

# The Oklahoma Baptist Chronicle



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# Oklahoma Baptists **HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

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# 1613 King James ‘He’ Bible Restoration Completed

Conservators recently completed the work of repairing and restoring a 1613 King James Version (KJV) “He” Bible recently 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. Officials with the Mabee Learning Center at OBU contracted with experts at the Museum of the Bible in Oklahoma City to perform the restoration.

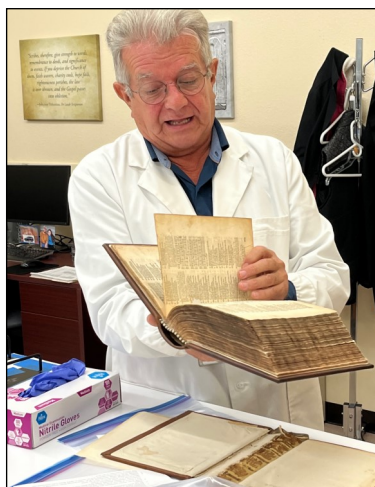
Bob Nigh, Oklahoma Baptists’ Historical Secretary and Director of History joined with Andy Latta, chairman of the Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission (OBHC); Julie Rankin, OBU director of library services; Joshua Mackey, OBU archivist; and other OBU representatives to pick up the historic book on Aug. 3, 2022.

Mackey presented his findings about the restoration in a “Stewardship and Exhibition Report: 1613 Authorized King James Version “He” Bible,” to the members of the OBHC during their Oct. 3, 2022 semi-annual meeting at OBU.

“Over the course of the last year, conservators carried out mold remediation, unbound the pages, cleaned centuries of grime off the Bible page by page, and rebound it using the tools and methods accurate to the early 17th Century, when it was originally printed. The result is a faithfully preserved, original King James Bible that has been saved for posterity,” Mackey wrote.

“The rarity of this Bible, the craftsmanship in its reconstruction, and its value to Oklahoma Baptists raise the stakes for proper stewardship and display. The conservators have provided clear instructions on caring for the Bible. Those directions will have implications on both wise stewardship of it and how we choose to display it. Additionally, ongoing discussions within the university surrounding the maintenance and use of the Mabee Learning Center, and current realities surrounding the facility, must be considered.”

Mackey’s report is broken down into three components. Part one explores the history of the Bible’s original production, discovery by



**Francisco Rodriguez, master conservator with the Museum of the Bible in Oklahoma City, discusses the details of the project to restore the Bible.**



Oklahoma Baptists' Historical Secretary Bob Nigh, center right, accepts delivery of the 1613 King James "He" Bible from Francisco Rodriguez, master conservator with the Museum of the Bible in Oklahoma City. Others present for the Aug. 2 ceremony included, front row from left, Joshua Mackey, OBU Mabee Learning Center (MLC) archivist; MLC staff member Denise Jett; MOB conservator Patricia Rodriguez, and Julie Rankin, MLC director of library services. Back row, from left, are MLC library staffers Sarah Stevens, Denise Jett, and Charles Ackerly and Andy Latta, chairman of the Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission and minister of music and finance administration at Tahlequah, First.

the Historical Commission, and preservation work. Part two centers around the directions given to the Mabee Learning Center by the Museum of the Bible on proper care and exhibition for the "He" Bible. Part 3 explains the current state of the library, short-, medium-, and long-term facility projections, and challenges that currently exist with exhibiting the bible in this space. The report concludes with recommendations for storage and display at OBU, while presenting other options, including possible short-term loan to another institution such as the nearby Mabee-Gerrer Museum of Art in Shawnee.

"Thank you to the Historical Commission for entrusting the library staff with this remarkable example of God's Word," Mackey said. "I pray that this report guides the commission in decision-making and stressing the importance of this Bible to our brothers and sisters across the denomination. It is not every day that such a rare treasure makes itself known to us!"

After receiving Mackey's report and discussion about its contents, the OBHC formed a sub-committee to study his findings and recommendations further and make a report to the OBHC.

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’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.

On Oct. 11, 2020, the Bible was donated to the Gaskin Baptist Archives by members of Oklahoma City, Shields Boulevard. Pastor Gary Bostwick, said the rare Bible was displayed in a hallway of the church, and the decision was made to donate the Bible to the archives for proper restoration and care.

Accompanying the Bible was a 1973 appraisal from an antique collector in Oklahoma City, which identified it as a 1613 copy of the King James Bible. The Bible’s provenance stems from David Sprague from Oklahoma City and it was previously owned by W.A. Stewart of Pittsburgh Pa.

“Its publication date alone would make it notable; the first Authorized King James Bible was published in 1611, while King James I reigned in England from the Union of the Crowns in 1603 to 1625,” Mackey said. “This means that not only was this particular Bible among the first copies of the original KJV, but it also is contemporary to the king who authorized its translation and publication. It is a remarkable piece of history, and a testament to both the craftsmanship of those early printers and the endurance of God’s Word.”

During the restoration process, conservators Francisco and Patricia Rodriguez discovered evidence of mold, which required remediation. That involved exposing the Bible to temperatures and humidity low enough to render existing mold spores inactive and dormant. The conservators provided the following guidelines for



**Museum of the Bible conservator Francisco Rodriguez displays the beautiful, new cover of the 1616 King James “He” Bible.**

care when we retrieved the Bible:

1. Keep the humidity and temperature moderate and steady so the spores remain dormant (below 70° F and below 60 percent relative humidity) and monitor to ensure the space is remaining within safe levels.

2. Maintain good air circulation in collection storage areas and monitor for stagnant pockets within a space.

3. Do not store collections in known damp areas or those areas prone to leaks or floods.

4. Keep areas where collections are stored and used as clean as possible. Dust and dirt are a source of spores, both active and dormant, so housing collections in protective enclosures whenever possible helps keep them free of dust. To also keep dust and spore levels low keep windows closed.

5. Isolate incoming collections to check for mold.

6. Change HVAC (heating ventilating, and air-conditioning) filters according to manufacturer's recommendations and/or switch to HEPA filters.

Taken together, the conservator's guidelines highlight the importance of closely controlling and monitoring the conditions in which the Bible is stored and displayed.

"With the above considerations for care and stewardship in mind, displaying the Bible brings with it a few challenges," Mackey said. "Specifically, protecting the Bible from UV radiation, temperature fluctuations, and humidity will be critical in extending its life, ensuring that it will continue to endure for future generations.

"UV light is perhaps the most challenging element to avoid, as both fluorescent office lighting and natural light are a hazard. The more light the Bible is exposed to, the more frequently its pages will need to be turned to prevent any individual page from fading. Spaces with lots of natural light from windows, such as the Mabey Learning Center lobby, are too great a preservation concern for long-term display. We will need to find a location in the library or elsewhere where lighting can be more closely controlled. A dimly lit location with space to install canned lighting would be ideal, since we can direct the light and select bulbs that match the lumens needed to follow the conservator's recommendations for maximum light exposure."

# **Oklahoma Baptist Hall of Fame**

## **Sylvia M. (DeHart) Boothe**

1936—2012

Inducted 2022

Sylvia Marlene DeHart was born on March 24, 1936, in Chickasha, Okla., to Mildred and Clyde DeHart. Sylvia grew up attending the First Baptist Church of Chickasha, and she loved music, especially piano and voice, from an early age. In high school, Sylvia sang



**Sylvia Boothe**

in a popular trio called "The Mel-lowntones," performing at local events and brush arbor revivals.

She attended her freshman year of college at Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU) in Shawnee, and then returned to Chickasha to continue her music studies at Oklahoma College for Women.

Sylvia and Dwain H. Boothe were childhood friends, and began dating in high school. They were married on Aug. 10, 1956, and to this union three children were born: twins Stephanie and Stephan, and Jeffery. Following Dwain's service with the U. S. Army Medical Corps at Ft. Sam Houston, the family moved back to Chickasha, where Dwain joined his father in the family's pharmacy business.

In 1965, Sylvia and Dwain were called to the mission field and moved to Ft. Worth, Texas, to attend Southwestern Seminary and to study church music. In December 1968, they were appointed missionaries by the Foreign Mission Board (FMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention and traveled to Thailand in January 1969. In the summer of 1972, Sylvia and Dwain returned to Chickasha and served at First Baptist Church of Chickasha, in the music and student ministries.

In August 1974, Sylvia received her Bachelor of Arts in Vocal Performance from the Oklahoma College of Liberal Arts in Chickasha, and in August 1975, she earned her Master of Arts Degree in Vocal Performance from Texas Women's University. In August 1976, Sylvia and Dwain were appointed by the FMB to serve as missionaries of music serving in the pastorate at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Paris, France, while living in Versailles, until their return to Oklahoma City in 1984.



In 1986, Oklahoma Baptists established the first Crisis Pregnancy Centers (CPC) in Tulsa and Oklahoma City with the aim of serving and supporting those in unplanned pregnancies, regardless of their pregnancy decision. Boothe was hired as CPC's first director. She passionately dedicated time and energy to the CPC, now known as the Hope Pregnancy Center (HPC).

Additional CPC offices were opened in South Oklahoma City (2007), Ardmore (2013) and Edmond (2017).

On average, Hope serves 3,260 women and men each year.

Serving with grace and compassion, Boothe's impact was felt throughout the ministry. For example, she met with a woman who was encouraged by her physician to have an abortion because her baby was diagnosed with special needs. Sylvia prayed for both the woman and her baby and walked with the young woman through each step of the process with her options. She offered the mother encouragement and support to keep the baby, but she also encouraged the woman to come back if she had an abortion so that she could offer her not only her love, but God's love through the healing process. She always offered a safe place, compassionate counseling, and God's love with no condemnation for the women who walked through CPC's doors.

The annual Rose Day Pro-Life Rally at the Oklahoma State Capitol has become the signature event of the faith-based, pro-life movement in Oklahoma, which has seen successes and challenges in its decades-long history. Established by a small Catholic group, Rose Day participants delivered red roses and a note to elected officials in the state, encouraging them to make policies that protect the unborn from abortion.

During the 1980s and 1990s, evangelical Christian groups and citizens became more convinced of the biblical mandate to protect unborn life and became involved. In 1990, Anthony L. Jordan, then pastor of Oklahoma City, Northwest, chaired the first-of-its-kind major pro-life rally on the steps of the Capitol. Television reporter Connie Chung reported that some 20,000 pro-life supporters attended the rally.

Jordan, who later served as the executive director-treasurer of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma (BGCO), was thrilled with the success but recognized that the event, which happened on a Sunday, could have had more impact at a time when legislators were at the Capitol.

Now each year, Rose Day is held at the Capitol at the beginning of the new legislative session to promote and support the lives of unborn babies. Attendees present their legislators with red roses, a representation of the sanctity of the unborn. Hundreds gather each year for this annual event and Boothe was a long-time attendee and supporter.

Her passion for the saving of the unborn from the tragedy of

abortion and her personal connection with those women who came to the CPC undoubtedly saved the lives of countless innocent unborn children and offered God's love and salvation through Jesus Christ to mothers struggling with their unplanned pregnancies.

In 1988, the Home Mission Board (HMB) in Atlanta, Ga., employed Sylvia to help churches develop ministries to women with crisis pregnancies across the country. During this period, she and Dwain resided in Fayetteville, Ga., where Dwain served as minister to Senior Adults at New Hope Baptist Church.

In 2000, Sylvia and Dwain moved to Edmond and retired. They attended Henderson Hills Baptist Church where Sylvia participated in Freedom Ministries, Women's Ministries, and Vacation Bible School. In her later years, Sylvia and Dwain attended Quail Springs Baptist Church of Oklahoma City and were active members, especially in the music ministry.

Beset by declining health in her last years, Sylvia went to be with her Lord on Feb. 8, 2012, at age 75. When Sylvia passed away, Dwain continued to wear his wedding ring, saying "Sylvia will always be my bride," until his death on June 5, 2022 at the age of 87. Mrs. Boothe was also survived at the time of her death by daughter, Stephanie; sons, Stephan and Jeffery; six grandchildren; three great grandchildren; two brothers, Clyde and James; and sisters, Nellie and Betty.

Even after her retirement, Boothe continued to work in pro-life ministry both locally and nationally, continuing to support the work of the CPC. Sylvia Boothe was an ardent student of the Holy Bible, and she was very well read and studious in her ministry. She was courageous and fought her entire life for those who were victims of injustice, while gracious and loving to all people. Her love for ministering to those in need was exceeded only by her love for her Lord.

*Submitted by Richard E. McCullough  
Member, Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission*

# Oklahoma Baptist Hall of Fame

**Paul Box**

1931—2014

Inducted 2022

No words can adequately capture the essence of a person's life. Such is the case with Paul Box. For behind that which is visible, is the part of a man which no one is able to see, except God. One might try to even use words to label a person, in an effort to depict an individual's life.

To try and label Paul Box as a preacher is inadequate. To try to label him as a missionary is inadequate. To label Box as a pastor is inadequate. To label him as a father or father-in-law is inadequate. To label him as a devoted and faithful husband is inadequate. Though he was all of the above, he was so much more. He would be the first to tell you that Jesus Christ saved him, transformed him and set him on a course to serve Him for his entire life.

Ada, Okla. was "home" for Box. From the young age of 16, he had the privilege to pulpit supply weekly and serve as an interim pastor. On Aug. 9, 1950, Box was licensed to preach. On Oct. 29, 1950, he was ordained into the gospel ministry. His conviction was that he should not pastor until he was married. He met Pattye Joyce Norwood at East Central State University in Ada. The summer before they were married, Box served as a summer missionary in Hawaii. On Dec. 19, 1952, they were married at Ada, First.

Box graduated from Southwestern Seminary on July 18, 1958. Securing that degree was not an easy task. While he was studying in seminary, he served as pastor of three churches: Centralhoma Baptist Church, Caney Baptist Church and Little City Baptist Church. To be able to accomplish this feat required work! Paul never shied away from work. He did not have a middle name, but if he did, it would probably have been "Work."

Pattye shared in her book, *It's a Grand and Glorious Life*, that Paul's father was convinced that the making of a man was wrapped up in his knowledge and ability to work. Upon hearing that Paul was called to preach while he was in college, his father purchased a service station because he said it would be good training for a preacher to manage and maintain the station. If that wasn't enough, in addition to the service station, Paul worked with the Post Office picking up



**Paul Box**

mail from the train station three times a night. While in seminary, he tackled night jobs while attending seminary classes during the day. During one semester, he slept in his car and took showers in the men's dorm at Southwestern. Working multiple jobs was the "norm" for Paul Box. The stories of God's provision during those days were nothing short of miraculous.

Paul's heartbeat was "missions." He and Pattye were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board (Now the International Mission Board) in 1959 as missionaries to Indonesia. Because of a delay in getting their visas to enter that Islamic country, they went to Singapore. As they were waiting in Singapore, Box served as pastor of the Kay Poh Road Baptist Church. Within two years, he was able to preach in Cantonese. The church flourished during his time as pastor.

One of the most powerful stories that punctuated Paul and Pattye's time in Singapore was in regard to the Leong family. Out of the 10 children in that family, four of them had muscular dystrophy. The Leong family lived on the fourth floor of the high-rise building with no elevator. To make it possible for the family to come to church, Paul carried the boys on his back down the stairs in to give them a ride in his car to church.

In December 1962, Leong Howe Seng (aka Elijah) tells of a most tragic event as they returned home from church. He recalls, "Accident! Serious Accident." The car bringing them back from church crashed! Now they have been sent to Singapore General Hospital. We must quickly change and go over there, his auntie said. That was the American pastor's car. Normally the pastor, Paul Box, drove them back home after church services. However, that Sunday, he had a meeting with the church leaders, and told the church's caretaker to drive them home. He crashed into a passing taxi."

Howe Seng was 12 years old when the accident occurred and he remembers the funeral.

"The following days were busy preparing for the funeral, with the help of that church (Kay Poh Road) and Pastor Paul Box. Thank God, it was a Christian funeral because Yee Siong had accepted Christ as Lord and Savior...I believe the funeral service brought a great measure of comfort to our family. As the body was lowered into the ground, and cries and sobs were heard, I wept a little thinking of my poor brother. Then I felt a hand on my shoulder. It was the hand of Pastor Paul Box. Then that hand pulled me close to his side. To this day, I have never forgotten that firm and gentle touch. To me, that was deeply significant—that gentle touch.

"Pastor Paul Box was the pastor I quietly and profoundly respected. As young as I was, I could feel the love and the sincerity that exuded from this man. To someone like me, brought up in a family environment that was filled with anger and bitterness, the love and genuineness he brought was so refreshing. He brought much hope

and light into the darkness of our situation. His gentle smile, his humble and positive personality, brought so much joy to my heart—a very tall, slim American man, his face sweating (after carrying my brothers up four stories) smiling cheerfully, speaking courteously and humbly in Cantonese with my father. I thank God for every remembrance of him. At that time, so many of my family members were there who needed his love and comfort. Yet, he took notice of me and came to me. It was the touch of our Lord Jesus.”

That 12-year-old boy, Elijah, became a pastor and one of the finest preachers in Singapore.

Once their visas were approved, the Box family moved to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and planted Ipoh Road Baptist Church. In 1966, their time in Malaysia was shortened as Paul became deathly ill with “tropical sprue.” The tropical climate was taking its toll and he needed to get to a more moderate climate.

The Foreign Mission Board placed him in California as their Regional Personnel Representative where he had responsibility for 19 states while living in Anaheim. Ultimately, Box became pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Fullerton, Calif.

In 1970, Paul was called to be pastor of Moore, First, where he served as pastor for 17 years. It is an understatement to say that his ministry there was fruitful when you consider the following: Because of outgrowing their previous facility, the church relocated to a 25-acre site north of Moore, where a 2,100 seat sanctuary was built in 1985; the church grew from 1,812 members to 3,302 members; the budget increased from \$139,000 to \$1.4 million; and 25 people surrendered to full-time Christian service. During Box’s time at Moore, he began a 24-hour-a-day prayer ministry.

Under his leadership, the church adopted several refugee families from Vietnam in the late 1970s. Box got involved personally with these refugees helping them to find jobs and teaching them to drive in the church parking lot. The mission impact on Moore, First was such that they have a missionary residence for furloughing missionaries. The missions giving by Moore, First was incredible. Paul was also a soul winner and led the church to be a training site for Continuous Witness Training, where he participated in sharing his faith by example.

While in Moore, Box’s influence was not limited to only Moore, First. Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma (BGCO) leaders tapped him on the shoulder time and time again to serve in various capacities. He was the first pastor to ever be president of the Baptist Foundation of Oklahoma. He preached multiple times at Falls Creek Baptist Assembly. He preached countless revivals all across the state of Oklahoma and beyond. For many years, he served as a representative from the BGCO on the Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va.

On a snowy Sunday morning in 1987, when the morning service

was moved to the Howard Street campus due to icy driveway conditions, the church heard their pastor tell of God's call on his life to return to the mission field. He and Pattye went to Munich, West Germany to pastor the International Baptist Church. A relatively small congregation compared to Moore, First, but one that had an international flavor. Dozens of people from countries in Europe and Africa were a part of that church. The Boxes served there until 1995, when they returned to the States and made preparations to retire. In reality, Box never retired. As one pastor said, "I am not retiring, I am being reassigned." Such was the case for Paul.

Over the next 19 years, Box served as interim pastor for 14 churches. All but one of those churches was in Oklahoma, with the exception of one church in Singapore. When Paul was in his late 70s, he returned to Singapore as the interim pastor at the International Baptist Church, for 10 months. His daughters said, "Daddy, you can't do that!" To which he responded, "It is just as close to heaven from Singapore as it is from the States." That statement reflects the heart and mind of Paul Box.

One of the crowning moments of his retirement years was when he was named Pastor Emeritus at Moore, First. During the recognition of him becoming Pastor Emeritus, a verse of Scripture was read from Heb. 6:10, *"For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints."*

Box died at the age of 83 on Nov. 28, 2014. He loved telling the story of Jesus to a lost and dying world. Before he passed away, he told his three children that everything he did, he did "for the Kingdom."

Box was buried in Resthaven Memory Gardens in Oklahoma City next to his wife, Pattye, who preceded her husband in death on Jan. 1, 2009.

*Submitted by Mark Hamm  
Member, Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission*

# Oklahoma Baptist Hall of Fame

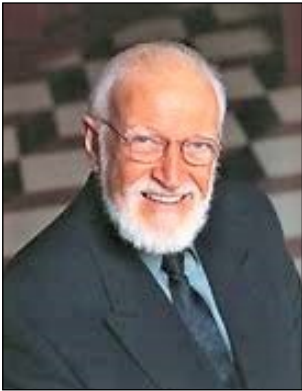
## Calvin Miller

1936—2012

Inducted 2022

Calvin Miller was born on Aug. 28, 1936, in Enid, Okla., to Franklin and Ethel Miller. After graduation from Enid High School, he attended Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU) in Shawnee, earning his bachelor's degree in 1958.

In recounting his journey to OBU from Enid, he remembered a long bus ride concluding with a terrifying enrollment into Opal Craig's speech class. After a disastrous semester of failed presenta-



**Calvin Miller**

tions, he returned determined to excel in public speaking; necessary for a successful preacher. Bolstered by the advice of a classmate to imagine everyone sitting in their underwear, he stood before a mirror practicing, noting it was the first time he had stopped to inspect his own image and "in an instant, I was healed—I had seen myself."

In 1959, Calvin married Barbara Joyce Harman and to this union two children were born: Melanie and Timothy. Attending Midwestern Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., he earned a master's degree in 1961 and a doctorate in 1975.

Miller's first full-time pastorate was Plattsmouth Church in Plattsmouth, Neb., from 1961-1966, and he then moved to Westside Church in Omaha, Neb., in January 1966, where he served as a founding member and pastor for 25 years.

A proficient writer, Miller authored more than 40 books of popular theology and inspiration. His articles and poems have appeared in numerous journals and magazines such as *Christianity Today* and *Campus Life*. In his best-selling 1975 trilogy, *The Singer*, Miller was described by Samford University's Beeson Divinity School dean Timothy George as a "troubadour singing a love song to his Lord."

His books include *The Empowered Communicator*, *Market-Place Preaching*, *The Sermon Maker*, *O Shepherd, Where art Thou?* and *Preaching: The Art of Narrative Exposition*.

Through the years, Miller served as an inspirational speaker in various assemblies and religious convocations, both in his own denomination and other Christian gatherings.

From 1991-1998, Miller served as professor of communication and ministry studies and writer-in-residence at Southwestern Semi-

nary in Fort Worth, Texas. In 1998, Miller's personal memoir was published entitled, *Life is Mostly Edges*. In his most recent book, *Letters to Heaven: Reaching Beyond the Great Divide*, he expressed his love and admiration to people he considered influential who preceded him into eternity, including Johnny Cash, Oscar Wilde, and C. S. Lewis, whose writing style was said to be similar to Miller's.

He also wrote heartfelt letters to his mother and other people who were close to him personally. In the letters, he expressed his gratitude for the meaningful memories and lessons learned from their inspiration.

"This book is about seeing Heaven as a place for wrapping up the unfinished business of Earth," Miller said. "Beyond the grand gates, everything is resolved. Nothing is ragged at the edge; all the loose threads are tied up."

In January 1999, he joined the faculty of Samford University's Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Ala., where he served as professor of preaching and pastoral ministry. After retiring in 2007, he assumed the role of research professor and distinguished writer in residence.

Together with nationally known worship leader Jami Smith, he returned to initiate the 2010-2011 academic year. In addressing OBU students, he asked, "How do you get mixed up with a 100-year-old university?" The answer, he said, "begins with how the student got mixed up with God." Miller then fondly recalled how after he received his personal call to ministry, his sister amusingly remarked: "If God called you to anything, He had a wrong number."

Based on I Cor. 2:1-10, Miller encouraged OBU students to intently examine their lives for what is truly important: knowing God and serving Him.

"I believe the most significant thing about your life is your testimony of Jesus," he said. "Not just the story of Jesus, but the story of your personal affair with Jesus."

Miller remarked that a person is not attracted to OBU or to a Baptist church because they are enamored with Baptists, but because they are attracted to the dynamism of the Christian believers in such places.

"We are all looking for one thing: something that approaches a demonstration of the Holy Spirit's power," he said.

He also encouraged students to be satisfied where God has put them and not to demean the importance of even a simple role. He said to imagine a statue, content to exist in one place for the purpose and pleasure of its owner.

"God has put me here like a statue in a niche," he said, "and I intend to be faithful to what He has called me to do."

Miller believed in the primacy of evangelism for the church in every age. In his own church ministry, he sought to be both a con-



temporary apologist, helping the church provide answers for a secular culture, and the equipper of the contemporary church for the task of missions and evangelism. In 2002, Miller was honored with one of OBU's Alumni Achievement Awards.

After a lifetime of serving the Lord as a Christian author, professor, speaker, preacher, and pastor, Miller passed away on Aug. 19, 2012, in Trussville, Ala., at the age of 75. He was survived by his wife, Barbara Miller; daughter, Melanie Sloger; son, Timothy Miller; and sisters, Frankie, Helen, Shirley and Bonnie.

At the time of Miller's death, OBU President David W. Whitlock said, "Calvin Miller has influenced my life and ministry profoundly, first as an author, then when I was a bivocational pastor and sat in his seminars at Beeson Divinity's Pastors School. His writing and many books are a gift to Christendom. His teaching has multiplied by the thousands his ministry of outstanding creative preaching. In fact, he was one of our featured speakers and teachers a few weeks ago at the newly re-established OBU Pastors School. In more recent years, Miller, the scholar, has become my dear friend. I'll miss the author, the professor and scholar, but I will miss my friend Calvin the most."

*Submitted by Richard E. McCullough  
Member, Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission*

# Oklahoma Baptist Hall of Fame

## Norman Leroy Wagoner

1937—2012  
Inducted 2022

Norman Leroy Wagoner was born on Aug. 22, 1937, in Hays, Kan., to Lee and Lucille Wagoner. He passed away at the age of 74 on June 13, 2012.

After graduating from Rogers High School, Wagoner served in the Army, then worked several jobs, including with the railroad and Skelly Oil Company until 1974, when he moved to Eufaula and opened Wagoner's Hardware Store.



**Norman Wagoner**

When Wagoner relinquished his role in 2011 as Mission Service Corps (MSC) volunteer coordinator for Oklahoma Baptists—Appointed by the North American Mission Board (NAMB)—Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma (BGCO) Partnership and Volunteer Ministries Specialist Sam Porter commented, “It’s going to take up to five people to replace him.”

Wagoner had worked closely with Porter for 11 years. In addition to coordinating volunteer missions projects, Wagoner had been an essential leader in several areas

of men’s ministries—most prominently disaster relief.

Wagoner survived a bout with prostate cancer in 2006, but discovered in January 2011 that the cancer had returned in his bones. In August of that year, the progression of the disease prevented him from traveling from his home in Eufaula to his office in the Baptist Building in Oklahoma City.

In September 2012, the BGCO Board of Directors approved the establishment of the Norman Wagoner Volunteer in Missions Award, which is presented to a missions volunteer who “has a deep love of Jesus, is determined to live on mission with God, is a vibrant witness to a lost world and is a faithful servant to fellow man.”

Wagoner was a charter member of the Oklahoma disaster relief team established in 1973, and also was involved in World Changers, Brotherhood, Royal Ambassadors, Camp Hudgens (Now CrossTimbers Children’s Mission Adventure Camp), and volunteer builders

through the years.

As an accountant for an oil company, Wagoner took early retirement and bought the hardware store in Eufaula. After his first wife, Martha, died of cancer, he met and married Flo, whose husband had died within a year of Wagoner's wife. They later sold the hardware store and became MSC volunteers with NAMB.

The Wagoners were initially assigned to North Dakota, then moved to Wyoming, where he served as men's ministry/Brotherhood leader for six years. He used disaster relief efforts to build a ministry and as a tool to get men involved. Ironically, the BGCO helped him build the first feeding unit for Wyoming by buying a disaster relief trailer for the state.

He returned to Oklahoma in 1997, where he helped coordinate volunteer builders, then moved to Hawaii for a year to work with Baptist men there and direct disaster relief. When he came back to Oklahoma, Porter asked him to help oversee disaster relief in the Sooner state.

"The biggest thing he helped me with was developing associational feeding units using the model he had in Wyoming," said Porter. "We now have more than 20 associations with feeding units."

From the time Porter came to the Baptist Building in 1998, the number of disaster relief volunteers grew from 300 to more than 5,000 by 2011.

"Norman had a huge role in that," said Porter. "We now have more than 30 trainings a year instead of just one."

Wagoner, who served as a layman in disaster relief for 38 years, 22 of those as a volunteer missionary—including serving on 17 mission trips in nine countries—was presented the prestigious Robert E. Dixon Award from NAMB in 2009.

"This is one of the national convention's highest volunteer honors, a hall of fame-type award based on a lifetime of service that helped shape the course of Southern Baptist Disaster Relief," Porter



**Wagoner was a familiar figure in his yellow DR jacket, taking on many roles through the years, including organizing and conducting training sessions.**

said. "Very few laymen have received the award."

Porter said Wagoner's calling was to strengthen men's ministry.

"Norman had a heart to reach men," Porter emphasized. "He realized volunteer missions gives men a place to plug in where they might not have otherwise—that their hands-on work can make a difference."

Porter added that Wagoner spent many days helping to develop Camp Hudgens (now CrossTimbers Children's Missions Camp).

"He invested a lot of time and effort in that camp," Porter said.

Wagoner once said he always enjoyed working with men, and compared men's ministry to "God walking in the Garden of Eden with Adam.

"Can you imagine Adam, made in the image of God, walking alongside God?" Wagoner asked. "That's how men's ministry should be—walking with God, sharing aches, pains, joys and relationships."

He said he formed a picture of that when he was working in Thailand after the devastating Dec. 26, 2004 earthquake in the Indian Ocean and the resulting tsunami, and six of the men he was with carried a heavy beam, which was to be used to support a house.

"One of us couldn't have carried it, but together we did," he pointed out. "That's the way men's work should be."

Wagoner said, "If you want to serve the Lord, get a passport."

He added that if there were not volunteers, God would have to shut down missions and ministry.

"Oklahoma Baptists have been loving, kind and encouraging," Wagoner once said. "Flo and I have been the ones blessed. It's been a pleasure to work for no salary."

Porter described Wagoner as a faithful servant, a man truly sold out to God.

"He's not normal," Porter related. "He works harder than anyone at the BGCO."

Randy Adams, former leader of the BGCO's Church Outreach Team who served as interim pastor at Eufaula, North Fork, said Wagoner's church was affected by his ministry.

"In that church are dozens of men and women who are involved in disaster relief, Baptist Builders and other volunteer missions, mostly due to Norman's influence," Adams said. "The other thing I have been told repeatedly is that Norman makes sure the church remembers to pray. He leads a prayer meeting following the Sunday evening service each week. Norman Wagoner is a true spiritual giant among Oklahoma Baptists, and that's not hyperbole."

Porter agrees.

"Norman's influence in his church and the Eufaula area made a group of volunteers from that rural area to be prime examples of what a church and/or community can do when they decide to 'give themselves' to be on mission whatever the task," he said.

Shortly before his death, Wagoner was honored at a tribute ser-

vice at his home church. Among those speaking at the service was the mayor of Eufaula, Selena Jayne-Dornan, who said Wagoner and Flo visited her when she was campaigning for office and asked if they could pray for her.

"After the election, they came by again to pray for me," Jayne-Dornan said. "We shut down the office and had a prayer meeting. Now, every couple of weeks, they stop by to pray for me."

"Norman and Flo are probably two of the strongest prayer warriors I've ever known," Porter affirmed.

Porter added that even with Wagoner's illness, he still tried to encourage other people.

"He sent emails almost every day saying he was praying for us," Porter noted. "He was the ultimate encourager. Norman has taught lots of men how to live. Later, Norman taught men how to die. He walked through the valley of the shadow of death, and he showed men how to walk by faith knowing that death is coming."

*Contributed by Bob Nigh, Oklahoma Baptists' Historical Secretary and Director of History. Dana Williamson, Baptist Messenger, (Retired) contributed to this article.*

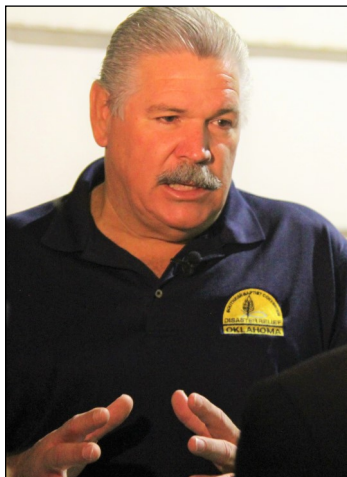
# **SAM PORTER**

## **2022**

### **DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD**

Samuel R. Porter served as director of Oklahoma Baptist Disaster Relief (OBDR) with the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma (BGCO) for nearly 20 years, before he announced his retirement on July 11, 2017 to become national DR director for the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

A native of Marietta, Porter had served as pastor of Sapulpa, First since May 1995, when in January 1998 he succeeded Buddy Hunt, who resigned the BGCO DR director's position to become pastor of Alva, First.



**Sam Porter**

Porter was described as a “man’s kind of man” by both BGCO Executive Director-Treasurer Anthony L. Jordan and Dave Clippard, associate executive director and Church Outreach Team leader.

As a pastor for nearly 20 years—at Eakley, First; Sapulpa, First and Bartlesville, Southern—Porter’s strength had been building churches through volunteer, hands-on ministries. He had led 50 volunteer mission projects, including local and state trips as well as to 14 foreign countries.

Porter served the BGCO as Volunteer Missions Specialist, which included being DR Director, Partnership Missions Specialist (2007-2017), and Men’s Ministries Specialist (1998-2007).

Then, from Sept. 1, 2017 to June 30, 2022, Porter served as national director for the North American Mission Board’s (NAMB) Disaster Relief operation when director Mickey Caison retired.

Porter is a prominent DR leader in Oklahoma and across the nation. He was one of the first volunteers to respond after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in New York City, making numerous trips for two years and serving as a chaplain in the temporary morgue at “Ground Zero” at the southern tip of Manhattan as first responders frantically searched for survivors.

From responding to the devastating Moore tornadoes of 1999 and 2013, Porter led OBDR volunteers to minister to victims and survivors of disasters and first responders in Oklahoma, across the United States and around the world.

From May 2-8, 1999, 154 tornadoes touched down in the U.S., more than half of them on May 3 and 4 when activity reached its peak over Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, Texas, and Arkansas. The most significant tornado first touched down on May 3 southwest of Chickasha, and strengthened into an F5 before dissipating near Midwest City. The tornado tore through southern and eastern parts of Oklahoma City and its suburbs of Bridge Creek, Moore, Del City, Tinker Air Force Base and Midwest City, killing 36 people, destroying more than 8,000 homes, and causing \$1.5 billion in damage. With a total of 72 tornadoes, it was the most prolific tornado outbreak in Oklahoma history.

The outbreak of storms prompted a massive response from Oklahoma Baptist DR volunteers and other organizations involved in disaster response.

"When I came on board in 1998, we had 300 volunteers, a feeding truck and a trailer and people with an awesome heart to serve," Porter said. "Since that time, God has continued to give us a heart to serve and has expanded our array of volunteers and equipment."

At the time of his retirement from the BGCO, Jordan said, "Sam's retirement is a great loss to me personally and Oklahoma Baptists. He and I have been friends and colleague for 30 years. Sam has led our disaster relief and partnership missions ministries with passion, excellence, and effectiveness. He is without equal as a leader of disaster relief ministries. He is respected by all.

"While I grieve (at) his retirement, I rejoice that he will continue to serve Southern Baptists through NAMB. He has the respect and skills to renew the partnership between state conventions who recruit, train, and provide equipment and the strategic role of NAMB in coordination. I pray the Lord's blessing on him and (His wife) Sheryl in this new adventure in service of our Savior and his people called Baptists."

Porter has led more than 100 volunteer mission projects and more than 40 international relief missions, including two humanitarian aid trips following an earthquake in Iraq in 2003, when he helped plan the distribution of food, blankets, stoves and fuel and assisted with the installation of water filtration systems in four hospitals in Najaf and Karbala.

He helped lead recovery efforts for a year in Haiti, enlisting and dispatching 34 volunteer teams from Oklahoma in the wake of the devastating earthquake that shook the country located on the west end of the island of Hispaniola on Jan. 12, 2010.

He also served in Indonesia and Thailand following the Dec. 26, 2004 earthquake and the resulting devastating tsunami in the Indian Ocean that killed some 230,000 people. He also led disaster relief and recovery efforts—mainly in Louisiana—following Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Ike and Gustav.

Regarding Porter's new post, David Melber, NAMB vice president

of Send Relief, said, “We prayed and searched for Mickey’s replacement for about 18 months. Sam has been in the disaster relief world for a long time, working around the nation and throughout Oklahoma. He’s proven to be a great leader. I’m excited to see how he’s going to continue unifying our state disaster relief leaders during crises and how he will bring a new direction for disaster relief that’s going to further build its future.”

“I am really thrilled to get to continue in the ministry I’ve already been doing 19½ years,” Porter said at the time of his move to NAMB. “The SBCDR network of state directors is a fellowship of incredible men who help believers learn how to put themselves in the ‘mission offering plate.’ My prayer is that we can see every state convention have a strong disaster relief team to impact their part of the USA for the Lord by serving when individuals’ lives are torn apart by disasters of various types.”

The first thing Porter did was to strengthen the DR teams in the state conventions that had declining numbers.

“We want to see every one of the 42 state conventions reach out to include collegiate students and many more millennials,” he said. “This generation are doers and desire to be in ‘hands-on ministry.’ They are perfect to be DR volunteers. We will seek to have more join their local state teams to serve across the nation.”

Porter served on the board of trustees at Golden Gate (now Gateway) Seminary and was chairman of the board for two years. He also served as a member of the BGCO Board of Directors, as a trustee for Oklahoma Baptist Homes for Children and vice president of the Oklahoma Pastors’ Conference.

Porter has an undergraduate degree from Baylor University, where he was defensive end on the Baylor football team. He also holds a Master of Divinity degree from Southwestern Seminary. He and his wife, Sheryl, have two sons, Aaron (married to Chanda) and



**Sam Porter poses in front of “The Cross of Ground Zero,” which was found amid the debris of the World Trade Center in New York City. Porter spent a quiet and reflective, but emotional, day at the National September 11 Memorial Museum on May 19, 2014. *Bob Nigh Photo***



Josh (married to Rachel), and five grandchildren, Reece, Doak, Zeke, Chi and Jet.

Upon learning of his being named to receive the Distinguished Service Award, Porter commented, "I want to express sincere thanks for the members of the Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission for honoring me for 25 years of Disaster Relief leadership. Leading volunteer ministry has been a true personal blessing.

"I loved being a local church pastor for three Oklahoma churches, and initially resisted when asked by Anthony Jordan to become a BGCO specialist in volunteer ministry because I loved serving others as a local pastor. Jordan simply said, 'We believe if you accept the Men's Ministry Specialist position, you will be able to touch thousands of more lives than you ever could as a local pastor.' Well, He was correct.

"I have loved every phase of the past 25 years serving Oklahoma Baptists and the last five years serving the 47,000 SBC churches as the National SBDR director. There is no other volunteer ministry as impactful across the nation like SBDR. It truly is one ministry that draws SBC believers together in unity to serve others.

"You not only have honored me, but also my wife, Sheryl, and the rest of our family. As Sheryl said numerous times the last 25 years because of my extensive travel to disaster responses, 'I and our family have shared Sam with much of the U.S.A. and the world each time there has been a major disaster in need of passionate believers willing to respond and share the love of Jesus through Disaster Response.'"

In late 2022, Porter served as interim director of OSBDR following the resignation of Don Williams.

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



**Robert Romines, left, superintendent of Moore Public Schools, accepts a \$500,000 check from BGCO DR Director Sam Porter and BGCO Executive Director-Treasurer Anthony L. Jordan. The funds helped build a 1,600-person storm shelter at Central Elementary/Junior High in Moore. Bob Nigh Photo**

# 2021 GASKIN BAPTIST CHURCH HISTORY AWARD

## Church History Award goes to Ardmore, Emmanuel

The 125th Anniversary history of Ardmore, Emmanuel was judged by a committee of the Oklahoma Baptist Historical Commission to be the best among those submitted in 2021, and has been awarded the Gaskin Church History Award.

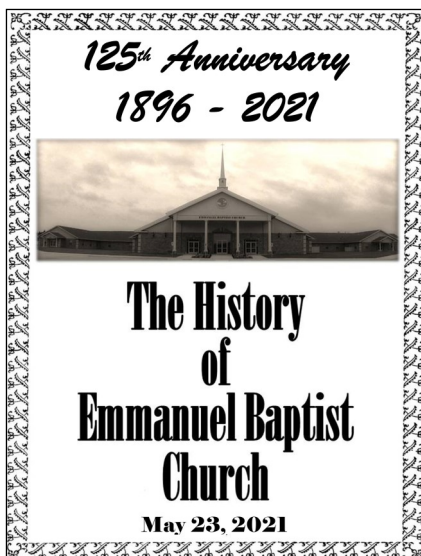
The history, written by Steven Johnson, minister of music and education, says, "At 3:30 p.m. on May 31, 1896, Emmanuel Baptist Church of Ardmore was organized. It was then known as the South Ardmore Baptist Church.

"For some time, there had been an impression in the hearts of the Baptists of South Ardmore that there ought to be a Baptist church in their area. Because of this leading by the Holy Spirit, Rev. J.A. McCullough wrote Rev. W.H. Kuykendall of Ryan, Okla. to come and assist in a revival with the view of organizing a church. Kuykendall agreed to do this, if Dr. J.F. Young, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Ardmore, and his church would invite him.

"The invitation was extended, and Bro. Kuykendall came for the meeting. The revival meeting was held under a brush arbor on the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> (Lake Murray Drive) and D Street. During the revival, the church was organized in the home of Mr. & Mrs. J.B. Hayes."

Charter members of the church included W.C. Canfield, Mollie Canfield, R.F. Thomason, June Thomason, Walter Haggard, Mollie Haggard, Nina Lindsey, M.A. Cook, L.A. Speed, J.A. McCullough, Sally McCullough, Van McCullough, W.A. Gilliam, Fannie Gilliam, J.B. Hayes, M.E. Glover and W.J. Cook.

The history points out that, "Even though the church was organized during a brush arbor and in a home, the congregation assembled thereafter in the South Ardmore schoolhouse. It was not long until objections arose relative to the church convening in the schoolhouse and finally, the church was prohibited from meeting therein.



### *Church History Award*

"The Ladies Society had made some chairs for the people to sit on while attending the school, so they were moved into the home of Mr. & Mrs. P.R. Henson.

The church met in that home for about eight months; most of that time, the church was without a pastor. On March 1, 1898, under the leadership of Rev. J.B. Hays, the lumber for the first building was delivered to the building site of the church building at 4<sup>th</sup> and D Street.

"It was a struggle, but the building was completed and later was enlarged and remodeled under the leadership of Rev. Dan Curb. The first Sunday School was organized on June 7, 1898, and on Aug. 30, 1898, the church presented itself for membership in the Enon Baptist Association and the Southern Baptist Convention, affiliations which continue to this day.

During anniversary festivities on May 23, 2021, those still living and known to be members of Emmanuel Baptist Church for 50 or more years were recognized. They included Betty Almon, Mary & Mark Cunningham, Jerri Day, Roger Day, Mary Ann Elmore, Pam Epperson, Geraldine Forson, Jackie & Ken French, Sue Green, Hazel Hitt, Lucille Hodges, Boyd Howell, Dovie Martin, Chiquita Morton, Natha & Kenneth Page, Kristi Reed, Rose Marie Sikes, Cindy Smith and Esther Spurgeon.

Thirty-seven pastors have served the church in its history. Donny Custar has served as pastor since 1996.

The Gaskin Church History Award was presented to members of the church during a special luncheon held on Tue., Nov. 15 during the Oklahoma Baptists' annual meeting

Other church histories were submitted for 2021 by Bartlesville, New Harmony and Cheyenne, First.

# 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.

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*Ramona Allen*, Wilburton

Given by John and Pat Hart

*Ramona Allen*, Wilburton

Given by Delmer, Charity and Tim Allen

*Donald E. Badgett*, Del City

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*James Ball*, Claremore

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