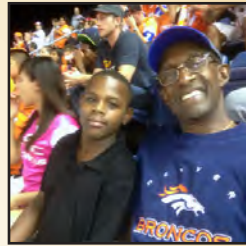


UMMEN

The magazine of United Methodist Men



14 men who are making a difference

A letter from the General Secretary

I am thankful for all those who mentored me.

Some of these mentors are discussed in this issue, but many are not included due to space.

Ironically, my wife and I were going through boxes of old materials this week, and she found a Certificate of Appreciation thanking me for serving as the chair of the Future Planning Committee of the National Association of Conference Presidents (1994-96).

I began my relationship with the NACP several years earlier when I attended the Nashville event as the president elect of the Texas Conference. I was amazed to discover all I didn't know about UM Men.

I think NACP leaders selected me to chair a committee because I was younger than many, and I asked more questions.

I am grateful for those men who helped me along the way.

As a new district president, I attended my first of many retreats at Lakeview Conference Center. When I walked in, Conference President Mouzon Biggs Sr., a huge, plainspoken guy from Carthage, Texas, insisted that I sit next to him.

When a sign-up sheet for the Upper Room Prayer Line was circulated, Mouzon asked if I had ever worked the prayer line, I answered, "No." (In reality, I had never heard of the prayer line.) "You will work



with me today," he suggested as he added my name to the list next to his. That was the beginning of a long mentorship in prayer, UM Men, and as a delegate to Jurisdictional and General Conference.

It was also at Lakeview that I met Harold Batiste, Bishop John Wesley Hart, and many other leaders from across the connection. All of them served as mentors to me.

However, my mentorship did not end with those long-ago events. I continue to be taught new ways of working, new ways of relating, and new ways of learning.

I don't think there is a point when the mentee, stops being mentored and becomes only a mentor. I hope I will always be a mentor and a mentee.

So, what is the "next right step" for you after you read this issue?

Maybe, it is to thank someone who mentored you.

Maybe, it is to mentor a younger or older man in your church.

Maybe it is to ask another man to help you develop a new skill or mentor you in a new hobby.

Be open to God's leading. We are all in this together.

Gil Hanke

United Methodist Men exists to declare the centrality of Christ in every man's life.



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Editor's note: This magazine includes articles from individuals who hold diverse opinions. We hope all articles are thought provoking; they are not necessarily the opinions of the General Commission on UM Men.



This issue could have been 200 pages long.

No — make that 500 pages.

While we wanted to feature men who are making a difference in their communities and across the nation,

we knew it would be difficult to confine the list to 12 men.

Staff members of the Commission on UM Men suggested scores of men.

We tried to get a fair geographic and ethnic representation, and we tried to include men who are involved in various aspects of the ministry.

We thought about men who are addressing domestic violence and leading prayer ministry. We cited Scout leaders and men who are engaged in innovative ministries to men.

We thought of men who are making a difference on the national level, but we didn't want to ignore those making a significant witness in a local community.

It was a difficult whittling process.

"You can't leave him out," was the frequent complaint. I agreed, but there is a limited number of pages in the magazine.

We left him out.

At the end of the process, we stretched the goal from 12 men to 14 men, but hundreds of men are not included in this issue.

I apologize even before you write a letter complaining about a leader you feel should have been included. I probably will agree. He should have been included.

While some members of our denomination focus all their attention on the February special session of General Conference, this issue spends scant attention to that gathering.

Our focus is on men who are making a difference in the lives of others.

The need for these men to continue their ministries and the need for all of us to minister to hurting people will continue long after exhausted delegates to that St. Louis gathering have returned to their homes around the world.

Those delegates will join thousands of United Methodists who will kneel at the Lord's Table on March 3 to receive the Communion elements.

Most of them will not know what happened in the Gateway City. The events in that city will have little relevance to their lives.

The church will still need to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.

The church will still need to feed the hungry and visit those in prisons.

The church will still need to care for hurting people.

This seems like an appropriate time to celebrate the ministries of United Methodist Men.

Rich Peck

Bishop James E. Swanson Sr.

Advocate for men's ministry

Anyone preparing a list of men who are strong advocates for men's ministry must begin with Mississippi Area Bishop James E. Swanson Sr.

Fighting domestic violence

Serving as president of the General Commission on UM Men, the bishop is a strong supporter of the agency's effort to reduce domestic violence.

He has personal reasons.

In 1968, 18-year-old James was on the porch of his girlfriend when a neighbor yelled his name and told him to hurry home. "Your mother's been hurt," she shouted.

He ran home to find an EMS team loading his mother into an ambulance.

His mother, Arnola Verna Triplett, 51, later died of wounds inflicted by R.C. Calhoun, James' stepfather.

"I am now 68 years old and it still hurts just as much today as it did 50 years ago," says the bishop. Little wonder he is such a strong advocate for the AMEND project to reduce violence against women.



Bishop Swanson preaches at the 2016 General Conference.

A determined spirit

James Swanson displayed a determined spirit early in life.

Following his 1968 graduation from high school, he caught a city bus to Texas Southern University near his hometown of Houston.

"I arrived at the Registrar's Office, but I was told that since I had not applied earlier, I would not be able to register," says Swanson.

Recalling his mother's words, "God will never let you down, so don't you ever stop believing in yourself." Swanson refused

to leave the office. After a lengthy wait, a registrar official helped young James complete the necessary paperwork, including a waiver of the required ACT exam. She also found a grant so he would not need a student loan.

The bishop went on to graduate from college and seminary and he received a doctoral degree.

Elected bishop

He was elected to the episcopacy at the 2004 Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference, and he was assigned to the Holston Conference. He served that Knoxville, Tenn.-based conference for eight years, prior to his assignment to the Mississippi Episcopal Area in 2012. He was elected president of the General Commission on UM Men the same year.

A critical ministry

As president of the commission, the bishop has underscored the importance of reaching men. "Men have three basic needs," he says. "1. A genuine faith journey; 2. Real relationships with others; and 3. Knowledge of how faith helps them in their work-a-day world."

"Men need to be with other men in the same way women need to be with other women," he says.

A preacher in demand

The bishop preached at the 2016 General Conference and the 2013 and 2017 National Gatherings of UM Men.

He has also served as a preacher and workshop leader in Japan, Korea, Brazil, Russia, Estonia, Chile, Canada, Israel, Egypt, Liberia, Sudan, Uganda, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and throughout the U.S.

The bishop and Delphine are parents of six adult children and they have 15 grandchildren. 

Robert Powell

'Whippersnapper' leaves a legacy

DOTHAN, Ala.—

No listing of men who are making a difference would be complete without the name of Robert Powell, who was serving as president of the National Association of Conference Presidents of UM Men when that organization asked the 1996 General Conference to establish the General Commission on UM Men.

Robert traveled to Denver to advocate for the creation of the agency. The assembly voted 754-185 to create the 23-member board, and, as a member of the newly formed commission, Robert was instrumental in employing the Rev. Joseph Harris, a district superintendent in the Oklahoma Conference, as the first staff executive.

"I spoke everywhere from Portland, Oregon, to Puerto Rico," says Robert.

President of UM Men Foundation

In 2000, Robert was named president and executive director of the UM Men Foundation.

During his nine-year leadership of the foundation, Robert helped secure a \$1 million grant from the Cal Turner Family Foundation.

In 2006, the commission moved into a new office on Music Row, and, in 2007, the foundation secured a \$500,000 gift from Ed and Gwen Cole. That gift and additional funds from the foundation paid off the mortgage on the Nashville building.

Robert resigned from the foundation in 2009 to assume a position with the UM Children's Home in Alabama.

When asked about his beginnings with UM Men, Robert recalled serving as the president of the Dothan District UM Men in 1985. At that time, there were seven chartered groups in the district; within a year of his presidency, 27 churches held charters.



Ed Shytle (left), president of the UM Men Foundation in 2016, presents the Dale Waymire Award to Robert Powell. Robert also received two John Wesley Society Awards in 1988 and 1989 and a Denman Award in 2013.

Whippersnapper church builder

In 1988, he was elected president of the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference UM Men. After his election, attendance at conference events increased from 50 to 200.

In 1992, Robert was elected president of the Southeastern Jurisdiction UM Men when he led a jurisdictional effort to build a church near a Naval Submarine Base at Kings Bay, Ga.

He also learned members of Emmaus UMC were meeting at an office of a fire station in Panama City, Fla. He led an effort to build them a church.

At a 25-year anniversary of the Emmaus Church building, the Rev. Jack Hankins, pastor, told some 250 attendees at the 2017 service, "Some whippersnapper from Dothan came by and said, 'I'm going to build you a church,' and he did."

Robert wasn't finished helping congregations build new facilities. He led an effort to build a church in Chickasaw, Ala., and a fellowship hall of an African American Church in Eutaw, Ala.

He also initiated the annual Dothan District Pastors' Appreciation Dinner, attended by some 350 people.

Robert is married to Elene and they have seven great grandchildren. 

Bill West

President serves as an Amachi mentor

DENVER, Colo.—

In 2011, the General Commission on UM Men formed a partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters to provide mentors for children of incarcerated parents. The program is called Amachi, a Nigerian Ibo word that means, “Who knows but what God has brought us through this child?”

In 2011, Bill was serving as president of Rocky Mountain Conference (now Mountain Sky Conference) UM Men when the commission named him the Amachi coordinator for the conference. In that post, Bill was asked to encourage men in Wyoming, Colorado, and Utah to become big brothers to boys whose fathers were incarcerated.

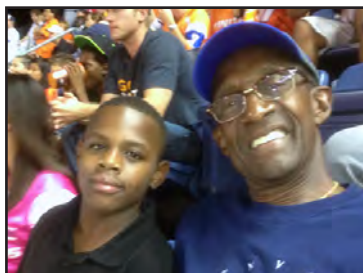
Need to walk the walk

“I decided to become a mentor as a way to help change a trend in which some 70 percent of children of incarcerated parents also become incarcerated,” said Bill. “I also thought that becoming a big brother would help me explain the relationship to potential mentors.”

Bill applied to the program in November 2011. After a two-month screening and training period, he was matched with 9-year old AJ in January, 2012.

With support from Big Brothers Big Sisters and occasional free tickets for outings, Bill and AJ have now spent at least two hours together every week for the last seven years.

“AJ will be 16 this year,” says Bill. “It has been a rewarding experience for me to see AJ develop into a promising contributor to society. I’m thankful I could assist in his direction.”



Bill West and AJ attend a Denver Bronco football game.

President raises funds for mission trips

Now serving as president of UM Men of Park Hill UMC, Bill coordinates several fundraising events, including annual pancake breakfasts and hamburger picnics. The organization also sponsors an antique car show. All the events provide funds for youth mission

trips to help in disaster struck areas such as Louisiana, Haiti, and South Carolina. The men also support youth activities such as rock-wall climbing, white-water rafting and other challenge trips that help young people build self-confidence.


After serving as treasurer for MCabe UMC while living in St. Petersburg, Fla., Bill was named treasurer of the Denver church. He also served as co-chair of the Staff Parish Relations Committee.

Professional experience

After receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in biology and graduate studies in business, Bill was invited to participate in the Financial Management Program with The General Electric Company, a company he served for 34 years. During his last five years with GE, Bill served as the national contract administrator for government hydro projects.

Following his retirement from G.E., Bill served for five years as project manager of international hydro projects with Alstom, a French multi-national company.

Family

Bill has been married to Louise for 49 years. They have one son, William III, and one 12-year old granddaughter, Ayden. 

Chris Karabinos

Veteran Scout leader

BROOKHAVEN, Ga.—
Scouting in the North Georgia Conference is exploding.

New troops and packs are forming and existing ones are expanding.

Part of the reason for this growth is an Eagle Scout with more than 20 years of adult scouting experience named Chris Karabinos.

Now serving as scouting coordinator for the North Georgia Conference, Chris has held leadership positions at the BSA unit, district, and council levels. Within the UMC, he has held positions in his local church, district, annual conference, and the denomination.

Impressive growth

As charter organization representative at Johns Creek UMC, Chris led 210 volunteers to double the size of the Scout program from four to eight units, growing it to an astounding ministry to 450 young people.

Twelve years ago, he started PRAY (Programs of Religious Activities with Youth) classes at Johns Creek UMC. A total of 430 youth have now completed one of the four courses.

“The first time a Scout walks into a church for an activity, religion is demystified a little bit,” says Chris. “With each additional activity in the church and the unit, the Scout becomes more comfortable and begins a faith walk. Before you know it, they are taking a ‘God and Country’ class to learn about the Bible and Christ.”

Families become church members

Unchurched families attend Scout Sundays at Johns Creek UMC, participate in service projects for the church, attend pack and troop meetings, and often become church members.



Chris Karabinos teaches Scout leaders about backpack cooking as they prepare for Philmont.

Chris’ own story reflects that path. Originally, he and his family were Episcopalians. When they wanted to start a pack closer to their home, it happened that Johns Creek UMC was the place to do it. They spent so much time there for Scout meetings, people thought they were already church members. To their surprise, leaders found out the Karabinos family were not members. Long story short, Chris and his family joined the church.

Chris has also served the UM Men in multiple roles including a 10-year stint on the Johns Creek UM Men board. As scouting coordinator for the North Georgia Annual Conference, he now serves on the North Georgia Conference UM Men Executive Board and the Conference Board of Laity.

Large collection of awards

Chris is a recipient of the Silver Beaver Award (2005), the Distinguished Commissioner Award (2007), the God and Country Mentor Award (2008), the UM Men Cross & Flame Award (2009), the Torch Award (2014), the God & Service Award (2017) and the Silver Torch Award (2018).

Professional experience

Chris earned a BS in industrial engineering from Auburn University and works for Digital Scientists as vice president of client services. He also sits on the boards of the Technology Association of Georgia (Digital Health Society), Kennesaw State University’s Healthcare Management and Informatics Masters Board of Advisors, and Strings of Mercy.

Married to Karen Karabinos since 1987, the couple have two Eagle Scout sons, Chris Jr. and John. 

Hank Dozier

Hammers bridge to support younger men

CHARLOTTE, N.C.—

Nearly every organization of UM Men across the U.S. laments the absence of younger men.

Hank Dozier, president of the Southeastern Jurisdiction of UM Men, urges men to change their thinking.

“It’s not an issue of getting younger men to attend our meetings,” said Hank, “It’s about finding ways to support their ministries.”

“Perhaps the most basic way for churches to reach younger men is to help them find commonalities with other men,” says Hank. “This is not rocket science; guys just want to be with guys who like the same things they like.”

Think Tank

Hank was instrumental in forming a YoungER Men’s Think Tank, a 16-member group of volunteers from each of the annual conferences in the Southeastern Jurisdiction. Members range in age from 20 to 45.

The group agreed to search for ways to increase the number of younger participants in men’s ministry.

At first, these men met together weekly electronically. They also involved themselves in studies such as “Lead like Jesus” and the “Class Meeting.”

Hank serves as the bridge to encourage UM Men organizations to support the ministries of younger men. “In other words,” said Hank, “Let’s give these guys the keys and let them unpack the ministry that God would have them to do.”

The Think Tank is now a ministry of its own, and the other four jurisdictions have invited members of the southeastern group to help them develop similar ministries in their areas.

Serves church at all levels

Hank has served St. Marks UMC as lay leader, president of UM Men, chair of the Board of Trustees, a Sunday school teacher, and chair of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee.


On the district and conference level, he has served as a district president of UM Men, president of the Western North Carolina Conference UM Men, a member of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, the Conference Board of Laity, and the District and Conference Nominating Committees.

He also was a delegate to the 2016 General Conference and will serve as a delegate to the 2019 special session in St. Louis in February. He also chairs the Metro District of the Conference Superintendency Committee.

As president of the Southeastern Jurisdiction UM Men, Hank is a member of the General Commission on UM Men and serves on both the Executive Committee and the Personnel Committee.

Personal

Hank received a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration from Delaware State University in Dover, and he recently retired after a 40-year career as a claims technical manager in the insurance industry.

Hank is married to Nancy, and the couple have a daughter, Lindsay. Both wife and daughter assist Hank in his ministry with men. 



Wife Nancy joins Hank Dozier following his induction into the John Wesley Society Class of 2014.

Herman B. Lightsey Jr.

South Carolina leader expands ministry in the state

IRMO, S.C.—

For Herman, former president of UMC Men in the South Carolina Annual Conference, making a difference has everything to do with the strength of the team.

“A leader is nothing but the cover of the book,” says Herman. “The real ministry is in the pages. It is in a team who understands the importance of disciplining men.”

Partnership with the bishop

Herman attributes the beginnings of growth in men’s ministry across the state to his 2013 invitation to Bishop Jonathan Holston to speak at their men’s annual spiritual weekend.

Both Herman and the bishop were new to their positions.

Only 150 people attended the 2013 event, but the bishop challenged the men to dream God-sized dreams, and he joined UMC Men leaders and several pastors to help them realize those dreams.

Six years of growth

In 2014, 576 people attended the retreat and the numbers jumped again in 2015 and 2016. In 2017 and 2018, 1,200 people attended.

The ministry team then added “Teaching Churches” as the next step to bring the training and message to the local churches.

Ministry across the denomination

Herman served as a 2012 and 2016 delegate to General Conference and he will be a delegate to the 2019 special session in February.

In 2016, he was also selected to a four-year term as a member of Wespeth Benefits and Investments, a firm that manages \$2.3 billion in assets on behalf of the UMC.

As first vice president of the NACP and



Herman Lightsey speaks to the 2018 Spring Retreat. Photo by Matt Brodie

a certified men’s ministry specialist, he is a member of the National Association of Conference Presidents.

Local church district and conference

Herman serves Ashland UMC in Columbia as a Sunday school teacher, Disciple facilitator, Bible study facilitator, and lay leader. He is on the Finance, Trustee, Stewardship, Administrative Board and Pastor/Staff Committee, and he is past president of Ashland UMC Men.

In the Columbia District, he is a certified UMC lay servant, a certified lay servant instructor, a member of the Connectional Ministries Committee, a Forward Focus facili-

tor, a member of the Midlands Emmaus Community (table of Mark) and past president of the Columbia District Men.

He is a member of South Carolina Annual Conference, past chair of the Conference Pension and Health Benefits Board, member of the Bishop’s Ministry Advisory Team, a member of the Connectional Ministries Committee, a member of the Board of Ordained Ministry, and a certified Forward Focus facilitator.

Community service

Herman is a retired deputy director of the South Carolina State Accident Workers’ Compensation Fund; a retired colonel, logistical officer, South Carolina Army National Guard; and a member of the South Carolina National Guard’s Hall of Fame. He is a member of the Boyleston Masonic Lodge, Ballentine, and a Shriner with Jamil Temple in Columbia.

Herman and wife Mary have two adult daughters, Jennifer Gibson (Marshall) and Amy Lightsey, and two grandchildren, Tyler and Riley Gibson. 

Migdiel Pérez

A lifetime prayer warrior

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—

Never underestimate the power of prayer. After serving for 13 years as the manager of The Upper Room Living Prayer Center, Migdiel has learned that prayer crosses geographical, cultural and political barriers to bring physical and spiritual healing to men, women, boys, and girls.

“I have the joy of being in relationships with people from all points on the theological spectrum,” said Migdiel. “They are only united in the belief that prayer changes lives. I provide training and schedule prayer times for 155 remote prayer line partners, and I provide them with the tools to make their prayer line experiences as simple and enjoyable as possible.”

Migdiel grew up in San Juan, Puerto Rico, where his family attended a Methodist Church, so he’s been around Methodists all of his life.

Move to Nashville

After receiving a bachelor’s degree in advertising and mass communications from Universidad del Sagrado Corazon in Santurce, Puerto Rico, he found his way to Nashville.

In 1993, he started work in Customer Care unit at the Upper Room of the General Board of Discipleship. He served in several positions with the board until he was named manager of The Living Prayer Center in 2005, a position well suited to this prayer warrior.

Migdiel not only works with those who answer the prayer line, he also spends time in prayer with those who happen to call his office seeking information about the prayer line (800/251-2468).

One request, scores of prayers

Migdiel also enjoys working with 494 global covenant prayer groups and individuals who receive prayers via email every week.



Migdiel Pérez responds to a prayer request at his Nashville office.


Those devoted volunteers join their prayers with those offered by the person who answered the initial phone call. This spiritual support system continues in prayer long after the first phone conversation has ended.

Migdiel is especially appreciative of the dedicated prayer advocates who operate remote prayer lines. “It’s not an easy ministry,” he says. “You need to be able to remind yourself that God is in control as you respond in prayer to people caught in life-endangering situations. You lift the situation to the Lord in the belief He will take care of something over which neither you nor the caller have any power.”

“It’s amazing to see God at work as He links caring volunteers with callers at the times they need prayer the most,” he says.

Response of a co-worker

“When I was a co-worker at The Upper Room, Migdiel was always the person I could go to when I had a prayer concern for myself or my family,” says Beth Wakefield. “My oldest daughter always calls me from Alabama when she has a prayer request and asks me to call Migdiel and add her concern to the Prayer Line because she knows he will always support and show deep concern.”

Migdiel is a member of Hamilton UMC in Antioch, Tenn. He is married to Alma and they are parents of 15-year-old Dale. 

Chuck Christian

Bandleader becomes prayer leader

PENSACOLA, Fla.—

Chuck was born and raised in York, Pa. along with his three older sisters. At age 13, he started playing drums and at 16, he was playing professionally with local bands.

He later played with the U.S. Air Force Drum and Bugle Corps in Washington, D.C., traveled with some big bands and, in 1959, he formed his own band based in Pensacola. Ten years later, he created a 40-member Diamond Drum and Bugle Corps to compete with other corps in the southeast. In 1971, his corps was the Florida state champion.



Chuck Christian at the Gethsemane Prayer Garden of Cokesbury UMC.

His experience with the prayer ministry at Cokesbury UMC evolved into a six-year term as prayer advocate for the Alabama West Florida Conference where he raised \$16,000 for the ministry. He was named prayer advocate for the Southeastern Jurisdiction.

Hunger relief advocate

After his term as conference president Chuck served as a hunger relief advocate for the Society of St. Andrew. In the six years, he held that post, he raised more than \$20,000 for the hunger ministry and he led district potato drops and several gleaning efforts.

Life changing experience

Chuck says his life radically changed in 1980 when he asked Jesus to come into his heart.

One year after joining Cokesbury UMC in 1981, Chuck was named president of the church's UM Men organization and the following year he was tapped to be president of the Pensacola District. In two years, he increased the number of chartered units from 20 to 40.

Chuck also served as Cokesbury lay leader, an alternate member of the annual conference, and chair of the Evangelism Committee.

Begins prayer ministry

He left the Cokesbury community to serve as director of evangelism for Pine Forest UMC, but after six years, he returned to Cokesbury where he was led by the Holy Spirit to start their prayer ministry. The team meets weekly and supports a prayer shawl ministry, an emergency prayer phone tree, and they operate a remote line for the Upper Room Prayer Center.

Family is biggest blessing

Chuck celebrates his 1987 marriage to Carol, his 3 stepsons and his 6 grandchildren.

During their 30-year marriage, the couple have gleaned fields together and sung in the church choir and the Singing Samaritans. They have participated in Sunday school classes, delivered Meals on Wheels, volunteered at the Manna Food Pantry, and delivered produce from two farms to local food pantries.

Local church activities

During his 37 years with Cokesbury UM Men, he has led three fund-raising events, recruited 30 men to become EMS members, led "Ladies Night-out" dinners, and arranged for four women to receive Susanna Wesley Awards. Eighteen years ago, he was instrumental in starting three men's study groups: Fishers of Men, Band of Brothers, and The King's Men.

He was a district lay speaker for ten years, and, in 2016, he received the Alabama West Florida Robert Powell Award for "empowering spiritual growth." 

The Rev. Greg Godwin

Pastor embraces scouting ministry

CLARKSBURG, W.Va.—

To give you an idea of Greg's devotion to scouting, he attended the 1971 13th World Jamboree in Japan as a youth member of Troop 421. Later this year, he will attend the 24th World Jamboree at the Summit in West Virginia as vice chair of the Faith and Belief program.

Between those 1971 and 2019 dates, Greg achieved the rank of Eagle in 1973, graduated from high school in 1975, and was on active duty with the U.S. Marine Corps from 1975 to 1979. As a Sergeant E5, Greg served in Iwakuni, Japan; the American Consulate in Karachi, Pakistan; the American Embassy in Tel Aviv, Israel; and accompanied President Carter on his 1979 visit to Jerusalem.

Ordained elder

Greg graduated from West Virginia Wesleyan College in 1982 and Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in 1985. He was ordained deacon in 1984 and elder in 1987.

Following five appointments to West Virginia churches, Greg was named senior pastor of First UMC in Clarksburg in 2016. In all those appointments, he continued his active engagement in scouting ministry.

Active on local and national level

While serving as Cubmaster of a pack at Concord UMC, he also was a member of the Buckskin Council Executive Board (2004-2017) and the National Religious Relationship Committee (2010-present) where he now chairs the BSA Protestant Working Group.

He was a commissioner for Allohak Council in 2017, and continues as a member of the Executive Board.

He also was as a chaplain at six National Scout Jamborees from 1997 to 2013. During the 2017 gathering, he was vice




Greg Godwin (right) joins Theo Johnson (center) and Dr. Charles Goodwin at the 2015 World BSA Jamboree in Japan. Theo, a member of First UMC in Waukesha, Wis., was selected to be the BSA representative at the Nagasaki's Peace Forum marking the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombing of that city. He is wearing a 1971 WSJ komodo given to him by Greg. "It has been a joy to be a part of Theo's faith journey," said Greg.

chair of the Duty to God and Country program area. In 2016, Greg was presented the Distinguished Eagle Award.

United Methodist scouting

Greg served as the scouting coordinator for West Virginia Conference and the W. Va. UM Men's Circuit Rider encampment at Jackson's Mill from 1999 to 2004. He was the scouting coordinator for the Northeast Jurisdiction from 2004 to 2012.

He was on the board of the General Commission on UM Men from 2008 to 2015 and a member of the Scouting Ministry Committee from 2004 to the present. He was on the faculty of several national UM Scouter's Workshops and was director of the 2008 and 2011 sessions at the Philmont Training Center.

Greg is married to Lisa Ann Dunn, an elementary school teacher. The couple have two adult children: Lauren Godwin, a UM pastor, and Jordan Godwin, a health care executive. 

L.W. Smith III

Vietnam veteran leads Strength for Service

COLUMBIA, S.C.—

As a child, LW joined with his four brothers and sisters as active members of Rehoboth UMC in Columbia.

Drifted from church

However, when LW was a teenager, his father died, and he drifted away from the church.

He graduated from high school in June 1969. That same month *Life* magazine displayed photos of the 242 Americans killed in Vietnam during the previous week.



LW Smith reviews Strength for Service book.

LW was drafted to serve in that war-torn country, and that experience sparked his passion to help others in military service.

Upon his return to Columbia, LW enrolled in Midlands Technical

College, where he met his wife, Jan. The couple married in 1978.

Rocky marriage

“Following the birth of our daughter, Jessica, in 1980, we experienced rocky times as a young couple,” says LW. “By the grace of God, UM Men were very instrumental in bringing me back into the church and showing me the grace and love of God.”

“I will forever be grateful to the men who held me accountable to God and to my life choices. Seeing their witness and love for Christ encouraged me to seek the joy they shared.”

LW and Jan celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary in 2018.

Showing the love of God

LW has held leadership positions at

local, district, conference, jurisdictional and national levels for 35 years, but he finds the most rewarding experiences when he is personally involved in ministry.

“I specifically remember volunteering at a young age to lead a Salkehatchie group in our local church,” says LW. “Towards the middle of the week, I realized it was not about hammer and nails, nor replacing a roof, as much as it is being a willing servant to show the love of God to those we serve.”

“When asked to cook for more than 100 people, or build a wheel chair ramp for someone in need, I know God is working through me to be in service to others.”

Property management


LW has worked in commercial property management for the past 42 years.

“I am very fortunate to have flexible working hours where I can carve out time to make hospital visits, teach Sunday school, and be a mentor of young men at our local church,” says LW.

President of Strength for Service

“Serving as a board member of the General Commission of UM Men allowed me to be part of a worldwide ministry to help first responders and military personnel,” says LW. “I am humbled to see how God orchestrated the plan, provided vision, guided us through establishment of a 501(c)3, and allowed me to serve as president of Strength for Service.”

The ministry has provided copies of *Strength for Service* books to more than 1.5 million military personnel and first responders.

“God continues to bless me richly with a devoted wife, daughter, son-in-law and two grandsons who light up my life and hold me accountable,” concludes the indefatigable leader. 

Glenn Wintemberg

Two-time president stokes fire for men's ministry

ST. CHARLES, Mo.—

For 33 years, Glenn Wintemberg led employees to make plumbing repairs, maintain air conditioning and heating units in five high schools, five middle schools and 18 elementary schools in a western St. Louis school district.

The ability to warm up cold St. Louis classrooms helped prepare him for his role of heating up enthusiasm for men's ministry.



Glenn Wintemberg

Conference president

"I have served in numerous positions of men's ministries since 1989," says Glenn. "My wife will lovingly give me a jab in the side when I start to list the positions I have served so I will consolidate them by saying I have served in just about every position possible in men's ministries."

While being president of the National Association of Conference Presidents of UM Men (2005-2008), Glenn introduced Family (Fast a Meal in One Year), an effort to raise funds for the Society of St. Andrew. He also proposed the UM Men Paver Project which invited men and women to make life-long reminders on the walkway in front of the Nashville GCUMM building.

Foundation president

In his current position as president of the UM Men Foundation, Glenn created two new endowment funds and led a successful effort to change the Life Membership Award to the Life Achievement Award. He also introduced the Society of John Wesley Plus program and the Heritage Society which includes those who make gifts through wills, life

insurance policies, charitable gift annuities and charitable endowments.

Glenn's goal is to enable the foundation to support all phases of scouting, men's ministry and the Upper Room Prayer Line.

No matter what office Glenn holds, you can expect him to find ways to improve it.


Family first

"Brenda and I just celebrated our 42nd wedding anniversary," says Glenn. "As I look back I realize that none of this would have been possible without her support. We have two children; Aubrey, 36, and Derek, 30, and two grandchildren; Maddellynn, 5 and Logan, 2." Aubrey is married to Zeb, and Derek is married to Jenna.

After caring for Maddellynn for four and a half years and now Logan for two years Glenn feels he was born for this. "There is nothing like changing a dirty diaper to keep things real," says Glenn.

Glenn recalls taking 13-year-old Derek with him to a jurisdictional retreat. "I was co-leading a training event, and I was looking for something for him to do during that time," says Glenn. Derek joined two other men in operating a remote prayer line. "The two men couldn't praise Derek enough for the maturity he showed."

Derek also accompanied his dad to the 2005 National Gathering of UM Men when Glenn was NACP president. The two were honored to welcome the men and women to the opening session of the event.

"I have been blessed to serve men's ministries and hope to continue to serve as long as I am able," says Glenn. 

Dan Ramsey

Veteran police officer supports colleagues

HOUSTON, Texas—

A 30-year veteran of the Houston Police Department, Dan knows what it is like to cope with grueling and complicated situations.

"I only wish we would have had a copy of *Strength for Service to God and Community* while I was with the Houston Police Department," says Dan. "In that profession we see the good (and mainly the bad) that occurs in our communities, and that takes a toll on first responders. I didn't want to take my anxieties home, but I needed daily assurance in some form."

Dan now makes sure that all first responders within driving distance (and that means within a 12-hour drive) have copies of the book, which provides inspiration and spiritual strength to first responders.

He gave the devotions to first responders in West, Texas, following a 2013 fertilizer plant explosion that killed 15 people and injured more than 160. He also gave books to the Baton Rouge, Louisiana Police Department after the deaths of three officers, and he gave cases of books to patients at the VA Hospital in Houston.

"These devotional books are a gift from God and make a major difference in people's lives," says Dan.

Officer training

Dan attended Blinn College in Brenham Texas and he studied police science at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville. He is a 1973 graduate of the Houston Police Academy and holds a Basic, Intermediate, Advanced, and Master's certification in law



Dan Ramsey delivers boxes of Strength for Service to God and Community books to the Rev. Duren Boyce, chaplain of the Baton Rouge (La.) Police Department. Dan delivered the books following the deaths of three officers.

enforcement from the Texas Law Enforcement Standards and Education.

He served in the Patrol, Traffic, Narcotics, Vice, and Burglary and Theft Divisions of the Houston Police Department, and he was a member of the "Peacemakers," a Houston Police Gospel Quartet.

Service with UM Men

Following a term as a president of a local church unit of UM Men, Dan became a district president, conference president and jurisdictional president. In 2012, he was elected to a four-year term as president of the National Association of Conference Presidents of UM Men.

After serving as national president, Dan helped his friend Ken Tielke with his responsibilities as president of the South Central Jurisdiction of UM Men and his five-year struggle with cancer. Upon Ken's death in October 2017, Dan assumed Ken's responsibilities and later became interim president of Texas Conference UM Men.

"It is a blessing to see men in ministry throughout the connection where hearts are changed and God's grace touches men, women, and children," says Dan. "Men feed the hungry through the Society of St. Andrew, participate in Bible study, participate in small accountability groups, and become disciples for Jesus Christ."

Dan also oversees safe sanctuary training and coordinates criminal background checks for the Texas Annual Conference.

Dan and wife Nancy have three adult children and four grandchildren.



Joe Kelley

Deputy sheriff cares for the elderly

Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.

ST. FRANCISVILLE, La.—

This quote, attributed to John Wesley, embodies the life of Joe Kelley, a man who demonstrates and promotes the love of Christ to everyone he meets.

Joe has been nationally recognized throughout his leadership career. He has been inducted into the Society of John Wesley, and he received the Charles Goodgame Award, and the Denman Evangelism Award.

A member of St. Francisville UMC, Joe has been a leader of men's ministry for most of his adult life.

As president of the South Central Jurisdiction UM Men, he encourages men to find ways to reach out to their communities, and he tries to convince individuals to become Legacy Builders and churches to charter

"We have raised a whole generation of kids who know little of the Bible," says Joe. "Now they are adults raising kids. We have double duty to try to catch up!"

Joe first retired from Georgia Pacific and more recently from his sales job at Red Stick Armature.

Red Stick was his dream job where, in addition to his regular customer visits, he had opportunities to visit UM Men organizations and churches to speak, encourage and promote the love of Christ.

When Joe retired from Red Stick, he prayed for other opportunities for ministry. Within a month, God answered that prayer by giving him a job as a part-time deputy for the West Feliciana Sheriff's Department. He doesn't carry a gun or chase bad guys, but



Joe Kelley

he helps run Triad, a program that provides services to the elderly such as delivering food and providing transportation to the doctor's office.

Joe is always alert to the needs of his community. He organized a weekly meeting at the local Chevron gas station/snack shop with the church's lay leader and other men meet for fellowship, prayer and growth. When he overheard complaints about how difficult it was for older singles to meet new people, he organized regular meetings at the local library to meet that need.

Joe's advice to men who want to lead and influence other men is "Study, study, study the Bible. We as leaders represent Jesus Christ in everything we do. If we do not know Him then we can't represent Him." He adds, "Be the men in Psalm 112; live John 15:9-17; and pray Psalm 51."

Joe is married to Anna Bess. The couple have four adult children, ten grandchildren and four great grandchildren. They live on several acres called "Kelley Hill", a frequent gathering place for church picnics and youth activities. Joe is a frequent guest speaker at Louisiana churches and men's events across the country. 

Hampton E. Conway Jr.

Vietnam veteran has full house

BELTSVILLE, Md.—

Things are a bit crowded in Hampton's home.

Hampton and his wife of 49 years have two children and 11 grandchildren. Three years ago, one son and 10 grandchildren moved in with them.

When 13 people share a home, they need to know how to get along with one another.

"My faith and my life's journey as a UM man helped me be a better father, grandfather, and husband to my 'new' family," says Hampton.

37 years of government service

Hampton entered federal government service following his 1965 graduation from high school when he enlisted in the Army. Following a tour in Vietnam, he was discharged in 1969, but he continued in government service as an employee of the Defense Department.

He attended Anne Arundel Community College and the University of Maryland, College Park while working at the department. He retired in 2003 after 37 years of federal service.

Queen's Chapel UMC

Hampton is a 38-year member of Queen's Chapel UMC. He has served as lay leader, chair of the Family and Children's Ministries Committee; an instructor for the confirmation class; a member of the homeless ministry, the male chorus, the senior choir and the mass choir. He served as president of the Queen's Chapel UM Men and as an usher; and he is still the best pitcher on the church's softball team.

Each Tuesday morning you will find Hampton answering calls on an Upper



Hampton E. Conway Jr.

Room Prayer Line. "Each time I receive a call, I am so very blessed and humbled by the requests for prayer," says Hampton.

Hampton is currently president of the Baltimore-Washington Conference UM Men and treasurer for both the Washington East District and Queen's Chapel UMC units of UM Men.


"I love to travel and I have visited all 50 states," says Hampton. "With every visit, I seek out the UM men of a local church to help them grow their unit."

Hampton is an owner of a 1970 Pontiac GTO, which he proudly displays at an annual classic car show in the church's parking lot.

Avid cyclist

"My passion for motorcycles has never waned despite losing my arm in a motorcycle accident 13 years ago," says Hampton. "On the first Sunday in May for nearly 20 years, Queen's Chapel has hosted the 'Blessing of the Bikes and Bikers.' The first one occurred when I stopped by my pastor's home on my way home with my new 1999 Honda Goldwing motorcycle."

More than a social club

"UM Men are so much more than just a social club meeting over a cup of coffee and donuts," he says. "When we lead our family in a way that is pleasing to God, unchurched families and friends are likely to come to the Lord. We must not be just hearers but also doers of God's Word. What we do in God's name will last for generations to come." 

The miracle of Mobility Worldwide

By the Rev. Walt Hays

ANCHORAGE, Alaska—

The year 2019 marks the 25th anniversary of the Mobility Worldwide (formerly PET International).

Since the 1992 beginning, the ministry has constructed more than 70,000 hand-crank carts for people in 104 countries.

The ministry was started by the Rev. Mel West, a World War II Marine Corp veteran and a former dairy farmer and vocational agriculture teacher in Missouri prior to his call to the ministry.

During Mel's ministerial career, he founded and led the Office of Creative Ministry for the Missouri Annual Conference. In that post for 20 years, he was the catalyst for scores of voluntary service projects that introduced hundreds of youth and adults to the joys of voluntary mission service.

An appeal from Zambia

Following his 1992 retirement from the ordained ministry, Mel received an appeal from Larry Hills, a UM missionary in Zambia.

The appeal derived from an evening experience. Larry was driving home and his lights played on an object crawling out of roadside bush. He thought it was an animal but discovered it was a woman, with an infant strapped to her back. Long ago, a land mine had blown both of her legs off. Larry gave her water and drove her to her destination.

Larry appealed to Mel to use his network of contacts to provide wheelchairs for those maimed by landmines.

Mel knew that a standard wheel chair would not work on the rough terrain of Zambia. He went to work with Earl Miner, an engineer. Working in the garage at Mel's Columbia home, the two of them built a hand-crank, three-wheeled, cart. They called their creation a PET (Personal Energy Transportation) unit.

A field test in Zambia received overwhelmingly positive reviews. With some modifications, they had a cart, which could haul 300 pounds, move at the speed of a fast walk, and last from eight-to-ten years.



A 4-year-old boy in San Bernadino, Guatemala, receives a mobility cart.

First shop

In 1994, the first PET shop was established in Columbia with a corps of dedicated volunteer workers. Most of the volunteers were seniors and many were members of UM Men organizations from neighboring churches.

From these simple beginnings, the PET project became a rapidly growing movement. Today there are 21 shops in the U.S. one in Zambia and one in Sierra Leone. These shops produce 7,000 units each year. The shops produce a cart for adults, a cart for children, and a pull cart without a crank.

In 2015, this movement was rebranded as Mobility Worldwide, and it became an official affiliate organization of the General Commission on UM Men. Participants at the UM Men gatherings have had a chance to "kick the tires" by constructing and test-driving the carts.

Working with some 50 distribution partners, the carts are delivered by maritime freight in containers of 80-140 carts.



Mel West with MW cart

Personal experience

I have been involved with Mobility Worldwide since 2004 when I volunteered to be the contact for this mission cause in Alaska. We thought that we could raise a little money (perhaps enough to build a few dozen carts) to assist this effort.

Over the past 14 years, UM organizations have combined their efforts with Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs, and local businesses to provide funding for more than 500 carts. Alaskan college students, UM laymen, educators, health professionals, pastors, veterans and service club members have had the joy of personally meeting and delivering carts to adults and children in South Sudan, Zambia, Cameroon, Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, Kenya, Vietnam and Sri Lanka.

I have made five trips to Guatemala since 2010—two trips to deliver carts and three trips with humanitarian service teams where cart delivery was part of our work.

Two memorable presentations

I recall a woman who got out of a mangled wheelchair and took to her new cart like a duck to water. The cart had a cooler in the back, which enabled her to support her children by selling tortillas in the plaza.

I also had the joy of presenting a cart to a beautiful young mother of two children who had been bedridden for the previous 18 months. She was disabled following a robbery where her husband was fatally shot and she was knifed and left for dead.

We helped her on the cart and she grabbed my hand in a vise-like grip, thanked, and blessed me for this gift. With a language assist from a college student on the team, I explained the gift was not from me; I was just a volunteer. The cart was from friends in the U.S. who wanted to share God's love and help people like her in this special way.

She was crying, I was crying and the college student was crying.

Your turn

I hope your UM Men organization will participate in the 2019 silver anniversary of Mobility Worldwide by providing \$300 to underwrite a cart and I hope you can become members of a distribution team.

For more information, visit MobilityWorldwide.org.

Mel West, 95, has a mantra. It reads, "When you do a good thing and do it well, let people know about it; good people want to help."

To paraphrase Mel's statement: "Mobility Worldwide builds a good cart that brings new life and possibilities for the disabled poor; good people want to help.

UM Men are good people. I am confident you will help. 



The Rev. Walt Hays

The Rev. Walt Hays is a retired UM pastor living in Alaska. He has experience in ecumenical ministries and was a development officer in the non-profit sector. He is now a volunteer senior adviser with Mobility Worldwide.

UM churches pack 100 million Rise against Hunger meals.

ATLANTA, Ga.—

Dunwoody UMC has assembled 2 million meals for Rise against Hunger, a partner agency of the General Commission on UM Men.

The UMC and Rise against Hunger

UM contributions since 2005:

Number of events: 4,952.

Meals packaged: 100,000,000.

Volunteers engaged: 705,241.

An August packaging event at the Atlanta church brought the total of meals packaged by UM congregations across the nation to 100 million. That's nearly a quarter of the 408 million dehydrated meals that have been distributed by Rise against Hunger to people in 74 countries.


The Rev. Ray Buchanan, a UM pastor, started what was then called Stop Hunger Now after working on food insecurity in

the U.S. with the Society of St. Andrew. He knew the food-packaging model would appeal to his denomination.



Members of Dunwoody UMC pack meals for Rise against Hunger. The Atlanta congregation has assembled more than 2 million meals since 2012. Photo by Bryan Jordin.

“Methodists are very socially oriented,” he explained. “Tie that to a social consciousness (which is part of our DNA) to the desire of all people to make a difference.”

Participants at packaging events mix rice, soy, dehydrated vegetables and flavoring into plastic bags. Each package provides food for six people. 



Three hundred children and youth of First UMC in Franklin, Tenn., package 40,000 meals.

The UMC seeks a way forward

A special session of General Conference is set for Feb. 23-26 in St. Louis.

During that 4-day event, 864 delegates from the U.S., Africa, Asia, and Europe will consider ways for the denomination to deal with conflicting attitudes toward homosexuality.

A 32-member Commission on a Way Forward proposes three plans: a One Church Plan, a Traditionalist Plan, and a Connectional Conference Plan. The Council of Bishops recommends the One Church Plan.

The One Church Plan

This plan offers some “local options” at various levels of the church. It eliminates the *Book of Discipline* language, “The UMC does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching.”

Also deleted is the requirement that ordained clergy cannot be “self-avowed practicing homosexuals.” Each annual conference board of ordained ministry and clergy session may determine standards for ordination or certification, including standards related to human sexuality.

The plan also allows, but does not require ordained clergy to perform same-gender marriages. Churches can vote on whether to hold same-gender marriages in their buildings. Clergy are also free to transfer to other conferences or churches based on the standards for ordination regarding homosexuals.

The Traditionalist Plan

This plan continues current language in the *Book of Discipline*, which bans “self-avowed and practicing” gay clergy and the blessing of same sex unions. It also provides ways to enforce those bans and a way for churches and annual conferences that disagree with strict enforcement to set up self-governing or

“autonomous, affiliated or concordant” churches or conferences.

The Connectional Conference Plan

This plan would replace the five U.S. geographically based jurisdictions with three connectional conferences that are “values-based.” Central conferences, which are outside the U.S., could join one of the three U.S. conferences to form a global conference or create their own connectional conference. However, the individual annual conferences that disagree with the decision of their central conference have the option of voting to join a different connectional conference.

Each connectional conference would create its own *Book of Discipline* that includes items “commonly agreed upon by United Methodists,” with the authority to adapt other items not included in a *General Book of Discipline*.

Other plans

The Commission on a Way Forward submitted 48 petitions to the special session. All petitions relate to one of the three plans.

Seventy-nine additional petitions were submitted, of which 18 were found to be invalid due to errors in formatting or failure to meet other requirements.

The 61 remaining petitions will be reviewed by the General Conference Committee on Reference to make certain they are in harmony with the call to the special session.

Eight of the 61 petitions call for a Simple Plan that eliminates all references to homosexuality in the *Book of Discipline*. Each petition calls for striking out a disciplinary reference.

One petition suggests that if a conference wants to leave the denomination it should receive \$200,000 from the reserve funds of general agencies to help pay for transitional expenses.



The 2019 special session of the General Conference will be held in The Dome, part of the America's Center Convention Complex in St. Louis. Photo by Dan Donovan, courtesy of the St. Louis Convention & Visitors Commission.

A petition in support of the Traditionalist Plan stipulates that by Sept. 1, 2020, bishops who do not commit to uphold the disciplinary prohibitions would no longer receive funding for housing, office or travel. A Global Episcopacy Committee would oversee the bishops.

One legislative committee

Saturday, February 23, will be designated for prayer and preparation.

Sunday will be dedicated to organizational and administrative matters, the report from the Commission on a Way Forward and plenary discussion of the various plans to discern the direction the conference wants to pursue.

On Monday the body will go into a single legislative committee to consider, amend and vote on petitions. The chair of the committee will be elected by the delegates.

On Tuesday, the assembly will go back into plenary session for final voting on proposals, considering future directions, and closing worship. Bishops will chair plenary sessions.

Commission plans beyond February conference

Addressing the three options to be considered by General Conference delegates, Bishop James E. Swanson Sr., president of the General Commission on UM Men, said, "I really don't care who wins, I care more about being faithful to the man who loved me enough to die on the cross. Love the Lord and it will be fine."

"Every piece of me loves the UMC," said the bishop. "It picked me up and allowed me to live out my calling."

Gil Hanke, top staff executive of the commission and a delegate to the St. Louis meeting, said the commission will not advocate for any particular position. "We only want men and youth to have an 'on-growing' relationship with Jesus Christ, and we want to accomplish this in practical ways."

"No matter which pathway our denomination takes, on Feb. 27, we will still be in the business of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world," said Gil. "We're going to get through this and bring men and youth to Jesus Christ."



In Memoriam

Allen Brown

BATON ROUGE, La.—

Allen Brown, 94, director of UM Men's Ministry from 1978 to 1994, died October 20.

During his 16 years of service, UM Men moved from a unit, to a section, and finally to a division in the General Board of Discipleship. The number of chartered units increased from 2,805 to 10,155. The number of staff members increased from three to 10.

Allen led two successful Black Men's Conferences in 1992 and 1994. Some 350 men attended the 1994 "Black Men in Crisis" event at the an auditorium of the Board of Discipleship.

Allen's wife Helen died in 1994 and members of Clark UMC in Nashville established a national memorial fund in her memory. In recognition of Allen's service to UM Men, the memorial fund committee and the national UM Men established the Helen and Allen Brown Scholarship Fund to provide annual awards to two graduating high school students.

In December 1996, Bishop Raymond Owen, chair of the newly formed General Commission on UM Men, invited Allen to leave his New Orleans home to come to Nashville to serve as the interim general secretary while the commission searched for a top executive. During that time, he helped organize the meetings of the General Commission on UM Men, the National Association of Conference Presidents, and the Seventh International Congress of UM Men.

The Rev. Joseph Harris was hired in 1997, and Allen returned to his New Orleans home where he served as a member of UM Men and chair of the Stewardship Committee of Cornerstone UMC.

Following Hurricane Katrina, Allen relocated to Baton Rouge and joined Hope



Allen Brown, a graduate of Loyola University and Tennessee State University, served as chair of the Administrative Board, Council on Ministries and Board of Trustees at First Street UMC in New Orleans, prior to his service as director of UM Men's Ministry in Nashville.

Community UMC.

He is survived by son Donald of Los Angeles, four grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife, Helen, parents Henry and Annette Johnson Brown, six brothers and five sisters. He is also survived by sister Mary Matthews of Baton Rouge.

"It is my sincere hope that my ministry to men has made a significant difference in the lives of men here in the United States and in other places around the world," said Allen in a farewell letter in a 1994 issue of Men's News.

No one doubts that Allen's hope is a reality and his legacy will continue for generations to come.

Jim Jeffery

LONG BEACH, Calif.—

Jim Jeffery, 74, a retired captain in the Los Angeles Fire Department, an advocate of the Strength for Service ministry, and a tireless Scout leader, died in July, after a brief battle with cancer

Jim retired from the Los Angeles Fire Department in 1987 and he later became the assistant fire chief with the California Office of Emergency Services. He retired from that position in 1998.

Strength for Service advocate

Upon his retirement, Jim took an active role in providing copies of *Strength for Service to God and Community* to fire fighters and police officers in the Long Beach area.

Jim served as member of the SFS Advisory Committee and he was a charter member of the Strength for Service Society, a group that promises to remember the ministry through their planned gifts.

"Like most first responders, I have post-traumatic-stress disorder," said Jim. "Most military do also. Spirituality is the primary tool I use to combat PTSD. *Strength for Service* is one of the best tools I use to stay spiritually fit."

Jim not only took SFS books to fire fighters and police officers, he also handed copies to patients at a VA hospital in Long Beach.

"Jim sat with us every year at the Duty to God Breakfast during the national BSA meeting," said Larry Coppock, executive director of Strength for Service Inc. "On two occasions, Jim co-sponsored SFS Scout edition devotionals for the national gatherings. He was a great man and will be missed."

Veteran Scout leader

Jim's lifelong love affair with scouting started in 1952 when he joined a Cub Scout pack in Long Beach. He became an Eagle Scout in 1958 at age 14.

At a recognition dinner honoring new Eagle Scouts in 2009, Jim told the boys how to wear their hard-earned badges:



Jim was especially proud of Spencer Gates, who, despite being in a wheelchair from an early age, earned the rank of Eagle. Spencer was selected Eagle Scout of the Year.

"Wear it humbly over your heart, not on your sleeve, and put back into scouting as much as you have received."


In 2010, Jim earned his 50-year Scout Veteran's pin and was elected president of the Long Beach Area BSA Council.

"Not a day goes by in my life that I don't use something Jim taught me, like how to survive in adversity and how to treat people with respect," said Brian McCall, executive board chair of Long Beach Search & Rescue Explorer Post 279, the nation's oldest Explorer Post.

"Brian, 59, said he was "a skinny little red-headed kid" when he met Jim in 1974. "He became a major influence on my life," said Brian.

"There are lots of men and women, many of them in careers with police and fire departments all over southern California and beyond, who think of Jim as a second father," said Paul Muehlebach, historian for the Long Beach Area BSA Council. "We lost one of the good guys."

Jim received the prestigious Silver Beaver Award, the William H. Spurgeon III Award, the Winthrop Rockefeller Award, and the Distinguished Award of Merit.

Survivors include wife Cheryl and children David, Jake, and Brooke. 

What difference do I make?

By Tom Tozer and Bill Black

If we think about our place on this earth too long, we can talk ourselves into believing that we are insignificant creatures, just plodding along.

Forces of nature

We point to Jesus, Shakespeare, Lincoln, Edison, Einstein, Martin Luther King Jr., perhaps The Beatles, as people who have reshaped humanity. Each of us could name “giants” who have influenced humankind’s thinking, behavior or beliefs.

If we zero in on our own miniscule corner of the world, we might think of an individual—a teacher, minister, doctor, or athlete—who was (is) a “giant” in our own lives.

Dad, the “giant”


Dad, truth be known, chances are you are a giant in your child’s life. You may not know it, and your kid may never admit it—at least not until he is older—but you may have more impact on your child than anyone he has studied in a history book.

You may loom larger than Abraham Lincoln or LeBron James or even Jay-Z! In fact, we’re willing to bet that your child, regardless of age, looks up to you and emulates your behavior even when you are convinced s/he totally ignores you. You might be amazed to know how much s/he is observing you even when you think s/he’s not looking at you.

You have a big job to do, Dad. These days so many young people suffer from low self-esteem. For many reasons, they think they don’t matter. We need to point out to them that they possess the power to be a giant in someone else’s life. We’re all human,

and we all appreciate a smile from someone, a pat on the back, a note of encouragement.

Your kids as “giants”

Your own children can make a significant difference in someone’s life. Impossible? Not at all. Think what a smile and conversation from your daughter could mean to an elderly woman whose family has forgotten her. Imagine your son sitting beside the kid in the cafeteria who always eats by himself. It seems so insignificant, doesn’t it? To people who may think their lives are inconsequential, these are giant acts of kindness. Holding a person’s hand may not alter the course of civilization—but it could bring light to a dark corner of someone’s world—and make a lasting difference. 



*Tom Tozer and Bill Black write a syndicated column on fatherhood and are authors of *Dads2Dads: Tools for Raising Teenagers*. Like them on Facebook and follow them on Twitter at [Dads2DadsILC](https://twitter.com/Dads2DadsILC).*

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Thank you and God bless!

Tom and Bill

A return trip to Haiti

By Gil Hanke

PORT AU PRINCE, Haiti—

The 3-member Hope of Hearing team returned to Haiti September 23-28 with the same purpose: to provide the gift of hearing to children who are deaf.

I have gone to Haiti nearly every year since my first life-changing trip in 1989.

New material, faster service

A new material to make the custom ear molds changed how our team completed our work.

On past trips, the children were fit with temporary molds and the custom molds were created back in the U.S. It was months before their custom molds arrived in Haiti.

This trip, the children were tested one day and had hearing aids and custom molds the next.

This new approach made for longer days and shorter nights, but it was a much faster way to provide the gift of hearing to Haitian children.

An open day

We worked for three days at a school in Port au Prince area, but I scheduled an “open day” to be directed by needs that might become apparent. I knew that providing an open day would enable us to see where God might lead us to provide additional service opportunities.

Our team uses the services of the Methodist Guest House, which places us in contact with other missionaries.

There has always been informal communication with those who have ongoing missions in Haiti. Some are engaged in water filtration, others are building additions to churches, and others, like Ellen Palmer (PhD, RN), have formal relationships with several hospitals in Haiti.



Gil Hanke tests the hearing of a Haitian school girl.

New opportunity in a familiar place

Ellen emailed two hospitals prior to the team’s arrival, and with additional help from longtime English friends stationed in Haiti, our team was able to spend our open day at a Methodist school associated with King’s Hospital in one of the poorest areas of the city.

During the 4 day trip we tested 323 children and a few adults and fit 61 children and 1 adult with powerful hearing aids. We also discovered some mild medical issues in a few children.

Ironically, we completed this testing at school clinic where I worked during my first visit to Haiti in 1989.

Smaller team

Our 3-member team was smaller than those established in previous trips. In the past, we invited and partially funded a graduate or doctoral student in audiology to accompany us.

However, recent demonstrations in Haiti made it unwise to add an inexperienced member to our team at this time.

The Hope of Hearing is an endorsed ministry of the General Commission on U.M. Men. They accept financial donations and donations of behind-the-ear hearing aids at 3644 Burwick Place, Antioch, TN 37013.



Across the Nation

LAWRENCEVILLE, Ga.— **A moving experience for UM Men**

Nine UM Men from Prospect UMC helped the staff of Lawrenceville Cooperative Ministry move across town.



Men of Prospect UMC unload canned goods for the Lawrenceville Cooperative Ministry.

On a hot Saturday in June, volunteers moved furniture, file cabinets, church pews, and tons of canned food to a new facility. The ministry provided food and financial assistance to Lawrenceville residents at its old building on Friday and continued its ministry at a new home on Monday morning.

Tom Balog, director of the co-op, said he

could not have done it without the help of UM Men.

FLORENCE, S.C.— **Men lend a helping hand**

Florence District UM Men, led by the Rev. Ernest Frierson and District President Harry White, partnered with the



Men take a photo break from moving.

South Carolina Disaster Recovery program to help Rosa Fulton move out of her home so repairs could be made.

GREENFIELD, Ind.— **Church hosts first responders**

Brandywine UMC invited all active and retired first responders to attend "Honor Sunday," a special service to honor

community servants and present copies of *Strength for Service to God and Community*.

The Rev. Matt Wickham, pastor of Brandywine UMC, said the event served to: “1) respond to the scriptural imperative to honor and pray for those who serve the public good; 2) encourage first responders to see their job as a call from God; and 3) invite people who seldom attend a church service.”

“Everyone felt God’s presence powerfully in the service and I thought, ‘Why haven’t we done this sooner?’” said Matt. “Many of the first responders commented, ‘We have never had someone do this for us before; thank you!’”

The sermon title was “Strength for Service — How to tap into God’s strength to serve with the attitude of Christ” (Phil 2:3-11).

“It was a big success,” said Matt. “Thank-you for helping us get the devotionals in a timely manner.”



Brandywine UMC hosts “Honor Sunday” to express appreciation to active and retired first responders.

AURORA, Ill.—

Santa pays early visit

Santa Claus paid a 3-day July visit to the Salvation Army Toys for Tots.

Paul Eggert, chair of the Fourth Street UMC Board of Trustees, grew a beard for his role as Santa. Elf Lauren Wiesbrook greeted kids while their parents left unwrapped gifts

and dropped coins in a Salvation Army kettle.



Santa Claus visits fans at the Banana Split Ice Cream Parlor in Aurora, Ill. Photo by Al Benson.

FOUNTAIN HILLS, Ariz.—

Churches encouraged to build ramps

Men in Arizona churches are being encouraged to build wheelchair ramps for people with disabilities.

They are using plans developed by SAWS (Servants at Work), an Indiana-based ecumenical ministry.

Central UMC in Phoenix provides part of one of their buildings for a carpenter shop to build pre-fab ramp parts.

The Southwest Desert Annual Conference received an \$8,000 grant to help fund the program.



Fountain Hills UMC provides an Adopt-a-Ramp display.

MIDDLETOWN, Ohio —

One hundred golfers participate in August tournament.

For 21 years, UM Men of the West Ohio Annual Conference have sponsored a golf outing at the Weatherwax Golf Course.



Following the tournament, golfers gather at the Weatherwax clubhouse for award presentations.

IMPERIAL, Kan.—

Bikers raise \$910,000 for hunger relief

Mark and Renae Bottom of Imperial, Kan., joined with other church members in the Great Plains Annual Conference for a 230-mile bike tour across southwest Nebraska and northwest Kansas.



Mark and Renae Bottom take a rest stop near Oxford.

The Nebraska UM Bike Ride for Hunger celebrated its 23rd year in 2018. The four-day bike and camping tour raised funds for the Heifer Project, the UM Committee on Relief, food banks in Lincoln and Omaha, and the Society of St. Andrew.

Riders pay a \$55 registration fee and raise a minimum of \$100 in pledges.

The 2018 ride raised \$60,000, bringing the grand total from rides since 1996 to \$910,000.

MEMPHIS, Tenn.—
Men welcome students

Each year, the UM Men of Centenary UMC gather at Alton School to welcome students on the first day of school. Centenary adopted the school and several men tutor in the second grade Arise to Read program.



SAN ANTONIO, Texas—
Two men run radio station

Two UM men operate KPPC, a 100-watt FM radio station based at 96-member Alamo UMC.

The Rev. George Chambers and Tom Kinkead mix inspirational Christian messages with golden oldies to reach a Boomer audience.



Tom Kinkead serves as KPPC station manager and morning disc jockey.

Photo by Cheryl Megosh.

“We both agreed that if we brought one soul to Christ, then it’s all worthwhile,” said Kinkead, a certified lay minister.

KPPC began broadcasting in 2014. Church member Rodney Davis came up with a slogan to fit the call letters — Keep People Praising Christ.

SANTA ROSA, Calif.—
Retiree builds homes for the homeless

Harold Wallin, 59, wanted to do something for the homeless people in his area.

The former Alaskan recruited volunteers to build small wooden shelters called HUTS (Harold’s Utilitarian Transitional Shelters) on the campus of First UMC.

The 30-square-foot shelters are large enough to provide a place to sleep and store belongings, and still be able to be transported from site to site.

HUTS are made of 2x3-inch supports and plywood. Each unit costs \$600.

A \$6,000 grant from the Sonoma County Homeless Task Force enabled Harold to build 10 HUTS.



Harold Wallin builds HUTS at First UMC of Santa Rosa. Photo by Beth Schlanker/The Press Democrat.



Volunteer Eileen Bill adds finishing touches to a HUT. Photo by Beth Schlanker/The Press Democrat.

SWANSBORO, N.C.—
Men cheer for Wood Ducks

UM Men of Swansboro UMC took the church bus to a night baseball game at the Kinston Grainger Stadium. The Down East Wood Ducks won 6–2.



Men of Swansboro UMC gather for photo.

DES MOINES, Iowa—

Church operates food fair stand for 69 years

West Des Moines UMC continues a 69-year tradition by annually recruiting 226 volunteers to serve eight-hour shifts at a food stand during the 11-day Iowa State Fair.



A photo of the first West Des Moines Methodist Church food stand at the 1949 Iowa State Fair.



The 2018 stand offers a new brand of sausage.

The church is the last remaining Christian organization to host an eatery on the fairgrounds. Church member Irma Meyers ran the stand from 1949 to 1954 when the men’s organization assumed responsibility. At the close of the 2016 fair, UM Men convinced the entire congregation to take it over as a mission project.

“We take the time to sit and visit with people and make them feel welcome,” said Bob Meyers, 88, a church stand volunteer since 1960.”

CAMDEN, S.C.—

Men provide funds for smoke detectors

UM Men of Lyttleton Street UMC gave \$800 to the Camden Fire Department to purchase smoke detectors for needy families.

Last year, the church recognized Camden fire fighters during a worship service. The

pastor and congregation gave thanks for their commitment to the community and prayed for their safety and well-being.



Kevin Shaw, president of UM Men at Lyttleton Street UMC, presents a check to the Camden Fire Department.

DILLON COUNTY, S.C.—

Men and football team build ramp

Main Street UM Men and members of the Dillon High School football team built a 53-foot wheel chair ramp for Patricia Smith, 68, who has a lung disease.

“We thought about how we’re going to get her out of the home to medical appointments because she’s confined to the wheelchair,” said Nicki Snipes, daughter of Patricia. “It was an enormous undertaking, and just to have a ministry like this, there’s no words to describe. They’re angels from our Lord.”



Men of Main Street UMC have built 76 wheel chair ramps in 17 years.

JACKSONVILLE and PORT CHARLOTTE, Fla.—

Florida Conference host Igniting Men gatherings

Florida Conference UM Men hosted two 2018 Igniting Men gatherings.

A February meeting at Mandarin UMC in Jacksonville focused on race relations and an August gathering at Edgewater UMC in Port Charlotte centered on domestic violence.

“The goal of Igniting Men is to help them

grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ,” said John Delaney, president of the Florida Conference UM Men.



A Jacksonville meeting focuses on race relations. From left: David Dusek, executive director of Rough Cut Men Ministries, Bobby Belton, 21st Century Community Learning Center in Sarasota; Lamont Hogans Sr., pastor of New Life Community UMC in Jacksonville; Chris Pillay, president of Meridian Technologies in Jacksonville; and Jack Levine, founding director of Voice of God Ministry in Orlando.



David Dusek, director of Sarasota-based Rough Cut Ministries, speaks to the Igniting Men's Conference at Edgewater UMC in Port Charlotte, Fla.

FLOWER MOUND, Texas—

Texas men venture to Louisiana

Eleven men of Triesch Memorial UMC traveled to First UMC in Natchitoches, La., for an August Lead like Jesus weekend training experience.



Triesch Memorial men meet with men of First UMC in Natchitoches.

Jim Boesch, a Florida-based staff member of the General Commission on UM Men, led the event. He also led two similar workshops in other Louisiana churches.

WAYNESVILLE, N.C.—

12 years of Loaves and Fishes

An annual Loaves and Fishes dinner, sponsored by UM Men of First UMC, supports a backpack program for elementary school children, a clinic that provides free medical care, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, and the Kairos Prison Ministry.



People attending the 12th annual Loaves and Fishes dinner enjoy fried catfish, spicy baked beans, coleslaw, and hush puppies.

WESTON, W.Va.—

Scouts join with UM Men

Four hundred Boy Scouts participated in a September Circuit Rider weekend event at Jackson's Mill State 4-H Camp.

West Virginia Conference UM Men have sponsored the annual event since 1988.

Mark Lubbock, a Louisiana-based staff member of the General Commission on UM Men, was the principal speaker at the gathering of UM Men.



A few of the 400 Scouts at the September campout gather for conversations.

CORTEZ, Colo.—
Vacationers give devotional books

While Eldon Schottman and his wife were visiting Mesa Verde, they spotted a police truck leaving the KOA campsite.

“My wife suggested I give *Strength for Service* books to the Police Dept. here,” says Eldon.

The couple gave 46 books to the Cortez Police Department.



*Eldon Schottman, of Aldersgate UMC in Chico, Calif. (right), gives *Strength for Service* books to Officer Noah Herrmann.*

MECHANICSVILLE, S.C.—
Men adopt a highway

The South Carolina Department of Transportation for Lee County presented Mechanicsville UM Men with the 2018 County Group of the Year Award. Since 2014, the men have cleaned debris from a highway that passes in front of their church.



Jimmy Myers, president of UM Men of Mechanicsville UMC, holds the award.

Fort Belvoir, VA —

Chaplain distributes devotional books

Chaplain Assistant Denises Veitia distrib-



uted copies of *Strength for Service to God and Country* to members of the Intelligence and Security Command at Fort Belvoir.

The books were provided by World Wide Technology.

BISHOPVILLE, S.C.—
Men provide fishing trip

The Boys-2-Men ministry of the Bishopville Charge provides a variety of experience designed to help boys grow into responsible and caring men.



Jacari Mixon smiles after a fishing trip with Boys-2-Men. He received a certificate, a framed picture of his fish, a trophy, and a rod and reel. In back from left: George Brisbon, John Cook Jr., and the Rev. Blondell Miller.

TUCSON, Ariz.—

Mayors participate in Pinewood Derby car race

Doug Wright, member of the General Commission on UM Men, who led Pinewood Derby races as Head Judge for Cubs & Scouts the last six years,



The judging team of regional mayors watch the race action to determine the win, place, and show winners.

hatched a plan to expand the Annual All-Business Pinewood Derby event. Over 35 businesses sponsored 60+ cars at \$500 and up, that raised over \$25,500 net.

The event supports Catalina Council's co-ed S.T.E.M. Scout program that began in 2015 and Venturing. Last year, Doug created the Mayor's Cup Race, where regional mayors matched skills "tuning" their own race cars for the event, Plans for next year include expansion to



Doug Wright (left in judges team photo), Head Judge and creator of the Spirit of Tucson, Mayors' Cup Race, joins other judges determining the winning cars. First place trophy goes to Marana Mayor Ed Honea (2nd from R).

several Arizona border communities. Doug later presented first, second, and third place trophies to the winning mayor's at their respective city or town council meetings.

UM Men Foundation creates Life Achievement Award

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—

The UM Men Foundation has created a Life Achievement Award to replace the Life Membership Award.

“The new award will honor men for their accomplishments in men’s ministry rather than just long-time participation,” said Glenn Wintemberg, president of the foundation. “The award can be given to individuals at every level of men’s ministries.”

The new award will clarify some misunderstandings that accompanied the Life Membership Award. Some recipients of that award assumed they would no longer have to support their local, regional or national UM Men ministries.

The investment to recognize an individual is \$250. An application form may be down-

loaded from the UMM Foundation website (<http://www.gcumm.org/umm-foundation>).

“Our goal is to have 90 new Life Achievement Award recipients before the end of this year,” said Glenn. “All funds received (excluding award costs) will be used to support the ministries of the UM Men Foundation.”

Recipients will receive a newly designed lapel pin and a certificate in a handsome presentation folder.

“I think you will find this new award as rewarding to give as it is to receive,” said Glenn. “Thank you for your support of the foundation and the ministries it supports.”

For information call Marc Stowe at 615-620-7262.

UM Men by the numbers in 2018

35	Men currently certified as men’s ministry specialists.
46	Scout leaders trained the Philmont Scout Ranch in 2018.
172	Remote partner groups and individuals for the Upper Room Prayer Line.
323	Haitian children checked for hearing loss by Hope of Hearing.
368	People now certified as scouting ministry specialists.
400	UM Men engaged in an 8-week AMEND study of domestic violence in 2018.
1,250	Volunteers who gleaned farmer’s field with the Society of St. Andrew in 2018.
4,874	PRAY awards given through UM churches in 2018.
9,344	Scouting units in UM churches.
25,245	Dollars contributed to the Upper Room Prayer Line in 2018.
40,000	Copies of <i>Strength for Service to God and Community</i> distributed since 2015.
70,000	Hand-crank carts created for Mobility Worldwide since 1992.
150,000	Dollars provided by UM Men to Meals for Millions in 2018.
234,386	Youth served by scouting units in UM churches.
264,940	Prayer requests received by the Upper Room Prayer Line in 2018.
530,000	<i>Strength for Service</i> books printed for military troops since 2000.
7,600,000	Servings of food provided by UM Men through Meals for Millions in 2018.
100,000,000	Servings of Rise Against Hunger meals packaged by UM churches since 2005.

Scott Hamilton delivers his 'most difficult talk'

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—

This is the most difficult talk I've ever given."

That is how Scott Hamilton, an Olympic champion skater who has delivered hundreds of speeches, began his September keynote address to Nashville leaders committed to ending violence against women and girls.

"We are here to talk about something we don't want to talk about," Scott told 500 attendees at the third annual AMEND (a combination of "men" and "end") breakfast, sponsored by the YWCA of Middle Tennessee.

Scott spoke about women in his life who experienced abuse and said "I have so many regrets" as he thought about what he might have done and what he did not do to counter a boys-will-be-boys culture that treats women as sexual objects.

Scott, the survivor of testicular cancer and three brain tumor diagnoses, derives much of his fighting spirit from Scripture. He suggests Paul's letter to the Church at Galatia provides wise counsel for those who seek ways to end domestic violence. Paul cites the fruits of the spirit as "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Galatians 5: 22-23). He underscored the importance of self-control.

"Violence against women ends here," concluded Scott as he called for support of the AMEND effort to make Nashville the safest city in the nation for women and girls.

The AMEND program

Noting that one of every four women will be a victim of domestic violence and

one in five will be raped, the YWCA provides housing for victims of domestic abuse. The city currently houses 60 victims of domestic violence in undisclosed shelters across the city.

As the demand for housing increased, in 2014, the YWCA created the AMEND program to address the root causes of violence against women.

The General Commission on UM Men joined the effort by creating *Amending through Faith*, an 8-week study that helps men and boys challenge a culture that supports violence against women.

Hanke receives award

During the breakfast meeting at the Omni Hotel, the YWCA presented awards to four community leaders.

The Community Leader of the Year Award was presented to Gil Hanke. The top staff executive of the General Commission on UM Men was cited for his work to create the 8-week AMEND study and as a leader of the only faith community involved in the effort.



Gil Hanke holds the Community Leader Award as he joins Scott Hamilton, three-time world figure skating champion and the recipient of the gold medal at the 1984 Winter Olympics.

My ten years as a big brother

By Ingram Howard

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—

My story begins in April 2008; that is when I first met Christopher and his mother, Julie. He was 8 years old; I was 61.

His dad left the family when Christopher was 3-years old, and he had not maintained contact since then.

I had just completed and passed all the requirements and background checks with the Middle Tennessee Chapter of Big Brothers/Big Sisters (BBBS).

Hesitant beginning

I remember thinking on that April day, “What have I got myself into now?”

Christopher probably was asking the same question.

I had some assurance in the fact my sister had mentored a young girl through Youth Villages in Memphis. Other UM Men, who served as big brothers, also encouraged me.

But, Christopher and I were now a match; I was the “big” and he was the “little.”

I had no idea we would still be together 10 years later.

“I’ve seen firsthand the positive impact Ingram has had on Christopher. His mom, Julie, says Ingram is like a member of their family, and I have the feeling that the two will definitely be lifelong friends.”

*Cynthia Elder, program specialist
Big Brothers Big Sisters*

Two options

BBBS offers two ways to interact with your match: 1) Site-based matches meet at a school, and 2) Community-based match-



Ingram congratulates Christopher on his high school graduation. The day marks the official end to their BBBS relationship and the continuation of their friendship.

es allow for once-a-week activities in places and times of mutual convenience.

I was fortunate to be in a community-match relationship, giving me more time to get to know Christopher.

Learning to fish

I like sports of all kinds, especially baseball. I imagined Christopher and I would share the same interest. However, I soon realized he was not into sports. His real interest was fishing. Therefore, I spent many afternoons by creeks or lakes where Christopher taught me how to fish. I learned a lot, but Christopher will always be a better fisherman than me.

Our “fishing time” became our “sharing

“Ingram was a needed friend and male presence in Christopher’s life during his formative years. Ingram’s consistency and patience were of immeasurable benefit to Christopher, and there is little doubt that Ingram will always be there for him.”

Diane Frey, former program director and match support specialist

time” when we talked about how school was going and family events.

A vanishing concern

I knew Christopher needed our one-on-one time since he did not have a father in his home, but I still wondered what, if any, kind of impact I was having on his life. That concern vanished when Christopher was in high school. A BBBS match specialist told me Christopher said, “I consider Ingram to be my adopted father now.”

I had no more misgivings about our relationship.

Even though we came from different backgrounds (I grew up on a dairy farm), we enjoyed each other’s company and we learned from one another.



Honor commitments

People asked me how I was able to spend at least one (usually three-to-four) hours a week with Christopher. My answer was simple, “You don’t do something else once you have made the decision to be with your “little.” One of the teaching tools I instilled in Christopher was to be responsible and honor your commitments; another was to respect each other’s opinions.

As he grew older, our choice of activities was the result of mutual decisions. We could be honest with one another and express our feelings; that was something that was difficult for Christopher to do at first. He was reluctant to trust anyone when I first met him. Over time, I became not only his friend, but a confidant as well.

Graduation

Christopher, his mother, and I attended a BBBS graduation ceremony on May 3, 2018. Christopher was one of 20 high school seniors graduating from the program.

Three weeks later, I attended his high school graduation. He was the second of 175 Sycamore High School students to walk across a stage at Austin Peay State University campus to receive his diploma.

Christopher is now 18 and I am 71. We are no longer paired as a BBBS “big” and “little”. However, we are solid friends and I expect our friendship to continue for many years to come.

I am truly thankful for the experiences we shared together, and I’m glad I did not pass on this opportunity.



Ingram Howard is a former president of Tennessee Conference UMMen and the treasurer of the Strength for Service Corporation.

UM Men Awards

President Jimmy Carter *A second president inducted into the Society of John Wesley*

PLAINS, Ga.—

Larry Price, former president of the Southeastern Jurisdiction UM Men, inducted former U.S. President Jimmy Carter into the Society of John Wesley.

Larry said the October presentation was on behalf of UM Men from across the nation, in appreciation for Carter's continuous support and devotion to prayer, young people and missional efforts.

Carter is the second U.S. president to be inducted into the society. President George W. Bush was inducted following his response to the bombing of the World Trade Center.



Larry Price presents a John Wesley Society plaque to President Jimmy Carter who is accompanied by wife Rosalyn at a community center in Plains.

The Rev. Tim McClendon *Men induct pastor into John Wesley Society*

AIKEN, S.C.—

St. John's UM Men inducted the Rev. Dr. Tim McClendon into John Wesley Society during a September worship service.

The award recognized Tim's contributions to the ministries of UM Men and his support and dedication to the denomination.

A six-time delegate to General Conference, Tim served an eight-year term as superintendent of the Columbia District

prior to his appointment to St. John's UMC.

He is the recipient of the Denman Evangelism Award and the SEJ UMM James Award. He has also served on the General Council on Ministries, the Connectional Table, the Worldwide Nature of the Church Committee, and the General Commission on Religion and Race. He has also served as an adjunct faculty member of Candler School of Theology and Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary.



Steve Lathrop, president of St. John's UM Men, presents the John Wesley Society plaque to the Rev. Dr. Tim McClendon.

Photo by Tom Brown.

Rayburn McGuire Sr. *Men name sixth life member*

EAST POINT, Ga.—

UM Men of East Point First Mallalieu UMC presented Rayburn McGuire Sr. with a Life Membership Award.

UM Men President Larry Few describes Rayburn as "one of the most committed and hard working men of the organization."

He is the sixth man to be honored in this manner.



From right: Larry Few president of UM Men, Rayburn McGuire Sr., wife Crystal, and son Rayburn Jr.

Scouter finds a calling and his first patch

By Steven Scheid

CIMARRON, N.M.—

Tom Beasley came to the August UM Scouters Workshop at the Philmont Scout Ranch to learn about his newly accepted role as scouting coordinator for the Memphis Annual Conference.

With a servant's heart, Tom had agreed to serve, but he did not have much experience with scouting.

At check-in to the weeklong event, Tom was asked to wear his Class A for the flag ceremony. "What is a Class A?" asked Tom.

What he did not know is "Class A" is the short hand for the BSA field uniform. Tom did not own a uniform yet. But, that was not going to stop him from learning.

A parable for Tom

Tom says a parable at the opening sessions seemed addressed to him:

God places a spark in each person. In scouting, our challenge is to prepare tinder to catch that spark. Some sparks need a little more fanning, but they all have potential. Once a flame is started, kindling must be added. And, finally, wood is added.

Participants were challenged to find the tools they need to prepare for personal growth and for a ministry to young people for whom they are responsible.

Tom took the challenge seriously.

Spark become a fire

Throughout the week, Tom heard from the national commissioner of the BSA, the leader of Venturing, the chief executive of Program of Religious Activities with Youth, and scouters across the nation.

He worshiped at sunrise and laughed with new friends, and he had found a calling to fulfill.

The spark had been ignited into a fire.

1,800 years of experience

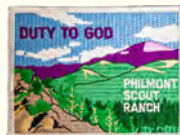
Tom was asked to speak at a closing service.

As a certified public accountant, Tom had done some adding.

"With all of the participants and staff at this course, there is about 1,800 years of scouting experience sharing together," he said. "Where else can you access 1,800 years of experience for \$550? I got a good deal."

His first patch

Tom noted that the Philmont Duty to God patch is the first patch he has earned.



Next workshop

We are excited to support and sustain ministries to youth in proven programs. These ministries are always in need of those who answer the call like Tom.

The next UM Scouters Workshop at the Philmont Training Center in Cimarron, New Mexico, is scheduled for June 16-22, 2019. Come to the mountain and hear the call.

"This was the perfect start to an amazing journey," he said. "It truly was the hearing and answering of a calling."



Steven Scheid is director of the Center for Scouting Ministries at the General Commission on UM Men (scheid@gcumm.org).

Honor leaders on Scout Sundays

Each week, some 234,286 young people participate in 9,344 scouting units sponsored by UM churches. In addition, 128,000 adult leaders support their activities at troop and pack meetings.

Girl Scout leaders and Boy Scout leaders are a special group of people. They pay to participate. They pay for training with money and time. Why? So they can be prepared to spend time and money effectively in the service of youth. They have come to understand the value of being in the service of others.

There was an assistant scoutmaster known by the boys as the grumpy scoutmaster. One Scout pointed out that for 22 years he was always there. They awarded Scoutmaster Grumpy the Cross and Flame Award on Scout Sunday. In his surprise, he could not stop sobbing. This hardened yet dedicated grump had been telling the Scouts, “I love you and care for you” without words. That Sunday, a simple ribbon and piece of metal hung around his neck returning that love. Scoutmaster Grumpy was still rough but never the same.

Scout Sundays provides opportunities for you to honor young people who have made important contributions to their communities. It provides the church a chance to

tell the leaders who give thankless volunteer hours to support these activities, “Thank you. We love you too.”

Scout Sundays are February 17 for Boy Scouts and March 10 for Girl Scouts. Your local church may choose to combine these Sundays.

Take steps today to ensure that people engaged in these selfless acts receive appropriate recognition on Scout Sunday. Call 615-620-7262.

Awards to consider:

Good Samaritan Award recognizes a young person between the ages of 6 and 30 who demonstrates the attributes of the Good Samaritan.

The Cross and Flame Award recognizes adult leaders who have given exceptional service to young people.

The Shepherd Church Charter Recognition is for churches with outstanding youth-mentoring programs.

You may also want to consider honoring an adult leader with a **Torch Award** at annual conference and apply for a **Bishop’s Award of Excellence** for a scouting unit based at your church.

For information on all awards, visit the awards/honors section under the resource tab at www.gcumm.org.



First UMC of Swansboro, Ga., present Cross and Flame Awards to five Scout leaders on Scout Sunday.

Do you know what a Scout's Own Service is?

A Scouts' Own Service is a devotional service led by the troop's chaplain assistant to help members of a troop or patrol live out their beliefs in accordance with the principle "A Scout is reverent."

This service is a reminder of faith. It is not doctrine.

The contents

Scouts, with guidance from the chaplain, plan the service. The service may include songs, quotes, scriptures, metaphors (like the building of an inward fire), prayers, sharing, and spiritual fellowship.

The service is a time to find or grow in faith.

The author of Hebrews tells us, "Faith is being sure of what you hope for, being sure of what you do not see."

Scouts practice faith

Every difficult thing we do requires an element of faith.

When a Scout troop wants a faith experience, they go to a COPE (Challenging Outdoor Personal Experience) course.

It takes a large amount of faith to tackle obstacles while tethered to another person.

"I got you!" is a common phrase; it is also a truth spoken by a still small voice.

You can do it

An African impala can jump to a height of more than 10 feet and cover a distance greater than 30 feet; yet, they can be kept in an enclosure by a 3-foot wall. Why? Impalas will not jump if they cannot see where their feet will land.

We are often like those impalas; we are able to do big things but unwilling to actually do it without knowing the outcome.

Being a Scout provides many opportunities to step out in faith and become the young men and women God calls them to be.

You can do it. Have faith.

Adapted from a COPE course devotional by Robin George

Two reasons to have a scouting ministry at your church

By Steven Scheid

1. We don't have any youth

There is the old saying, "If you build it they will come." If that is true, then why are beautiful churches frequently empty?

Today's youth have no interest in a building, even if it is historic and stunning. Youth want action and meaning.

Scouting ministry (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Camp Fire or Big Brothers Big Sisters) provides the activities, the church provides the meaning—not only a thing to do, but also a place to belong and grow.

When churches reach out to their communities, they provide young people with a place to belong with adults of faith who care.

Many young people, who previously did not attend any church, will introduce their families to their new church home.

2. We have youth

So, you have children but don't have a scouting ministry?

Just having youth who sit in pews on Sunday morning, does not mean you are spending the time needed to build disciples.

Having a scouting ministry with a PRAY (Programs of Religious Activities with Youth) program provides time for character building and faith development.

Scouting and other civic youth-serving organizations provide opportunities for youth to serve and develop leadership capabilities.

If they are not given opportunities to develop leadership skills as young people, how can we expect them to serve as principled leaders later?

Scouting Awards

Eli Hardin

Scout receives Four-Star Award

DALLAS, Texas—

Eli Hardin, a Life Scout and senior patrol leader for a troop chartered to Stonebridge UMC in McKinney, Texas, received a Four-Star Award for completing all four emblems through PRAY

(Programs of Religious Activities with Youth).

Eli received the award at a Duty to God Breakfast during the National Boy Scouts of America meeting in May. Laura Bush was the speaker at the event.

A high school junior, Eli has participated in high-adventure programs at Summit Bechtel Reserve, Philmont Scout Ranch, and the Florida Sea Base.

Eli's older brothers, Ty and Jacob, are Eagle Scouts who also earned Four-Star Awards.



Laura Bush joins Eli and his mother, Cecilia, following the award presentation.

Ralph Herron

Scout leader named Man of the Year

WESTON, W.Va.—

Don Davis, president of the West Virginia UM Men, presented Ralph Herron with the UM Man of the Year Award during the 30th annual Circuit Rider September gathering of men and 390 Scouts at Jackson's Mill.

A member of Highlawns UMC in Rivesville, W.Va., Ralph served as chair of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee, a member of the Board of Trustees, and a member of the West Virginia Annual Conference. He also has worked with the Kids for Christ Community Outreach Program.

A scouting ministry specialist, Ralph has

served for 12 years as scouting coordinator for the West Virginia Annual Conference.

He is a 20-year member of the executive committee of the BSA Mountaineer Area Council.



Ralph Herron

DeMarko Hooper, Cabral Jeter, Matthew Thacker, Joshua Owens and Nicholas Wilborn

UM Men honor five Eagle Scouts


EAST POINT, Ga.—

During a Men's Day event, UM Men of East Point First Mallalieu UMC honored five young men who achieved the rank of Eagle.

"The parents and Scout leaders of Troop 54 are to be thanked for their guidance of the young men in the scouting program," said Larry Few, president of UM Men.



First row from left: Eagle Scouts Nicholas Wilborn, Joshua Owens, Matthew Thacker, Cabral Jeter, DeMarko Hooper are congratulated by Larry Few (right). Back row from left: The Rev. Fleming Thompson Jr., pastor; Phillip Owns, assistant scoutmaster; and Brent Summers, scoutmaster.



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