



In Memory of Dr. Carl D. Bennett

On August 29, 2006, St. Andrews Presbyterian College lost one of the founding fathers of the institution with the passing of Dr. Carl D. Bennett.

A member of "The God Squad," credited with the creation of the Christianity and Culture Interdisciplinary Curriculum upon which St. Andrews is based, Bennett was the first faculty member hired by the Consolidated College in 1958. It became the last academic stop of his long career.

The Man

Carl Bennett was born on July 22, 1917, in Waycross, Ga., to George and Tivvie Bennett. Bennett spent his formative years in the Georgia education system. He went to Emory University and earned his A.B. in English with honors in 1940.

From 1942 to 1944, Bennett served in the Civilian Public Service as a conscientious objector to World War II due to his Quaker upbringing. This service proved to be another significant piece in his life as it was during this time that he married Margaret, his loving wife of 64 years.

He completed a master's degree in English at Emory in 1945. Bennett completed his degree trek in 1962 when he received his Ph.D. from the Graduate Institute of Liberal Arts at Emory.

Bennett taught at West Georgia College in Carrollton, Ga., for one year and Wesleyan College, in Macon, Ga., for 15 years before becoming the first faculty hire of the

Consolidated Presbyterian College now known as St. Andrews in 1958.

Bennett was not afraid to take on the challenges life had outside of the classroom. He served as chair of the Macon Interracial Committee in 1953-1954 and Director of the Interns in Industry Project of the American Friends Service Committee in Atlanta during the summers of 1953 and 1954. His service beyond himself continued throughout his life, with years of volunteering with the Boy Scouts of America, Habitat for Humanity, the Scotland County Literacy Council and CROP Walk for Hunger all a part of his life. A self-proclaimed "Quakerized Baptist," Bennett moved his membership to the First Baptist Church of Laurinburg, serving faithfully for many years.

Bennett also found time to raise a family of three daughters with Margaret: Katharine, Susan and Patricia. As the years passed, he also had the joy of a grandson, Jeffery Bennett.

The St. Andrews Professor

It was Dr. Leslie Bullock, a professor of religion at Flora Macdonald College charged with creating a curriculum for the consolidated college, who recruited Bennett from Wesleyan College. They met at a conference of Danforth Fellows, and quickly formed a bond. Bennett had experienced interdisciplinary education as a graduate student and became excited about the opportunity to help design an interdisciplinary undergraduate curriculum. He and Bullock worked closely for a year to

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Memories of Dr. Bennett

Your description of Dr. Bennett as "beloved" is quite apt. His pleasant professional demeanor clearly stood out to me, and I remember him fondly – despite the fact that I never took any of his courses.

Dr. Howard Hall '89

I had Dr. Bennett for C&C and English 201-202. I worked in the library my first year until I qualified to work for Rehab Services. I shared the meal table in the dining hall with the Bennetts and other folks nearly every Sunday lunch.

Sally MacLeod Owens '69

He literally helped save my life by making blood contributions for me when I was an infant with problems requiring complete transfusions. We found out about the connection years later when I was his student at St. Andrews. It was a small kind thing he did when he was rather young. It was pretty big thing for me – here I am! Because of this, I have always held very special thoughts for him in my heart and prayers.

Beth Penn '85

I remember Dr. Bennett was my first English teacher. I still have the book he taught on my bookcase... we will miss him but he will live in our hearts.

Daniel Nie '84

bring *The Chapel Hill Report* suggestions to the next level.

That work was the foundation for the Christianity and Culture Interdisciplinary Curriculum which has evolved over the years into the St. Andrews General Education Program. The “God Squad,” as they were sometimes called, of Bullock, Bennett, Dr. William Alexander, Dr. Harry Harvin and Dr. David Hawk, created the curriculum by consensus, pouring over texts to find the exact right translation for what they were looking to accomplish with the course. Despite the nickname and the curriculum title, Bennett shared in a fall 2001 interview, “Of course, others thought we were near atheist.”

“The best thing about teaching C&C was what we learned from each other,” he said in that same interview. “Students who came back would universally testify that (thanks to C&C) they felt in a stronger position for graduate school and for life. But when they were here they didn’t like it very much.”

Bennett continued to learn through various opportunities for travel and lecturing in his academic life. In the summer of 1964, he traveled to India on a Fulbright-Hays Grant in Indian Civilization. He also earned study grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Carnegie Institute. Bennett held the Piedmont University Center Fellowship from 1972 to 1973 and was the 1977 Lilly Scholar at Duke University for the summer. He was a visiting professor at Seinan Gakwin University at Fukuota, Japan for 1980 and 1981. His travel and research trips included stints at Harvard, Princeton, Yale and Cambridge. He was also a lecturer at Kansai Gaidi.

His professional organizations



Margaret and Carl Bennett were married for 64 years. The couple raised four daughters and shared a work environment at St. Andrews as Margaret worked in DeTamble Library.

were numerous, as he was a member of the Modern Language Association, American Studies Association, South Atlantic Modern Languages Association, the Danforth Association, AAUP, and SASASSAS, among others.

Bennett served as a professor for several St. Andrews Institute of Lifelong Learning classes since his official “retirement” in 1988.

The Expert

As an English professor, Bennett was frequently sought out for comment by the local media on literary topics.

For the *Fayetteville Times* article in 1988 about the sequel to *Gone With The Wind*, Bennett was able to serve as an expert on two levels. While sharing insight on why Margaret

Mitchell is not considered a key southern writer as Eudora Welty and Flannery O’Connor, Bennett was also able to share the experience he had as an usher at the movie’s release ball at the Atlanta City Auditorium.

“I saw all those people in the flesh – Clark Gable, Olivia de Havilland, Vivien Leigh,” Bennett said in the article. “It was an exciting thing for a kid to see those movie greats.

“Everybody had to see the movie,” Bennett said. “There were long lines on the street outside the old Grand Theater.”

Bennett was also tapped for the explanation of why the George Orwell novel *1984* was selected for the spring semester reading in the SAGE class in that year.

“The book is a warning to people with democratic instincts against totalitarian governments,” said Bennett.

The Legacy

As a founding father of St. Andrews, Bennett’s academic legacy is tied to the institution. As word of his passing spread through the college community, many alumni shared their thoughts and memories. (See sidebar)

Perhaps the best description of his impact came in a message from Karo M. Burton ’73. “Dr. Bennett was a fine man and teacher. He was a true inspiration for learning at St. Andrews.”

“Carl was a wonderful contributor to what we all know and love about St. Andrews,” said President Paul Baldasare ’77. “He will be missed.”

To read more memories of Dr. Carl Bennett, visit the alumni home page at www.sapc.edu/alumni.php and click Remembering Dr. Bennett.

Thoughts of Carl Bennett

David Steven Beale '73

I was a student at St. Andrews from September 1969 to May 1973. I had Dr. Bennett for many classes over four years as I was an English major, and he was in the English Department. I really enjoyed his classes, and I received good grades for my classes with him.

He taught one class on American Literature, which for me was an amazing class, as we read so many wonderful books. I still have the papers I wrote for each book in that class with his comments, and the grade, written in red in the margins of the paper. When I read those comments, I can hear his voice as he tells me how to improve my writing, and as he grills me on what the author was trying to say. My mind was opened to new viewpoints and ideas, and Dr. Bennett was there, guiding me along. He had sensitive insights, and helped me to understand the connections and trends in American literature and history with the long, preceding history and literature of England. He encouraged me to write better, and he helped prepare me, although I did not know it at that time, to become an attorney.

I will celebrate my 29th year of practicing law on March 21, 2007. I think that I am a better attorney and person because of Dr. Bennett, and also, more generally, because of the coordinated approach of teaching and curriculum taken by the professors at St. Andrews, of which Dr. Bennett was intrinsically an important part. He was part of the coordinated team of professors in the English Department, from whom I learned so much. They were all my mentors. St. Andrews was truly a special, unique place for me, and Dr. Bennett was a special part of that unique quality.

Dr. Bennett honed in on fine points of grammar, and clearly expressing a point of view, and supporting a position in writing with specific references to the text, all of which were incredibly prescient for me. He helped me to think and to speak clearly, to be organized, to enunciate succinctly and directly, on my feet, and in front of others. He pushed hard to obtain your comments and views, to get you to talk. He was not satisfied with generalizations. He challenged, beckoned, urged, and persuaded. He asked the question "why" a lot. And he wanted an excellent answer. He once said to me that successful communication has occurred when you convey what you are thinking either in writing or orally to another person so that person is thinking exactly what you are thinking. In this context, thinking does not necessarily mean agreement. He commented to me that I was a vigorous writer, that I expressed my views

FOR CARL BENNETT

Dr. Belle Gironda '83

I didn't know it yet, but
I had just conceived my daughter,
(who had her 22nd birthday this week, while you died)
when I took your
winter term seminar on *Gravity's Rainbow*
her entire lifetime ago.

It was January
in North Carolina, which
means
the light is thin,
the landscape cross-hatched,
sometimes the floors are wet.

The Lipton tea you brought
everyday for us
made me nauseous
but I drank it and enjoyed
the vertiginous feeling.

I was 22
and needed to read
an encyclopedic novel
led by you who knew the history
and pronounced the German
and filled the bunker
with a secret society of feeling
the probable truths of which have
only recourse to the outside
(where you are now standing?
...behind the curtain
where Carol Merrill points?)

but materialize
clearly as
the s of your posture,
and your shoes.

forcefully, and he encouraged me to focus upon and develop those gifts further. He helped me to understand that justice was important and that vigilance was necessary to protect it. He was an exemplary professor.

I am a better writer, reader, speaker, man, and lawyer because of Dr. Bennett. He helped me while I was in a formative stage to become what I am now. I am glad that I was his student and that I knew him. I will miss him.