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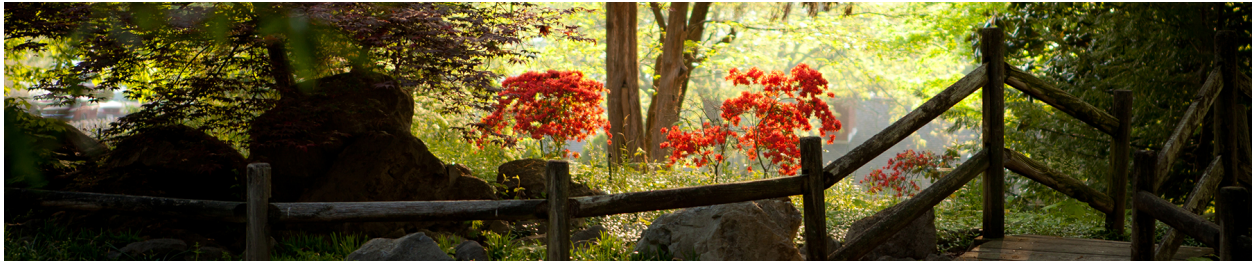
9-2019

## **September 2019 QuickNotes**

Southern Adventist University

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## September 2019 QuickNotes

# QuickBits

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### **ALUMNUS GARY RUSTAD, '00, NAMED NEW GEORGIA-CUMBERLAND CONFERENCE PRESIDENT**

On August 29, Gary Rustad accepted the nomination to become president of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference. In this new capacity he'll lead more than 40,000 Seventh-day Adventist church members and approximately 400 pastors, chaplains, ministerial directors, teachers, and support staff.



Rustad has worked in the conference office since 2015. He most recently served as vice president for administration/secretariat and general vice president, where he worked with human resources, membership, and church organization. He also managed numerous church ministries

departments, served as liaison for the Cohutta Springs Conference Center, coordinated camp meetings, and oversaw Adventist Community Services and Disaster Response.

“I am delighted to learn of Gary's selection as our next conference president,” said outgoing president Ed Wright. “You will find him insightful, enthusiastic, personable, and engaging. More importantly, Gary is a deeply devoted Christ-follower and loyal Seventh-day Adventist. I believe God has uniquely equipped him for this role at this time.”

Rustad and his wife Denise (Dixon), '04, have three children: Ava, Elayna, and Heath. To learn more about Rustad's appointment, view the [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#) on the Georgia-Cumberland Conference website.

-by Tamara (Wolcott) Fisher, '91, Georgia-Cumberland Conference communication director

### **BIETZ CENTER UPDATE: STEEL BEAMS HELP SECOND AND THIRD FLOORS TAKE SHAPE**

Construction crews made tremendous progress on the Bietz Center for Student Life in August, prompting students and employees on campus to pause and take pictures of the impressive new structure as it rises up off the promenade.



To date, workers have poured nearly 800 cubic yards of concrete and used more than 250 tons of steel, both of which help define the building's shape and future footprint. Steelwork is scheduled to be completed by the end of September. Less noticeable but equally critical progress includes rough plumbing in the slab and soil backfill against the base of selected walls.

On Friday, October 25, the university is hosting a beam-signing and topping off ceremony at 2 p.m. as part of Homecoming Weekend. Students, employees, and alumni are all invited to attend. To remain up to date on the Bietz Center, visit Southern's \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

-Staff Report

## Campus Life

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### **DIE MEISTERSINGER REUNION ATTRACTS ALUMNI FOR HOMECOMING WEEKEND**

During Marvin “Doc” Robertson’s 33 years as chair of the music program at Southern, he helped shepherd several substantial projects. Accomplishments such as the installation of the Anton Heiller Memorial Organ in the Collegedale Church of Seventh-day Adventists and accreditation for Southern’s music program with the National Association of Schools of Music both have his fingerprints on them.

But decades later, Robertson may be best known for something else on a far more personal level.

Robertson founded Southern’s Die Meistersinger male chorus in the 1970s and led it until his retirement in 1999. Former choir members maintain an almost fraternal connection, prompting buzz for reunion concerts where they come together on campus both to reconnect with one another as well as to honor their venerable leader. This year’s \_\_\_\_\_ features a Die Meistersinger reunion concert on October 26 at 4 p.m. in the campus church sanctuary.



Die Meistersinger alumnus Gerald Peel, '90, is director of music at First Cumberland Presbyterian Church of Chattanooga and hasn't missed participating in a reunion concert since graduating from Southern. He's participating this year, too.

"I know people who are flying in from the West Coast specifically for this reunion," Peel said. "A male choir has an unusually tight bond. The social environment is much different than a mixed choir. These groups are often much more "rough and tumble" than other groups, in positive ways of course, and the friendships resume immediately with every reunion, almost as if no time had passed at all."

Paul Ware, MD, '87, had heard about Die Meistersinger even before arriving at Southern as a student and participated for three years after enrolling.

"I was interested in the camaraderie and potential for foreign travel, and I felt that singing sacred music was one of the more important parts of my spiritual experience," Ware said.

Friendships with fellow musicians isn't the only reason alumni return to campus for Die Meistersinger practices and performance. They also come to honor Robertson, who provided a steady, professional presence in the lives of young men during formative years.

"Marvin Robertson has a gift, a special way of dealing with a male choir," Peel said. "He made it a point to connect personally with every singer. He is permanently tied to the group. There's no escape for him whatsoever!"

Ware agrees: “He was committed to excellence and didn’t shy away from expressing his appreciation for our work.”

Along with reunion concert participation, Die Meistersinger alumni have also chosen to honor their leader through gifts to Southern in his name. The Marvin Robertson Endowed Scholarship offers need-based financial assistance to upperclassmen pursuing choral direction as a major or degree emphasis.

“I’ve made gifts to this fund because I feel it is important to support the mission of Southern and the long-term strength of our university,” Ware said.

Contributions to the Marvin Robertson Endowed Scholarship can be made online at \_\_\_\_\_ or by calling 423.236.2829.

-Staff Report

### **UNIVERSITY UNVEILS RENOVATION PLANS FOR LIBRARY EXTERIOR**

When Southern’s Bietz Center for Student Life opens in spring 2021, its newness and architectural detail will stand in contrast to the 50-year-old façade of its nearest neighbor, \_\_\_\_\_. Thanks to a significant corporate gift received over the summer, plans for an ambitious \$500,000 facelift have begun to move forward. Improvements will help modernize the library’s exterior while also adding much-needed interior square footage.



Several major projects to update the library’s interior have been completed in recent years, but the outside—specifically the portico—is immediately distinguishable as part of a bygone era. Aside from a desire to modernize the aesthetics for one of campus’ most highly used and centrally located facilities, administrators believe this project brings two practical benefits to students frequenting McKee Library: increased seating and natural sunlight.

Initial design plans by Fred Turner—Southern’s corporate architect who also designed the adjacent Bietz Center for Student Life—call for replacing the existing entrance with an enclosed vestibule which contains a second floor. This creates approximately 2,000 square feet of new entry and seating space. A proposed side entrance, located on the building’s northern facade facing Hackman Hall, adds an abundance of windows to both floors and dramatically alters the library’s interior.

“Students and faculty will appreciate the increase in natural light,” said Deyse Bravo, McKee Library director.



By working on adjoining spaces, Southern demonstrates a commitment to the concept of two buildings functioning as one. According to Marty Hamilton, associate vice president for Financial Administration, collaborative structures have always been part of Southern’s construction master plan.

“When planning the Bietz Center for Student Life, we intentionally designed an exterior patio to connect it with McKee Library,” Hamilton said. “There is a clear synergy between the two buildings: one is focused on research and learning, the other will be the new ‘living room’ of campus. Both play a key role in student success and provide critical support services.”

McKee Library renovations are funded by a combination of institutional resources and gifts to the Campaign for Excellence in Faith and Learning. The campaign’s Academic Growth impact area also covers completed projects representing improvements to Brock Hall and the Art Annex. For more information visit [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#).

-Staff Report

# Community Connections

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## **BOSTON INTERNSHIP OFFERS NATIONAL EXPOSURE FOR WSMC STUDENT WORKER**

When it came time to make plans for the summer, Southern student and \_\_\_\_\_ music director Edyn-Mae Stevenson traded in her on-campus job at the university's radio station for a similar one elsewhere. But don't mistake familiarity with monotony. An opportunity to intern at Boston's WCRB, one of the nation's largest classical music stations, was too good to pass up for the senior music theory major from Massachusetts.

Stevenson recently shared a quick recap of her exciting summer internship.



**How did you hear about this opportunity?** Tyler Rand, a 2016 Southern alumnus and my former supervisor at WSMC, encouraged me to apply. I definitely wouldn't have done it without support from him and WSMC general manager Scott Kornblum.

**What did it feel like to work for such a prestigious station?** Having that access to such a great station while growing up was part of the reason I fell in love with classical music in the first place, so it was a really surreal couple of months being able to intern there. I'd been hearing their announcers over the air waves for years and was definitely a little star-struck when I first arrived.



**Were there any “wow!” moments from the internship?** I had an opportunity to sit in on a live broadcast of a Boston Symphony Orchestra concert featuring Grammy-winning pianist Emanuel Ax. Also, WCRB featured [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#) about the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra’s new album on its home page.

**What did you learn at WCRB?** I transcribed interviews, participated in live broadcasts, and even sat in on studio sessions for an album recording. Those things weren’t my primary takeaway, though. Between my time at WCRB and the work I’m doing at WSMC, I have a lot of experience—and yet this internship taught me there’s a lot I still don’t know. That’s a really valuable lesson.

**Did the internship impact your career ambitions?** Working at WCRB solidified for me that radio is what I want to do moving forward, but I was already pretty confident about that decision. When I began working at WSMC two years ago, I was this lost little musician. Our campus station provided me with direction and put all my possibilities for the future into perspective.

-Staff Report

## **SCHOLARSHIP FUNDED BY ESTATE PLAN PROVIDES IMMEDIATE TUITION RELIEF**

Edwin and Mary Belle Martin serve as a powerful example of planning for the future and sharing a legacy of generosity. They demonstrated their love and commitment for Christian education by including a gift in their estate plan that is providing \$100,000 annually for student scholarships at Southern over a five-year period.

The Martins (pictured below) might appear as unusual candidates to become champions of higher education; they enjoyed successful and financially rewarding careers in long-term care even though Edwin never earned a college degree. Despite this, they recognized the immense value of education and the doors it can open for young adults entering the workforce. This included their three children who all went to Southern: Bobby Martin, ’70; Mary Hagen, ’72; and Judy Wilcox (attended).



This ability and compassion to see the bigger need existing outside of their own circumstances led to the creation of the Edwin and Mary Belle Martin Scholarship. During the 2018-2019 academic year, the Martins' gift helped 49 students receive the financial support necessary to enroll or remain at Southern without adding to their burden of student loan debt. Scholarship amounts vary, with most beneficiaries receiving \$2,000-\$2,500 per year.

Joelle Kanyana, '19, graduated in May as a double major with degrees in international studies and finance. She studied hard in academy to earn merit-based scholarships at Southern. Once enrolled, Joelle faithfully worked to help pay for school, regularly putting in 20 or more hours per week on top of her internships and academic course load during the semester. Without the Edwin and Mary Belle Martin Scholarship, it would have proven even more difficult to complete her senior year and transition into a new job as a financial analyst with AdventHealth Orlando.

"I'm overcome with gratitude every day for the scholarships that Southern and its donors provided for students like me," Kanyana said. "I can start my career oriented toward service and not survival because I'm leaving Southern debt free. No words can express the impact that donors like the Martins have had on my life!"

Estate gifts that support Southern can be made in a variety of ways, including insurance, real estate, retirement assets, stocks, and other options. For more details, visit [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#) or call 423.236.2818.

-Staff Report

# Alumni Highlights

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## **ENTREPRENEUR RUBEN HARRIS, '10, FEATURED ON FORBES WEBSITE**

Ruben Harris started his journey toward entrepreneurship in September of 2015 when he bought a one-way ticket to San Francisco—even though he only had a place to stay confirmed for three weeks. With God’s help, he was able to find work and began learning how technology can be used to build startups in the fields of education, healthcare, and mass communications.



A little more than one year later, Harris launched the “Breaking Into Startups” podcast with his co-founders, twin brothers who had moved from Atlanta to enroll in technical coding bootcamps to become software engineers. This popular podcast features stories about people who broke into tech from nontraditional backgrounds and has reached millions of listeners.

In 2018, Harris’ enthusiasm for entrepreneurship continued to grow, and he began his own tech company, Career Karma. Career Karma helps people become software engineers by matching them with the right bootcamps and supporting them for the rest of their careers. The business has received significant financial backing from some of the top venture capitalists in Silicon Valley. These successes are part of the reason Southern named Harris its 2018 Young Alumnus of the Year during Homecoming Weekend.

Harris is passionate about the idea of technology as a ministry and reaches out to Adventist pastors and educators frequently to help bring these opportunities to their local churches and communities. To learn more about Harris' professional journey, [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#) published by Forbes (August 2019).

-Staff Report

## Upcoming Events

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Unless otherwise noted, all events are free and open to the public.

**Christine Williamson Convocation.** September 12 at 11 a.m. in Iles P.E. Center. Miss Tennessee 2018 will speak during Community Service Emphasis Week.

**Star Watch.** September 13 at 8:30 p.m. in Hickman Science Center parking lot. Students and guests will explore the heavens through a telescope (weather permitting).

**Kristin Du Mez Convocation.** September 19 at 11 a.m. in Iles P.E. Center. In recognition of Constitution Day, Du Mez, PhD, will share her research that focuses on the intersections of gender, religion, and politics in recent American history. She is a professor and department chair at Calvin University.

**E.O. Grundset Lecture Series (Biology).** September 19 at 7:30 p.m. in Lynn Wood Hall Auditorium. Loma Linda University's Bill Hayes, PhD, will present "A Sting to Die For: Venom Composition and Expenditure in Scorpions."

**White Oak Mountain Trail Race.** September 22 at 7:30 a.m. at the trail entrance near Southern's Outdoor Education Center. The university is a race sponsor for this event put on by Benchmark Physical Therapy to benefit local charities. Distances include a 1 mile walk as well as 4.5- and 9-mile race options. For more information, visit the [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#).

**Andrew Collins and Jameel McGee Convocation.** September 26 at 11 a.m. in Iles P.E. Center. Collins and McGee will share their [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#) as told in the book *Convicted: A Crooked Cop, an Innocent Man, and an Unlikely Journey of Forgiveness and Friendship*.

**Luis Martinez-Fernandez Convocation.** October 3 at 11 a.m. in Iles P.E. Center. In conjunction with Latin American Heritage month, Martinez-Fernandez, PhD will speak. He's an author and history professor from the University of Central Florida.

**423 Night Market.** October 5 at 8:30 p.m. in Collegedale Commons. The exciting showcase gives students the chance to shine outside the classroom by [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#) in a public venue. More than 1,500 students, employees, alumni, and community members attended the inaugural 423 Night in March 2019.

**Symphony Orchestra Concert.** October 6 at 7:30 p.m. in Collegedale Church of Seventh-day Adventists ([\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#)).

**Homecoming Weekend.** October 24-27. This year's theme is Foundations for the Future. Honor classes: 1939, '49, '59, '69, '74, '79, '89, '94, '99, and '09. Special features include a Die Meistersinger reunion and concert, Evangelistic Resource Center (ERC) and Soul-winning And Leadership Training (SALT) reunions, a Golden Anniversary Class of 1969 reunion, and a McKee Foods alumni employee reunion. Eric Bates, '99, DMin, will speak for the worship services. Visit [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#) for more information. [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#) or by calling 423.236.2829.

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We are excited to offer an experience for our alumni and friends called Southern Community Online. Create an account which will grant you access to our alumni directory, event calendar and registration, your giving history, and more.