



# CALLING

A NEWSLETTER OF WESLEY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY • WINTER 2016



**Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain,** growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold."

**MARK 4:8** NRSV





*Longtime Wesley supporter Marty Carr at the dedication ceremony for the seminary's newest residence hall.*

# Gifts of Time, Talent and Treasure Leave a Lasting Legacy

**THOSE WHO HAVE SUPPORTED WESLEY AND ITS STUDENTS  
OVER THE YEARS HAVE HAD A PERMANENT IMPACT.**

## A SHARED VISION

"I think the key to Wesley's success is that we practice shared leadership and shared vision," says Wesley's president, the Rev. Dr. David McAllister-Wilson. "We seek to incorporate everyone's ideas so it's a shared vision."

"My vision was to improve the facilities and the living conditions for the students," says Marty Carr, a board of governors' member emerita and a longtime supporter. "I can see the things that need to be done."

As a result she persuaded McAllister-Wilson to commit to the upgrades in Straughn Dormitory and then to building a brand new dormitory.

Carr became involved with Wesley when she met former Wesley president, the Rev. Dr. G. Douglass Lewis, at her church Metropolitan Memorial United Methodist Church, which is in the same neighborhood as the seminary. Lewis invited her to visit the campus.

"I had lived in the neighborhood for years, and I never knew Wesley was there," Carr recalls. "Wesley is a hidden gem in the city."

## A COMMITMENT TO SERVE

Once on campus, she was impressed with the students, faculty and staff. "Everyone was so nice," she says. "I was excited by the fact that if you support one student, that one student can reach hundreds of people. I thought it was a very worthwhile place to support."

Soon she committed to serving as a board member. In this role for 12 years, she threw herself into helping Wesley prepare students for service to the church and the world. She chaired the

institutional advancement committee for a time and in addition to the dorm, she was involved in funding the extensive library renovations. She also endowed the ethics chair held by Dr. Sondra Wheeler.

*"I was excited by the fact that  
if you support one student,  
that **one student can reach  
hundreds** of people."*

"I think it's good to choose one thing in which you can make a difference instead of giving a dab here there and everywhere," she says of her decision to focus her giving to Wesley over the years.

Wesley is honoring her and other donors whose significant gifts have been transformative on the recently installed donor tree on campus.

## A RECOGNITION OF SUPPORTERS' IMPACT

"For several years, Wesley has been exploring an appropriate way to recognize our most generous donors," says Laura Norvell, Wesley's vice president for development.

"Former Director of Planned Giving Cindy Davis worked with Deborah Sokolove and Amy Gray on this project. Together, they imagined an installation honoring our commitment to the arts, telling a story, and recognizing our most generous supporters," Norvell says.

Sokolove is the director of the Henry Luce III Center for the Arts and Religion and professor of art and worship. Gray is the Luce Center's program administrator, a designer and adjunct faculty.

Fabricated by local, award-winning sculptor Davide Prete, the wood and bronze tree with green heart-shaped leaves occupies a wall in the courtyard entrance of the Kresge Building. The leaves will be engraved with the names of individuals or organizations that have given a cumulative amount of one million dollars or more.

“Our mission is sustained by generous support that strengthens our roots and our branches so that we are fruitful. A strong and vibrant tree tells this story,” says Norvell of the decision to use the tree design.

“I talked to the current and previous presidents to try to capture everyone we could think of who should be on the tree,” says Davis. “We researched old files and tried to be as comprehensive as we could be from the beginning of the seminary in 1882. If we missed anyone, we can always add another leaf.” Davis spent the last year before she retired in September 2015 organizing the project.

Gordon and Helen Smith are also honored on the tree.

### A COMMITMENT TO LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE

Helen is another board of governors’ member emerita and former board chair. Gordon served on the presidential search committee.

In Lewis’ early years as president, the seminary was unable to balance the year-end budget. It was \$50,000 short. While discussing Wesley on a Saturday, the Smiths decided to offer Lewis \$15,000 to help. By Monday, he had sent out a letter encouraging others to add to the gift. Within two weeks, \$60,000 was raised. Lewis says that for the next 20 years Wesley was able to balance the budget. The Smiths’ future gifts were instrumental in building the Lewis Center for Church Leadership and the new dormitory.

“It’s a good feeling to see that people care so much,” says Davis. “I think it will be good for students to see that there are people who are so involved with Wesley and want them to succeed. I’m grateful to the people who give so generously. We can continue to provide scholarships and continue to prepare leaders for the future of the church. The donor tree is a wonderful way to honor our benefactors.”



“Our mission is sustained by **generous support that strengthens our roots and our branches** so that we are fruitful. A strong and vibrant tree tells this story,”



Cindy Davis



Helen and Gordon Smith





# Church Leaders Shaped by Wesley Now Shaping the Church

**SOCIETY OF JOHN WESLEY AWARD RECIPIENTS WERE SHAPED BY WESLEY  
AND THEIR WORK HAS SHAPED THE CHURCH, WESLEY AND THE WORLD.**

Each year, the Society of John Wesley Award of Merit is given to Wesley graduates who exemplify a high standard of commitment and devotion to God, to the church and to Wesley Theological Seminary. Four of the recipients talk about their experience.



**BISHOP SUNDO KIM,**  
M.R.E. 70, SJW 1996

The Rev. Dr. Sundo Kim founded a church that grew to 94,000 members at its height from the initial 200 in 1970. Kwanglim Church in Seoul, Korea, stands as the

largest Methodist Church in the world.

At Wesley, he and his congregation endowed the chair in World Christianity, held by the Rev. Dr. Sathi Clarke.

Now retired from the pulpit, Kim started mission centers and seminaries in places such as Russia, New Zealand, Zimbabwe and China.

He has written several books, the latest of which is his autobiography, "A Miracle of Five Minutes." Kim has also served on several international boards during his ministry, including World Vision.

**Recently, he preached at the prayer breakfast with the Korean President Park. His sermon was about the good shepherd. Later, Park spoke at another gathering, she mentioned the good shepherd. A Korean newspaper stated she got the concept from Kim's sermon.**

Additionally, Kim was invited to give the benediction at the funeral of the late president, Young-Sam Kim. Kim has said several times that he received this honor because he learned well from Wesley. He specifically mentioned Dr. Ferguson's preaching class and pastoral counseling classes. Kim earned near-perfect marks in the preaching class and preached at Wesley's chapel as a student.



**THE REV. DR. CHARLIE PARKER,**  
M.Div. 1994, D.Min. 2001, SJW 1997

**"Wesley's got a wonderful intentionality around and an appreciation for diversity of community," says the Rev. Dr. Charles Parker. "That was a pretty formative and**

shaping piece for me. I grew up in Washington, D.C., so I have been in a multicultural context all of my life. Wesley's intentionality gave me an opportunity to reflect on that and what it means theologically. It was an important piece for me."

Parker experienced a call strong enough that as a high school senior he audited a class in Wesleyan theology at the seminary. "It gave me a taste of what was coming," he says. After graduating from college, he took a year off to work, then returned to Wesley to earn his M.Div.

After briefly leading a church, he spent 16 years working with nonprofits working on hunger and housing issues with Bread for the City and Emmaus Services for the Aging. He entered Wesley for a third time for D.Min. studies.

"I had been doing a lot of hands-on work in the Shaw neighborhood," he said. "I wanted to study something that would help me be grounded and also provide a little balance to some of the day-to-day stuff I was doing."

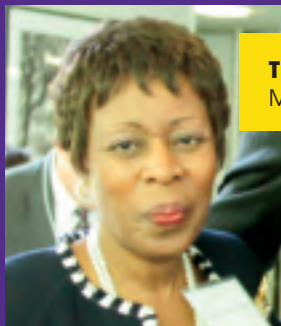
Nine years ago, he returned to the pulpit as the senior pastor of Metropolitan Memorial United Methodist Church not far from Wesley. He has continued his work in the community. "I'm passionate about people who are homeless and hungry. My experiences have shaped a lot of the work we are doing at Metropolitan," he says.

This includes gleaning food from area markets and getting it to meal programs, setting up a feeding program at the former St. Luke's Church and opening shelters at two locations. "We have over the last several years built some wonderful and dynamic relationships," he says. "Cross-city engagement has continued to be an important part of my ministry."

He uses his expertise on multiple committees within the Baltimore-Washington Conference and the General

Conference. He also serves on the board of governors for Wesley.

He says, "This wonderful Wesleyan tension that we hold between the life of the spirit and the life of the activity has been a critical piece of my journey all the way through."



**THE REV. BRENDA GIRTON-MITCHELL,**  
M.DIV. 2004, SJW 2008

The Rev. Brenda Girton-Mitchell, a lifelong Baptist, said she was intimidated when she first came to Wesley. "The Baptist church, being more congregational, didn't

use the same language as the seminary. We don't have the same polity as other denominations. I wondered if I would have to justify my faith, because I was in a Methodist institution," she says. "It became clear I didn't have to, and I could acquire other tools to do the work that God assigns me."

Girton-Mitchell had never been easily intimidated. For years, she worked as an elementary teacher, staff attorney, lobbyist, association executive and a corporate diversity director. In her current job she directs the Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships in the U.S. Department of Education. She has served on numerous non-profit boards, including Wesley's board of governors.

In addition, she serves as minister of stewardship and missions at Metropolitan Baptist Church in Largo, Maryland, where she has attended for 27 years. Her pastor, the Rev. Dr. H. Beecher Hicks, encouraged her to attend Wesley when she acknowledged her call. Hicks is Wesley's Distinguished Visiting Professor of Homiletics and an emeritus governor.

"He said to me, 'You don't recognize it, but **you have a church without walls**, and I hope you won't underestimate the value of it.' He didn't want for me to see the ministerial credentials limiting me to pastor in the traditional church. He actually helped me see that I could minister wherever God planted me. When I was called to work for the president five years ago in this role in the Department of Education, it was like a light coming on all around me.

"In my work I try to encourage building collaborative partnerships between the church and the school to meet unmet needs that help improve student outcomes," she explains. "Some in both institutions were wary with working with the other. They believed that having churches working with schools violated the separation of church and state. We helped them to see that it's civic engagement. It's putting faith to work—not proselytizing. **It is the way to be the hands and feet of God.**"



**BISHOP MARCUS MATTHEWS,**  
M.DIV. 1974, SJW 1996

"Wesley didn't recruit me. I selected Wesley," says the Rev. Dr. Marcus Matthews, bishop of the Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church.

His selection was based on a decision he made when he was on a sixth grade safety patrol trip to Washington, D.C. "I told my mother that one day I wanted to live in Washington."

Born and raised in a longstanding Methodist family in Florence, South Carolina, he had the opportunity to listen to several speakers from a nearby seminary. Knowing that he had a call to ministry, he was delighted to find that there was a Methodist seminary in D.C. After working with his home church on a project for what was then called the Board of Missions, receiving a Ford Fellowship and doing a project in the Mississippi Delta, he was ready to attend.

"Wesley was eye-opening," he remembers. "Until coming to Wesley most of my experience had been in primarily African-American churches and settings. **Wesley helped to open my eyes to the role of the church and what role I could play in it. It helped me crystallize my theology.**"

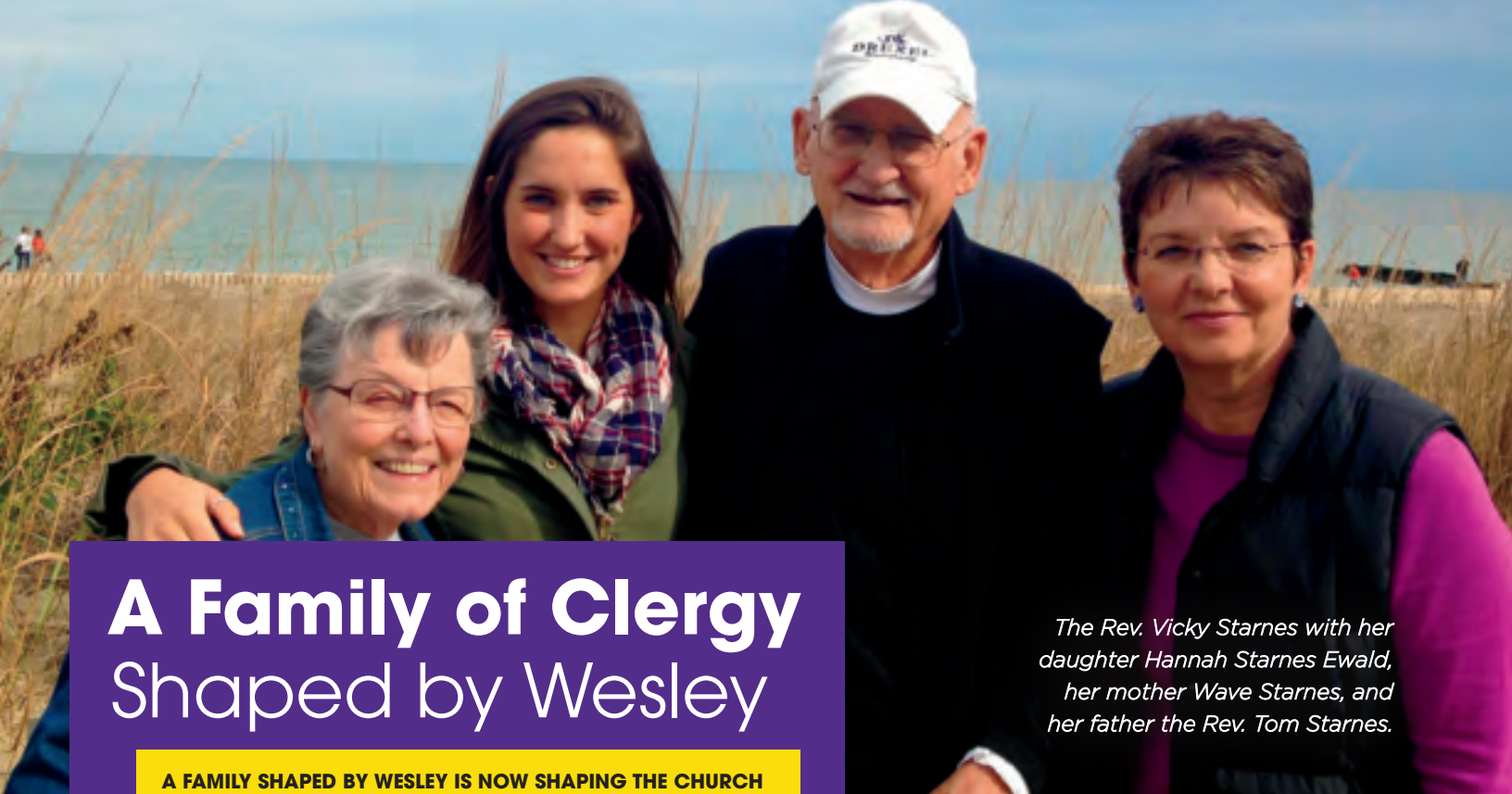
One of approximately 10 black students, he helped found the Association of Black Seminarians. "It was organized out of protest," he says. Attending at the time in the 70s when liberation theology was being formed, the students felt neglected. "Courses were not meeting our needs, nor were they sensitive to African-American students. Everything was totally integrated, but we were not feeling that the contributions of African-Americans were being received at that time. We were asking for more liberal theology to be integrated into the total life of Wesley." Matthews took the spokesman role in the discussion with the dean.

His concerns went beyond this issue alone. The pioneer he was, he became the secretary of the Student Council under a woman president—a first. "It was groundbreaking," he says.

Matthews went on to have several pastorates, served as a district superintendent, and is finishing his second term as bishop. Like all of his SJW peers, he holds positions and chairs a wide range of boards and committees across his denomination.

One volunteer position he is most excited about is the board for Africa University. It is a Methodist-affiliated school located in Mutare, Zimbabwe. Planning to retire in August 2016, he says his retirement gift is a love offering from his colleagues. It is being used to build a health and sports complex named after him on the growing campus.





# A Family of Clergy Shaped by Wesley

**A FAMILY SHAPED BY WESLEY IS NOW SHAPING THE CHURCH  
AND WORLD—THREE GENERATIONS OF WESLEY STUDENTS**

*The Rev. Vicky Starnes with her daughter Hannah Starnes Ewald, her mother Wave Starnes, and her father the Rev. Tom Starnes.*

## CALLED TO THE MINISTRY

Although her ministry gifts were evident since she was young, no one in her extended family pressed Hannah Starnes Ewald about her call.

It's not their way.

"My parents didn't want me to feel any pressure," says her mother, the Rev. Vicky Starnes, a pastor from the Baltimore Washington Conference, on loan to the Peninsula-Delaware Conference. "That's exactly what I felt for Hannah. I didn't want Hannah to feel that she had to fulfill this legacy thing."

Vicky is a second-generation Starnes pastor. Her father, the Rev. Tom Starnes, and her uncle, the Rev. Luther Starnes, were the first to answer the call. All three Starnes earned M.Div. degrees from Wesley. The brothers are now retired from the conference they both served.

"They would never say I want you to go to Wesley," agrees Hannah. "That is one of the amazing things about my family. They would have been supportive with any decision I made."

Tom, Hannah's grandfather, adds, "I don't think I influenced her. Hannah, from an early age, had the gifts and graces of loving being around people. She relates to people well, which is important for ministry."

"Dad and mom had a lot to do with my call," says Vicky. "She's an educator. We grew up steeped in my father's sermons; it made an imprint on all our lives. Faith is definitely rooted in our family."

## A FAMILY IMBEDDED INTO THE WESLEY COMMUNITY

Vicky even married into another faithful Methodist family. Her husband's father, the late Jack Ewald, also attended Wesley and was a pastor. "My father-in-law ended up being my pastor when it came time to go before the church in a charge conference. He was the one who got to sign the papers for my ordination path."

Vicky's brothers—Hannah's uncles—are involved in the church as laity. One is an attorney who serves as the chancellor for his United Methodist conference. His Washington, D.C., firm handles all the conference's legal work. The second brother is an active member of Dumbarton United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C.

Finally, her great-grandparents on the Ewald side, Edward and Polly, were great supporters of Wesley. "He didn't attend, but he was a very faithful donor," Hannah says. "In my opinion, he believed in the ministry of his son, my grandfather, Jack. He also wanted to make sure that other people received an education to prepare them for ministry." A classroom in the Kresge Building, near the Dadian Gallery facing the courtyard, is named for the late Ewalds.

"They were strong financial supporters of Wesley," adds Vicky. "They had a great relationship with Doug Lewis and David McAllister-Wilson." Lewis and McAllister-Wilson are Wesley's previous and current presidents, respectively.

## COMMITTED TO GIVING BACK

Vicky has been faithful to Wesley too. “I believe in supporting institutions, and I have for a long time. I started officially when I was on the Graduate Council—in the late 90s,” she says. “John and I give electronically every month; it’s automatic. It’s almost 20 years worth of giving. Giving is so important, I’m happy to talk to people about it.”

“He also wanted to make sure that other people received an education to **prepare them for ministry.**”

She might have been following her father’s example. “I was a member of the Wesley Council. We gave thousands a year,” Tom says. “We’re getting back to that based on Hannah attending there. We support Wesley.”

Vicky also gave back in service to Wesley. She served as the Graduate Council president as well as being a student pastor colloquy leader. Of the latter, she says, “I was able to visit student pastors, meet different church folks, preach, and had classroom time. It was rewarding to be able to serve.”

Lewis chose her for these roles partly based on her history with Wesley. She was the first recipient of a scholarship and a stipend for the new student pastor track.

“When I wanted to go to seminary, John was in college, and I was working retail,” says Vicky. “I couldn’t afford to go to seminary. But Wesley paid for the whole first year.” She was also given a house with utilities paid near her pastorate in rural Maryland and a stipend that began at \$9,000 a year. “I didn’t think I could do it. But it all worked out!”

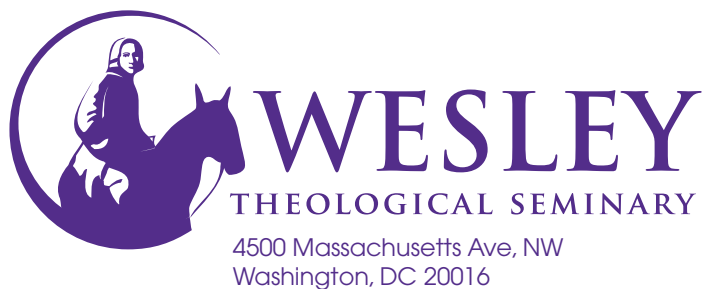
Hannah thinks things will work out for her too. “I’m passionate about social justice. I want to lead people in a ministerial setting while also empowering others, particularly women, in their own voices,” she says. “One of the first things I saw that I liked about Wesley was that it has a gender-inclusive-language policy. I said to myself, ‘You chose the right seminary.’ It reassured me that this is the place to do this kind of work.”

“I’m passionate about social justice. **I want to lead people in a ministerial setting while also empowering others,** particularly women, in their own voices.”

# Support the Shaping of Christian Leaders

Your support of seminarians during their time at Wesley removes the financial worry that can cloud their ability to clearly discern and respond to their call to ministry. Please help us to prepare the preachers, leaders and teachers—the visionaries and the dreamers for the future mission of the church. Your gifts bless our students so they may be a blessing to others throughout the world.

To donate online, visit  
[www.wesleyseminary.edu/support](http://www.wesleyseminary.edu/support).



NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
SUBURBAN, MD  
PERMIT NO. 1

## Upcoming **Events**



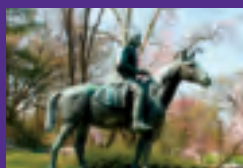
### **Second Mondays Lecture**

Topic: Race  
Dr. Beverly Mitchell  
**March 14**  
7:30 a.m.



### **Honoring Oscar Romero**

Chapel: March 15  
Lecture: March 17



### **Second Mondays Lecture**

Topic: Global Citizenship  
Lecturer TBD  
**April 11**  
7:30 a.m.



### **Commencement**

**May 9**  
2 p.m.

