for 31 years as she prepared more than 300,000 meals for Royal Ambassadors (RA) at camp and church groups on weekend retreats.

In recognition of her years of dedicated service, the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma (BGCO) Board of directors voted to name the kitchen at Camp Hudgens near McAlester in her honor.



Teala Mae Goddard

Thus, it became known as the “Teala Goddard Kitchen.”

Goddard began cooking for campers when the RAs and GAs met at Falls Creek for 10 years, then at Camp Nunny-Cha-ha when they met there.

Then, it developed into a “full-time” job and, for example, she cooked for eight weeks of RA camp, one week of deaf camp and supervised the kitchen for two other week-long camps each summer. During the off-season, she traveled back to Camp Hudgens on 42 weekends to prepare food for retreats.

When queried about her age and plans for retirement, the silver-haired grandmother once replied, “I’ll be 70 on Sept. 29, and I don’t plan to retire until I’m 90.” Her mother worked with her for nine years and helped cook until her doctor ordered her to retire at age 77.

Goddard preferred cooking for boys because “girls are too picky,” and she especially liked to cook for single adult retreats because they’re “extra, nice.”

During RA camp, she prepared three meals a day with two helpers assisting her. About Camp Hudgens and her work, she said, “This is the happiest time of my life. Camp Hudgens is as much home to me as my mobile home near Dickson. I don’t really have to work, but this is something that needs to be done; these boys need good meals. Besides, I can’t stand those old folks who just sit and grumble.”

Goddard is proud of the fact that many boys she prepared meals for grew up to become preachers, teachers and full-time church workers.

"Some of the boys who've eaten my cooking have even brought their prospective brides by for my approval," she added.

One-time camp director Bob Banks, whom Goddard claims as an "honorary son," said of her: "Mrs. Goddard is an example of a person who has dedicated her talents to the Lord and to youth. She loves her work, and this is evident in the time she spends in and the plans she makes for foodservice, the care she gives the equipment,



Teala Goddard dishes up some of her trademark cobbler in preparation for a meal for Royal Ambassadors at Camp Hudgens.

the pride she takes in her work and her love for those she serves. Only eternity can measure her contributions to the lives of boys, the Lord's work and to Baptist work."

Like most "seasoned" cooks, Goddard said she didn't follow a specific meal plan.

"I just buy the meat and plan the meals around it," she said.

Invariably, a few minutes before lunch every day, camp pastors, staff and campers started asking, "What's for lunch?"

Her answer: "Food."

"What kind of food?"

"Good food."

Goddard's schedule called for her to rise at 5:30 a.m. and retire at 9:30 p.m. She said her meals passed the test when "the proof of the pudding is in the eating."

She is proud that some Camp Hudgens staff members gain 10 to 20 pounds during the summer, despite hard work. Knowing most boys really like dessert, Goddard specialized in cobblers.

Oklahoma Baptist Hall of Fame

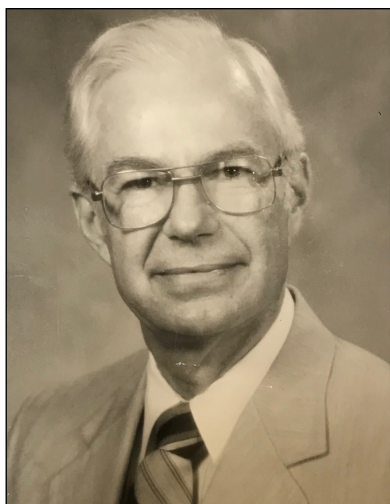
Robert Neal Hammons

1928—2012

Inducted 2021

by Bob Nigh, Oklahoma Baptists' Historical Secretary and Director of History

Robert Neal Hammons served as a pastor in Oklahoma for more than 50 years, including churches in Onapa, Lawton, Clinton, and Seminole. He lived for many years in Seminole, where he was ordained to the Gospel ministry in 1949, and later returned to serve as pastor of First Baptist Church from 1976-1993.



Robert Neal Hammons

He was pastor of Onapa Baptist Church from 1949-51 while he was a student at Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU) in Shawnee. He then was pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in Lawton from 1951-57 before starting a 19-year pastorate of the First Baptist Church of Clinton (1957-76). He returned to Seminole's First Baptist Church in 1976 and served as pastor there until his retirement in 1993.

Upon his retirement, Hammons said, "My philosophy of ministry is you need to take time and move slowly so the people can come to trust your ministry. Don't go in and move too fast until the people have a chance to know you as pastor."

He completed several interim pastorates after his retirement, including a year as full-time interim pastor of the First Baptist Church of

Seminole in 2004.

Hammons served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1946-1948. He earned a bachelor of science degree from OBU in 1951, and a bachelor of divinity degree from Southwestern Seminary in 1954.

During his years of ministry, Hammons was active in the state convention and associational ministries, served on numerous boards, participated in 89 revivals in 11 states and one foreign country, and led seven tours to the Holy Land. He also taught numerous classes at Falls Creek, was Bible teacher at Falls Creek in 1973 and taught in numerous other Bible conferences and religious meetings.

After retirement in 1993, Hammons served as interim pastor for five churches and was guest preacher numerous times in churches

across the state.

Hammons invested his life in local church ministry in the state of Oklahoma. He retired in 1993, following 44 years in the pastorate. In retirement, he continued to assist churches in interim roles.

Filling a variety of roles in Baptist life, Hammons served five full terms on the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma's board of directors, and served on numerous BGCO committees, including chairing the Co-operative Program study committee in 1997. He also served on the OBU Board of Trustees from 1963-67 and 1972-75, and the Baptist Foundation of Oklahoma Board of Directors (1977-1980). Hammons was first vice president (1976) and second vice president (1961) of the BGCO.

He also worked internationally as pastor of East Bavaria Southern Baptist Church in Grafenwohr-Vilseck, Germany in 1995.

Hammons taught as an adjunct teacher of Pastoral Ministry at OBU and taught in Southwestern Seminary's extension program. He also worked as a field supervisor for students from OBU and the seminary.

Hammons was among six distinguished alumni of OBU honored during OBU's Harvest Dinner on Fri., Nov. 10, 2006 in the university's Geiger Center. The OBU Alumni Association's Alumni Achievement Award is the highest honor bestowed by the association. The award is given "in recognition of outstanding life service which has brought honor to the individual's alma mater."

In 1999, Hammons and his wife, Ella, were honored at OBU with the establishment of an endowed scholarship—the Robert and Ella Hammons Scholarship Fund for International (Or children of missionaries) Students. The scholarship honored the Hammons' 50th wedding anniversary on Sept. 3, and was an anniversary gift from their children.

The couple were married for 63 years. They have five children, Sam Hammons; Cynthia McMains; Diana Nieto; Robert Hammons, and David Hammons, 16 grandchildren, and 19 great-grandchildren, with four more on the way. Hammons passed away on Wed., Sept. 26, 2012 at home, surrounded by his loving wife and children.

At the time of his death, Hammons was a member of Oklahoma City, Quail Springs.

"Bob Hammons has had a profound impact on the life and ministry of Oklahoma Baptist University as a long time pastor near the university and by way of the many church and family members he has sent to the school through the years," M. Dale Griffin, OBU Assistant Vice President for Spiritual Life and Dean of the Chapel, said after his passing. "His influence will be felt for many years to come. To the family and friends of Bob Hammons and his family, I want to express my condolences."

Oklahoma Baptist Hall of Fame

Lester Leo Reed

1928—2007

Inducted 2021

“Hello, I’m a servant of Jesus Christ. I’m a born-again, baptized believer, a Christian, a deep-water Southern Baptist. I believe laughter is the best medicine; it will help take your mind off your problems.”

With those words, “Les The Mess” Reed introduced himself at most of his speaking engagements.

A native of Winfield, Kan., Reed was an outstanding athlete in football and track and field at Winfield High School. After graduation, Reed married his sweetheart, Mae Belle Lucas, and briefly worked as a police officer before embarking on a 25-year career in the oilfield business.

In 1960 in Montana, Reed escaped without injury when a gas plant exploded, killing one of his coworkers. After witnessing the man’s death in the fire, Reed promised God that if He would open the doors, he would tell people how they could be saved from a burning eternity.

Three days later, a church asked him to play his guitar and sing in its services. He did, and a revival broke out. Years later, Reed, a deacon at, Tulsa, Parkland had appeared in more than 2,500 engagements before 800,000 people in 32 states.

“I don’t have any talent, I can’t read music and I’m tone deaf,” he once said. “All I had was humor. God just uses what little I have.”

In addition to full-time employment with an oil field supply company, Reed averaged 160 engagements during the school year, plus numerous appearances during the summer.

Billed as an evangelistic comedian. Reed used various costumes and facial expressions, along with quick one-liners to draw laughs. In addition to engagements at churches, he appeared at the Tulsa State Fair, civic group meetings and such gatherings as meetings of cattlemen’s associations.

Beginning a full-time ministry of evangelism, with a strong flavor of Christian entertainment in 1981, Reed accepted an invitation from Owasso, First to be its on-staff evangelist and lead the church’s visitation program.



Lester Leo Reed

He proved to be a popular speaker at sweetheart banquets, state and national conventions and churches, presenting his program of stories, songs, humor, impersonations—and the gospel message—with some variation based on the audience.

He made recordings of his materials: Three LPs were followed by three more recordings on 8-track and, then, cassette tapes. The novelty recordings were titled “Less the Mess”, “Les Who?”, “More of Les”, “The Rest of Les”, “The Best of Les”, and “Les Re-joice.”

A stickler for keeping his humor and message simple, Reed discarded the master tape from his first album when elaborate accompaniment “made it sound like a dance band.” He ended up being accompanied by a \$12 guitar and a makeshift drum fashioned out of sandpaper and a cardboard box.

“Les the Mess” was honored by the Mabe family—the founding members of Branson’s Baldknobbers—to make occasional guest appearances in several of their shows. He even was invited to join the group full-time, but he declined, saying he was called to minister in Oklahoma and, more specifically, to Oklahoma Baptists.

He used several alter egos, including “Cecil Swartz from back home in Winfield,” and impersonations of Will Rogers, Glenn Campbell and the Tijuana Brass to delight his audiences. With a versatile voice, Reed also could imitate Johnny Cash, his favorite, Elvis Presley, Willie Nelson and the Ink Spots.

“The act depended on the (make-up of) the audience,” he said. “But the message is always the same—the Gospel of Jesus Christ. God didn’t call me to be a preacher. But He did call me to serve Him in whatever way I could. When Jesus told His disciples they had to be fishers of men, He didn’t say what kind of bait they had to use. I used about whatever kind of bait I could find. It got me into places preachers can’t get into.”

Reed once said, “I deal a lot with young people because they are our future. The spirit of America is God, but the soul of America is the young people.”



“Les the Mess” kept audiences entertained using a wide variety of costumes and impersonations.

WALTER WILSON

2021

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Walter Wilson, who serves Oklahoma Baptists as African American Affinity Ministry Partner (AMP), has been pastor of Lawton, Friendship for 14 years. He attended Bishop College in Dallas; Dallas Baptist University; Dallas Theological Seminary and received a bachelor's and master's degree in Christian education and, in 1989, a doctorate degree in ministry from Bishop college. He has served 37 years in the pastoral ministry.



Walter Wilson

In 1989 Wilson was one of the 15 pastors involved in forming the African American Fellowship (AAF) within the Baptist General Convention of Texas and a founding member of The Oklahoma African American Fellowship in 2009. He also served as a member of the Oklahoma Baptists Board of Directors from 2009-2013.

An SBC pastor since 1987, Wilson has excelled in black church administration, moving his first church, by God's direction, from a membership of 10 to 350, then planting three churches. Also, he helped to restart two churches, one of which was 165 years old.

Wilson has been married to his wife, Velma, for 48 years. The couple has one daughter, Rochell, who is married and lives in Fate, Texas.

Wilson loves teaching and preaching God's Word and when asked who he is, he says; "I'm just a nobody, trying to tell everybody about Somebody, Who can save anybody."

Lawton, Friendship, at 75 years, is the flagship African American Southern Baptist church in Oklahoma. For the last 14 years, the church has been led to work with the Great Plains Improvement Association; the Lawton Pregnancy Resource Center; Farmers to Families and numerous other community help groups.

As African American ministry partner with Oklahoma Baptists, Wilson serves as liaison between the convention and its 68 Black churches among the state convention's 1,800 churches.

He works with pastors, churches and associations statewide who minister in an African American context. He is an encourager, counselor, resource provider, motivator and mentor, especially focused on the overall wellness of each church, pastor and his family.



Walter Wilson, Oklahoma Baptists African American Affinity Ministry Partner and Lawton, Friendship (Center) meets with members of the African American Fellowship, including from left, Don Burton, Oklahoma City, Calvary Missionary; Victor Paul, Bartlesville, Greater First; Dale Roland, Tulsa, Concord; Greg Rogers, Oklahoma City Gideon; Rickey Thomas, Oklahoma Baptists and Oklahoma City, Freedom City, Joe Ligon, Oklahoma Baptists Interim Executive Director; LeRon West, Tulsa, Gilcrease Hills; James Swain, Oklahoma Baptists associate executive director and Church Relations Group leader; Tiller Watson, Tulsa, Turn Church and LaTricia Watson, Tulsa, Turn.

Wilson also serves as the director of the African American track of the Convention's Robert Haskins School of Christian Ministry. Courses are designed to strengthen African American pastors.

In July 2019, with support from the Convention, Wilson was able to take pastors and their wives to the Black Church Life Conference hosted by LifeWay at Ridgecrest Conference Center. The African American Ministry partnered with the Oklahoma Baptists' Evangelism Office to host two evangelism rallies to equip African American pastors and laypeople with evangelism tools.

Recently, Wilson was asked to help 12 African American pastors and their wives attend the 2021 Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting in Nashville, Tenn. to support the first African American Nominated to serve on SBCs executive board of directors.

One of Wilson's assignments involves bridging the gap between the convention and African American churches.

"Every culture has its own way of doing things," he said. "We're all God's children. There's only one Heaven. I love to see churches working together. For 37 years, that's been one of the things driving me."

Karen Willoughby contributed to this article.

GASKIN BAPTIST CHURCH HISTORY AWARDS

2020 Church History Award to Okmulgee, Calvary; Honorable Mention to Tulsa, Valley View Tribute

"Our Story is Still Unfolding," a concise record of the history of Okmulgee, Calvary, has been chosen to receive the Gaskin Church History Award for 2020 by the members of the Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission.

Founded with the assistance of Okmulgee, First, Okmulgee, Calvary first opened its "doors" in March 2020 to offer Sunday School classes for children in the Berry Addition who did not attend any church. Six children attended that first Sunday, and the attendance doubled to 12 the next week, growth which prompted a move three months later from the home of the S.W. Halls to a building on a lot donated by Dr. V. Berry.

Glen Gurley was the church's first salaried minister, hired on Sept. 17, 1926. Since then, the church has had 36 pastors in its history, including present Richard Manning, who has been pastor since Nov.20, 2011.

The church held a 100th Anniversary Dedication Service on Sept. 19, 2020, which included the presentation of a time capsule, recognition of past and present deacons, staff and teachers. Charter members also were recognized, and anniversary committee member Kathleen Nix presented anecdotes from former pastors.

Music Minister Glenn Fincher performed a tribute song, "People Come, People Go," he had written for the occasion. Manning gave closing comments, and the closing prayer was given by North Canadian Association Director of Missions, Bill Rowland.

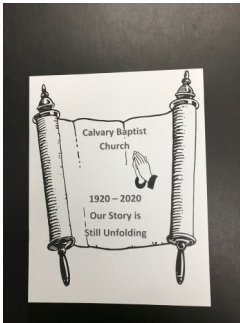
A dedicated group of faithful former members and staff—Friends of Valley View—joined hands to produce "A Historical Tribute to Valley View Baptist Church, Tulsa," using church membership records, event bulletins, Sunday service bulletins, photos and early records which were collected over the years by long-term members who held onto them for safekeeping even after the church was no longer in business.

"I had my parents' records," said Larry Riddle, who submitted the document to Oklahoma Baptists' Historical Secretary Bob Nigh for inclusion in the Gaskin Archives at OBU. "My dad had been the Sunday School Superintendent and wore many other hats, and was there every time the doors were open. Mother was a volunteer typist for many reports Dad furnished and wore many other hats, too, and for many years, she typed and our family assembled the annual Sunday School and Church members directory. "

Riddle still has some of those directories and his own collection of valley view facts, photos and memories.

"My parents joined Valley View in March 1958, three months after it became a church, and I joined in 1959 at age 6, when I was saved. Betty Satterfield was my mother's friend and taught pre-school Sunday School and served on the kitchen committee and flower committee and other things alongside her for decades.

"Betty, who outlived my mother by many years, kept some of the church records, as well as those that were found at the church when it closed. She had been the keeper of records for many years and when ready to pass that torch, she contributed all her records.



"Hazel Kight also had kept many church records through the years and was the last church clerk, so the final membership records were there. When Hazel passed on to Heaven, her daughter, Sue Rogers, contributed all of those records as well. Betty and Hazel were among the last six regular attenders when the church closed. I could see that some others

who had passed on before us had made their contributions as well."

Riddle retired in 2018 and joined the Friends of Valley View lunch group and volunteered to be the keeper of all the records going forward.

"As these records came in and I went through them, I discovered it was all quite inspiring, and just needed to be assembled into a tribute that could be shared," he said. "Betty had told me about her desire to contribute something to the Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission. That, too, figured into the goal."

Last winter, Riddle scanned, compiled, organized and filled in a few gaps.

"It took a month of spare time to put it all together, with the help of a new computer and printer and thanks to those who had done such a good job keeping records through the years," he said. "I could not have done my part without them! What a wealth of information they contributed. This was significant because they had all been very involved in the church from the late 1950s.

"Without them the early records of the church would probably not have survived. The result is the contributions of many brought together with a common purpose, a labor of love and a treasured keepsake. The Friends of Valley View are a lovely group, each one with a history of serving at Valley View in very significant ways, and still living the legacy where God has placed them to serve."

"This is an excellent chronicle of the church, and will be a valuable addition to the Gaskin Baptist Archives," Nigh said. "It would be well that more such "labors of love" were produced.

Gaskin legacy takes step forward with opening of ‘time capsules’

by Bob Nigh, Oklahoma Baptists’ Historical Secretary and Director of History

Jesse Marvin (J.M.) Gaskin, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma (BGCO) historical secretary for 45 years (1953-1998), was undoubtedly a prolific writer, penning numerous articles and books about Oklahoma Baptist history before he passed away at the age of 101 on Jan. 8, 2019 following a brief illness.



J.M. Gaskin's son, Ray, cuts the cords binding the “time capsules” left behind by his father.

Born on Aug. 30, 1917, near Spiro, the native of Bokoshe was raised a Methodist, but during a Southern Baptist revival, felt the call to preach while still in his teens.

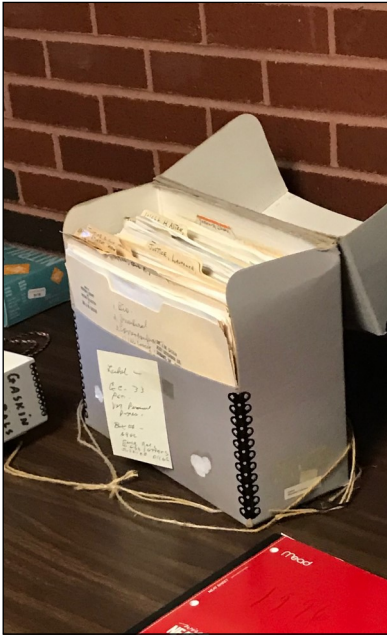
The founding editor of the *Oklahoma Baptist Chronicle*, Gaskin kept copious notes, messages and letters pertaining to Oklahoma Baptist History, some of which he kept “close to the vest,” intending those to only be seen a year after his death.

But, with the COVID-19 pandemic raging across the nation and world, the opening of his “time capsules” was delayed until only recently.

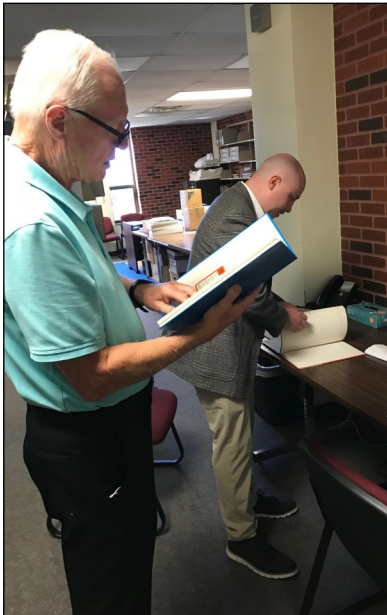
That finally occurred on Sept. 4, when Gaskin's son, Ray, met with archive officials at Oklahoma Baptist University to cut the cords with which Gaskin had sealed four mysterious boxes.

“It was great getting to be a part of that process,” said Joshua Mackey, archivist for the J.M. and Helen Baptist Archives. “As important as J.M. Gaskin's role was, it was an honor to get to play my part in that, and it was nice to give Ray an opportunity to have a hand in it, too.”

The four sealed boxes that were opened on Sept. 24 included Gaskin's personal journals spanning the years 1976-1996, as well as personal correspondence and miscellaneous documents related to important Oklahoma Baptist figures.



One of the boxes contained file folders with information about specific Oklahoma Baptist statesmen.



“Gaskin obviously journaled extensively, writing on a near-daily basis about daily life, ongoing projects, current events, and the highs and lows that he experienced in those two decades,” Mackey said. “For example, he provided insight into the decision to name the state convention’s archive in his honor in a Sept. 5, 1995 entry. He also wrote in early April 1995 about seeing news of the Oklahoma City Bombing on TV, breaking the flow of his regular life.”

Gaskin’s correspondence files include folders relating to the following individuals: Bob Agee; Anson, Lawrence, and Paul Justice; William G. Tanner; H. Alton Webb; and Slayden Yarbrough.

“This collection of letters comprises a roster of important figures in Oklahoma and Southern Baptist history,” Mackey said. “Additionally, these letters provide a glimpse into Gaskin’s varied work with key Baptist figures, and the impact he made on them.

“Taken together, these personal materials provide a rich resource for those with a keen interest in Oklahoma Baptist history. J.M. Gaskin played a significant role in preserving the history of the denomination, and his journals and correspondence gives future researchers a glimpse into important historical moments from his perspective.”

Ray Gaskin and Gaskin Baptist Archives archivist Joshua Mackey scan some of the personal journals written by J.M. Gaskin.
Photos by Bob Nigh

2001 terrorist attacks changed face of SBC, Oklahoma disaster relief

Editor's Note: The Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States forever changed the face of Southern Baptist Convention and Oklahoma Baptist Disaster Relief. Ten years later, the *Baptist Messenger* published this article on Aug. 29, 2011, "9-11 attacks took SBC disaster relief efforts to new level," written by Joe Conway with Baptist Press. This has been edited slightly.

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP)—Imagine India's Yamuna River without the Taj Mahal. Paris without the Eiffel Tower. The loss of the World Trade Center's twin towers left a similarly unimaginable hole in the American landscape and psyche.

Sept. 11, 2001's terrorist assaults on the United States changed more than the lower Manhattan skyline. The unprecedented attacks that ended so tragically in New York City, Washington, D.C., and

rural Pennsylvania also forever changed the face of Southern Baptist Disaster Relief.

Out of chaos came advancements that few disaster response pioneers would have dared dream. In the decade following 9-11, tens of thousands of Southern Baptists became trained disaster relief volunteers; relationships were forged and deepened with faith-based groups, law enforcement and government entities; and Southern



BGCO DR Director Sam Porter, right, and BGCO chaplain Paul Bettis visit with law enforcement officers at Ground Zero. Photos: Bob Nigh

Baptist Disaster Relief gained recognition and influence.

That influence grew from the respect victims and other responders gave SBDR volunteers, who have used those opportunities to present the Gospel and seen thousands come to faith in Christ. The SBDR logo—now widely recognized—opened doors for an historic response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and it continues to remove barriers.

As leader of the disaster relief team for the North American Mission Board (NAMB), Mickey Caison often is at the center of disaster response and for development of the ministry. Like many Americans on the East Coast that morning, Caison was in his office working on

something that quickly became less important.

"It is difficult to believe that it has been 10 years (since 9-11). The memories still flood in," Caison said. "A co-worker came into my office and asked to turn on the television. The first tower was burning. A short time later, the dozen people standing in my office gasped as the second jet hit. My heart sank."

Months earlier, Caison had participated in discussions with the New York City Office of Emergency Management in a meeting held in one of the other World Trade Center buildings.

"I knew people in the building. They were in my prayers," Caison said. "I went in disaster response mode, making phone calls—all the while knowing that SBDR must be there."

One of Caison's first calls was to a state disaster relief director who was all-too-familiar with the New York scenario—Sam Porter in Oklahoma. It had only been six years since the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City.

"I was driving to work when the second plane hit," Porter said. "About an hour later, my phone rang, and a familiar voice said, 'Porter, what are you doing the next few days?' I said, 'Mickey, you don't need Okies in New York.' He said, 'You're right. We already have Tennessee and Kentucky preparing to roll. But no one knows as much about terrorism as Oklahoma.'"

"Those words rang in my ears for the next 12 months," Porter said, "and literally impacted our DR ministry from that day on."

While Caison and Porter were traveling to New York City with their respective teams, South Carolina disaster relief coordinator Cliff Satterwhite was making his way to the city to lead efforts by volunteer lay chaplains. With him were 11 lay chaplains trained through the National Organization for Victims Assistance.

The ministry these and other chaplains provided in the 9-11 aftermath merged chaplaincy and disaster relief efforts.

"My experience as a pastor living through Hurricane Hugo made an impact," Caison said. "I wanted to see a system developed to help pastors as they walk through disaster. . . . Our chaplains worked spontaneous memorial sites, the morgue, Ground Zero, the medical examiner's office and other sites in Lower Manhattan."



Smoke rises from the debris and ashes on Sept. 14, 2001, three days after the destruction of the World Trade Center in New York City.

Whether it was assisting firefighters and other responders who faced the daily burden of recovery efforts, or cleaning New Yorkers' apartments, Southern Baptists enhanced their crisis ministry. Change also came to critical relationships.

"The biggest changes in (disaster relief) are in relationships and credibility," Caison said. "Our relationships are stronger and more purposeful. Our credibility with partners grew through what Southern Baptists were able to accomplish."

A cooperative agreement between the Salvation Army and NAMB in 2002 followed the pattern of similar agreements with the American Red Cross (ARC), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other response organizations.

"We are seen as strong leaders in the response community," Caison said. "We probably mobilize more trained and credentialed volunteers than anyone else. Southern Baptists have a passion to live out their relationship with Christ and they choose to demonstrate it."

Another area of change since 9-11 is training—the desire of people wanting to be trained and willing to respond in an organized way, Caison added.

In 2001, there were 24,874 trained Southern Baptist Disaster Relief

volunteers. Today, (2011) there are more than 82,000. The first year that Southern Baptists provided more than 2 million meals in disaster response was 2001. In 2004, that number was 3.5 million. In 2005, the year of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma, Southern Baptist volunteers provided more than 17 million meals.

The Southern Baptist Disaster Relief fleet—units equipped by churches, associations and state conventions for mass feeding and a range of disaster relief services, from chainsaw response to child-care—has grown from 335 in 2001 to 1,552 in 2011.

Hurricane Katrina and 2005 are the benchmarks for Southern Baptist disaster response, but it was 9-11 that set the stage to make those responses possible. Some services now expected from Southern Baptist disaster response did not exist prior to 9-11.

"A unique ministry came out of the response to New York," said Gaylon Moss, disaster relief coordinator for North Carolina Southern



Firefighters awaiting their turn to work on the pile of debris at the World Trade Center display their patriotism.

Baptists. “North Carolina volunteers assisted with the apartment clean-up and provided some base camp logistics. One of our on-site coordinators, Beddie Tarlton, contacted Richard Brunson (North Carolina Baptist Men executive director) regarding the need to wash clothes for the ARC volunteers. A laundry unit was built consisting of three washers and two dryers. This was the beginning of the organized laundry ministry for Southern Baptists.”

North Carolina’s first unit was followed by six more. Southern Baptists now have 21 laundry units in their disaster response fleet.

“Another unique thing about 9-11 was working with the Salvation Army, the mayor’s office and the local restaurant association to allow restaurants to prepare volunteer meals,” Caison said. “Some restaurants provided as few as 50 meals at a time, while others prepared more than 200. That coordination built bridges. We set up feeding units in Manhattan and Brooklyn. Later, the Salvation Army eventually asked that we help staff the feeding operations at Ground Zero and Staten Island.”

Florida disaster relief director Fritz Wilson, no stranger to natural disasters, saw the importance of partnerships in critical ways at Ground Zero. Again, those partnerships would pay dividends in the future. The development of the Salvation Army partnership during the 9-11 response strengthened the Southern Baptist relationship with the ARC, already strong in Florida from responses to Hurricanes Hugo and Andrew.

“Last year (2010), that growth positioned (Southern Baptist Disaster Relief) to respond in mass to the Haiti earthquake,” Wilson said. “We utilized all of the lessons learned from 9-11 on down. Buckets of Hope food boxes were collected. Home inspection, chaplain, medical, ministry and other types of teams responded to the devastated island. I believe the Lord has blessed this ministry since 9-11 because the focus is not only on meeting the needs of the moment, but also always giving the glory and credit to the Father.”



OSBDR Director Sam Porter, fourth from left, organizes chaplains serving at Ground Zero, including, from left, Jack Poe in blue uniform (OKC PD), Paul Bettis and Leslie Sias in yellow DR jackets (BGCO) and Joe Williams (FBI).

Baptist Foundation prepares for another 75 years as 'WatersEdge'

by Mike Schueler, WatersEdge Vice President, Marketing and Communications

After serving and strengthening Oklahoma Baptists for nearly three quarters of a century, the Baptist Foundation of Oklahoma (BFO) embraced a new name in 2020.

Since 1946, the Foundation has inspired generosity and multiplied giving that has resulted in hundreds of millions of dollars flowing to Kingdom-impacting ministries across the state. Now, the non-profit Christian financial services organization is laying the groundwork for the next 75 years as it shifts to a new brand: WatersEdge.

"We've outgrown our name," said WatersEdge CEO Robert Kellogg. "The word 'foundation' is simply too limiting—it doesn't accurately describe the broad suite of financial services we're able to provide to individuals, families, churches, ministries and institutions. Besides, few know what a 'foundation' is anymore. It's a vague word that doesn't resonate, especially with younger generations."

The new WatersEdge brand serves as an umbrella for the organization's two branches—"WatersEdge Advisors" and "WatersEdge Ministry Services"—each focused on one of the two primary groups the nonprofit serves: donors and ministries.

WatersEdge Advisors meets the needs of donors, assisting individuals and families with charitable giving solutions that maximize tax advantages and multiply gifts to ministry. These services include estate planning, endowment, donor-advised funds, charitable gift annuities, charitable trusts and other giving solutions.

WatersEdge Ministry Services focuses on the needs of churches and ministries, providing practical financial solutions that grow resources and minimize the burden of ministry finance. These services include church loans and investments, ministry accounting, asset management, online giving and more.

If the WatersEdge name sounds familiar, it's because the Foundation prepared for the change for more than three years. The transition first became public in January 2019, when the Foundation moved the majority of its church-focused services to the WatersEdge Ministry Services brand. That success laid the groundwork for the Foundation to transfer the remainder of its services to the WatersEdge Advisors brand Nov. 9.

"Our new name may be one of the worst-kept secrets in Oklahoma Baptist life, and that's intentional," said Shryln Treadwell, WatersEdge Advisors president. "We have been wrestling with this decision for years. We've explored numerous options, sought counsel from dozens of Oklahoma Baptist leaders, including both donors and pastors across the state, all while covering every step of this

process in prayer. It's not a choice we made lightly, but we know it's where the Lord is leading us."

"For the past 75 years, the Lord's hand has been on the Foundation," Kellogg said. "We've been blessed with tremendous growth that has allowed us to help Oklahoma Baptists channel hundreds of millions of dollars to advance the Gospel. And now we find ourselves at a crossroads when many Baptist organizations need greater financial support than ever before. We've been called to meet that need; we've been set apart for that purpose, and the WatersEdge name reflects that truth."

Kellogg stressed that though the Foundation's name has changed, its commitment to serving and strengthening Oklahoma Baptists has not. "Our leadership and our staff are the same," he said. "Our partnership with Oklahoma Baptists and our allegiance to the Southern Baptist Convention remain unchanged. The only thing that's changed are the limitations that the Foundation's name placed on the work that God is calling us to do."

In addition to offering new services, the WatersEdge brand also opens doors for the Foundation to expand who receives those services, including likeminded ministries and Baptist organizations outside Oklahoma. As one of the largest ministry-based lenders in the Southern Baptist Convention, the Foundation has provided loans to Baptist churches across the country for more than a decade.

"I frequently receive calls from Baptist pastors outside Oklahoma who have heard about our church loan program and want to know if they can apply," said Jerry Vaughan, WatersEdge Ministry Services president. "Many mistakenly assume we either can't help or aren't willing to help because we have 'Oklahoma' in our name. "But I'm grateful I can tell them 'yes,' because Oklahoma Baptists are Kingdom-minded people. We want to see the Gospel advance, not only in our state, but also across the country and around the world.

"Why do we send Oklahoma Baptist Disaster Relief teams to states like Texas, Colorado and Louisiana when there is a hurricane, fire, flood or tornado? Because God's Kingdom is bigger than Oklahoma. That same truth drives us to serve other Baptist churches and ministries, especially in states where fewer churches mean the state's Baptist convention isn't able to offer the same number of services that WatersEdge is blessed to provide to Oklahoma."

Kellogg added that expanding the Foundation's client base out of state also allows the Foundation to improve services within the state. "Growth means we can continue to lower fees and develop new services, like Ministry Accounting," he said. "But serving and strengthening Oklahoma Baptists will always be our primary purpose, whether we're known as the Foundation or WatersEdge."

Historical Commission elects 2022 officers, approves annual awards

by Bob Nigh, Oklahoma Baptists' Historical Secretary and Director of History

The Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission (OBHC) elected officers for 2022, and approved the induction of three new members into the Oklahoma Baptist Hall of Fame, the 2021 Distinguished Service Award honoree and the recipients of the 2020 Gaskin Church History awards when they convened at Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU) in Shawnee, Sept. 16, 2021.

Commissioners also enjoyed meeting the new archivist for the J.M. and Helen Gaskin Baptist Historical Library and Archives housed in the Mabee Learning Center on the OBU campus. Joshua Mackey began work in the role on Aug. 9, replacing former archivist Rachel Walker.

Mackey was a special guest at the meeting, along with Julie Rankin, OBU Director of Library Services, and James Swain, Oklahoma Baptists' associate executive director and leader of the Convention's Church Relations Group.

Mackey provided information about his educational background and work experience to the group and, following the meeting, led commissioners on tours of the Gaskin Baptist Archives and the OBU archives.

Rankin brought the commissioners up to date on the restoration of a 1613 King James Bible recently donated to the archives. The restoration work is being done by expert conservators with the Museum of the Bible in Oklahoma City.

Elected as chair of the Commission for 2022 was Andy Latta, Tahlequah, First. Bill Rowland, Okmulgee, Calvary, was elected vice chair, and Lee Herring, Sand Springs, Broadway, will serve as recording secretary. Commissioners showed appreciation for the three members rotating off this year: Bill Haggard, Oklahoma City, Putnam City; Terry Brooks, Lindsay, First and Leona Marion, Oklahoma City, Trinity.

In addition to the three elected officers, Don Baxter, Oklahoma City, Quail Springs (2022); Mary Ellen Keeton, Willis, First (2022), and Mark Hamm, Moore, First (2023) will continue to serve as members of the Historical Commission.

The 2021 inductees of the Oklahoma Baptist Hall of Fame include Teala Mae Goddard, long-time cook for Royal Ambassadors at Camp Hudgens and other meetings; state pastor and statesman Robert Neal Hammons and evangelistic comedian Lester L. "Les the Mess" Reed.

The 2021 Distinguished Service Award was approved for Walter



Archivist Joshua Mackey describes some of the archives' holdings to Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission members, from left, Andy Latta, Bill Rowland and Mary Ellen Keeton.

Wilson, Oklahoma Baptists' African-American Affinity Ministry Partner, and pastor of Lawton, Friendship.

The 2020 Gaskin Church History Award goes to Okmulgee, Calvary, with a special "honorable mention" designation given to an "Historical Tribute to Valley View Baptist Church in Tulsa." Church membership records, event bulletins, Sunday service bulletins, photos and early records were collected over the years by former long-term members who held onto them for safekeeping even after the church disbanded. The church had only six regular attenders when it closed.

Latta announced that committee assignments for the coming year will be compiled in consultation with Historical Secretary and Director of History Bob Nigh following the election of three new Commission members by messengers to the 2021 Oklahoma Baptists' Annual Meeting to be held Nov. 15-16 at Oklahoma City, Southern Hills.

During his report to the Commission, Nigh said anniversary activities by state churches in 2021 slightly increased after being severely curtailed during 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic. In December 2020, the Historical Secretary mailed letters and response cards to 54 Oklahoma Southern Baptist churches eligible to celebrate milestone anniversaries during 2021. Only two churches—Poteau, Double Branch and Okmulgee, Calvary—conducted celebrations for their anniversaries (100th) during 2020. Thus far this year, two churches—Ardmore, Emmanuel and Cheyenne, First—observed their 125th anniversaries, while centennial celebrations were held at Bartlesville, New Harmony; Letitia; and Shawnee, University.

The Historical Commission's next meeting is tentatively scheduled to be held beginning at 1 p.m., March 3, 2022 at OBU.

Memorial Gifts

On Sept. 8, 1998 by vote of the Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission, a memorial fund was established whereby a gift of \$25 or more may be made to the Gaskin Historical Archives and Library Forever Fund in memory of a deceased relative or friend. The following list includes those gifts in alphabetical order for those honored.

Del Allen, Wilburton

Given by Sans Bois Association

Ramona Allen, Wilburton

Given by John and Pat Hart

Ramona Allen, Wilburton

Given by Delmer, Charity and Tim Allen

Donald E. Badgett, Del City

Given by Winfred T. and Grace L., Knight, Jr.

James Ball, Claremore

Given by Lemuel Ball

Margie Ball, Claremore

Given by Lemuel Ball

Bob Burrows, Amarillo, Texas

Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

Pluma Cantrell, Sallisaw

Given by Del and Ramona Allen

Rose Chronister, Sallisaw

Given by Sans Bois Baptist Association

E. Farrell Dixon, Tulsa

Given by Curtis and Betty Dixon

Memorial Gifts

Donald R. Dunn, Chickasha

Given by Jimmie L. Dunn

Jack Everhart, Oklahoma City

Given by Del and the late Ramona Allen

Betty Farris, Muskogee

Given by Del and Ramona Allen

J. C. Folk, Midwest City

Given by Winfred T. and Grace L. Knight, Jr.

Virginia Ann Fry, Claremore

Given by Lemuel Ball

Helen Isom Gaskin, Durant

Given by Patricia Roberts

Jesse Marvin (J.M.) Gaskin, Durant

Given by Delmer Allen

Joseph Alexander Gaskin, Cartersville

Given by J. M. Gaskin

Jim Glaze, Montgomery, Ala.

Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

George Hill, Coalgate

Given by Margaret Hill

George Hill, Coalgate

Given by J. M. Gaskin

Mrs. Carrell Hooper, Durant

Given by J.M. and Helen Gaskin

Carleen Jones, Oklahoma City

Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

Memorial Gifts

Norma Jordan, Bartlesville

Given by the Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission

Nadean Justice, Oklahoma City

Given by J. M. Gaskin

Thelma Juanita King, Del City

Given by Winfred T. and Grace L. Knight, Jr.

Murray Leath, Plano, Texas

Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

Dick Lovelady, Bethany

Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

Clara Luedecke, Weatherford, Texas

Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

Burl Mackey, Edmond

Given by Jonell Crawford

Carl Mackey, Kingfisher

Given by Jonell Crawford

Charles Mackey, Durant

Given by Mrs. Robert Mackey

Robert Mackey, Durant

Given by Mrs. Robert Mackey

Bob Maxwell, Stigler

Given by Del Allen

Lee McWilliams, Durant

Given by Patricia Roberts

Maye McWilliams, Durant

Given by Patricia Roberts

Memorial Gifts

John H. Morton, Durant

Given by Bill J. Morton

Emma L. Shoemate Morton, Durant

Given by Bill J. Morton

Barbara Peaden, Oklahoma City

Given by Winfred T. and Grace L. Knight, Jr.

Wenonah Willene Pierce, Fayetteville, Ark.

Given by Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission

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Given by Del and Ramona Allen

Marie Ratliff, Wilburton

Given by Center Point Baptist Church

John D. Riggs, Durant

Given by J.M. Gaskin

Todd H. Sheldon, Dallas, Texas

Given by the Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission

Todd H. Sheldon, Dallas, Texas

Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

John L. Smith, Marlow

Given by Winfred Knight

Cathy Spain, Midwest City

Given by Winfred T. and Grace L. Knight, Jr.

Max Stanfield, Oklahoma City

Given by Winfred T. and Grace L. Knight, Jr.

William G. Tanner, Belton, Texas

Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

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James Timberlake, Atlanta, Ga.

Given by Kathryn Timberlake

Thelma Townsend, Oklahoma City

Given by Marlin and Patsy Hawkins

Lawrence Van Horn, Oklahoma City

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H. Alton Webb, Anadarko

Given by J.M. and Helen Gaskin

Almeda Welch, Durant

Given by J.M. and Helen Gaskin

Hazel Marie Williams White, Wilburton

Given by Del and Ramona Allen

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