

# HARDING

FALL 2024



100 ITEMS | 100 YEARS

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## 2 100 THINGS

We introduce you to 100 items to represent 100 years.

## 48 FOUNDERS DAY

The culmination of our yearlong Centennial Celebration

on the cover



President Clifton L. Ganus Jr. and Vice President for Finance Lott Tucker bury the time capsule in 1979.



Following in their fathers' footsteps, Charles Ganus and Stephen Tucker bury the new time capsule on Founders Day 2024. See the items included in the new time capsule that will be unearthed in 2074.

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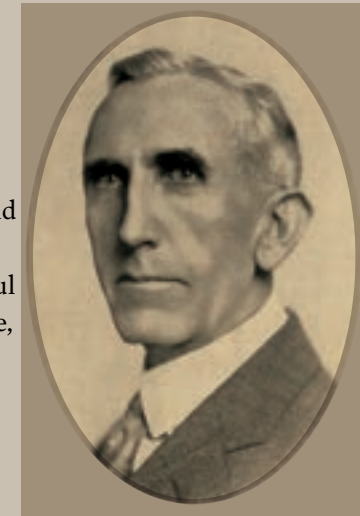
## 64 ACROSS TIME

A tribute to the work and life of Dr. Jeffrey T. Hopper



The goal of a Harding education has always been a pursuit of enlightened knowledge and discernment of truth. J.N. Armstrong led a faculty and staff who aimed to create active citizens and flourishing people with a strong allegiance to Christ. More than a century later, the University's mission remains steadfast.

“To guide a mind to think truly and wisely, to judge properly, reason correctly, is a masterful work. Were this the greatest work to be done in the rearing of a child, it would be enough to engage the undivided thinking and planning of fathers and mothers. But in this mind, even in the lowest type of man, it is something still more beautiful and wonderful. By some it is called conscience, and by others the moral sense. Call it what we may, it separates man from all other animals and fixes his destiny eternally different. Robbed of this power, man is no longer man. Through its abuse he gradually sinks so low that language reels to tell the story. The real and lasting advancement of every community, nation and people lies in the consciences of its people. So in our work our chief aim is to send every boy and girl home at night with a tenderer conscience, a greater respect for right and duty. To teach a boy how to live a hundred years and train him to be an intellectual giant without this conscience culture is to curse the world and him.



“Don't cry out that perfection is impossible. We have been attempting perfect spelling, perfect writing. We shall not make any worse mistake in attempting perfect men and women. What kind of man or woman ought we to try to train our child to be? One whose body is sound, the ready servant of his will, doing with ease and pleasure all the work it is capable of; one whose intellect is a clear, logical force, dependable for thinking and expressing; one whose memory is stored with a reasonable amount of the great and fundamental truths of nature and the laws of her operation, of the important accomplishments of mankind; one who is alert, lively, cheerful, hopeful, with passions trained to heel; one who is the servant of a tender conscience, who has learned to love beauty, whether of nature or of art, to hate all wildness, to respect, to assist and to work with his fellowman — this is the sort of product we teachers are expected to work for.”

J.N. Armstrong, circa 1912  
Quoted in L.C. Sears' *For Freedom*

# HARDING MAGAZINE

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1924  
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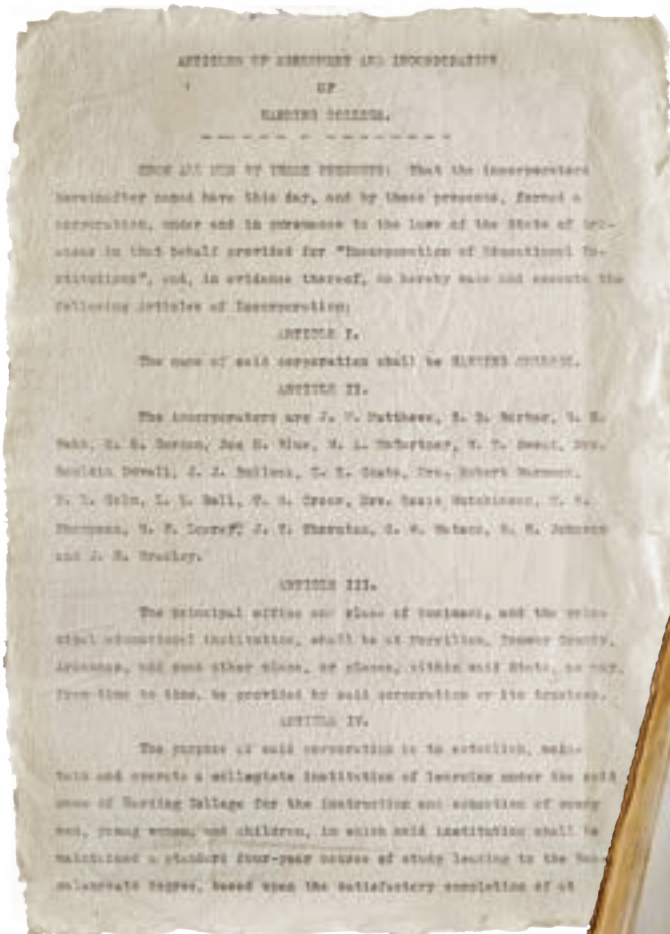
# THE FIRST 100 YEARS

## 100 ITEMS TO REPRESENT 100 YEARS OF MEMORIES

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One hundred years of Christian education is a milestone in the history of an institution. Our yearlong Centennial Celebration was full of special events honoring Harding's legacy and those who sacrificed to make it possible. In this special issue of *Harding*, we wanted to highlight campus life in a fresh way and thus have chosen **100 items to represent 100 years**. We recognize the impossibility of perfectly capturing every experience, but we hope that many of these objects will jog memories and create connections. From a can of Pattie Cobb green beans to hammocks on the front lawn, we present 100 things that make it great to be at Harding.





### HARDING COLLEGE CHARTER

Here on the first page of the official school charter, it is declared that Harding College be incorporated for the purpose of establishing, maintaining and operating a collegiate institution of learning. Beginning as a senior college in 1924, Harding was the result of a merger between Arkansas Christian College and Harper College and was located in Morrilton, Arkansas, until its move to Searcy in 1934. The college was named in memory of James A. Harding, co-founder and first president of Nashville Bible School (now Lipscomb University) in Nashville, Tennessee. A preacher, teacher and Christian educator, James A. Harding inspired his co-workers and associates with an enthusiasm for Christian education that remains a significant tradition at Harding.

### HARDING'S FAMILY BIBLE

James A. Harding was a renowned evangelist, often preaching multiple times each day from Canada to Florida and from New York to New Mexico, and traveling all that way on a horse! He also participated in biblical debates and started his own Christian newspaper, The Way. He and his friend, David Lipscomb, started Nashville Bible School, which is now Lipscomb University. Harding also served as president of Potter Bible College in Bowling Green, Kentucky. Here in the family Bible are records of his marriage to Pattie Cobb in 1878, and his daughter, Woodson's, marriage to Harding College's first president, J.N. Armstrong.



### THE ALMA MATER

Legend has it that early one morning in 1924, Florence Cathcart stepped out onto her porch with a cup of coffee in hand. As she gazed at Petit Jean Mountain, she listened to the sounds of Morrilton, Arkansas, coming to life, and the words of the alma mater came to her. The school song was later set to music by freshman L.O. Sanderson. Cathcart had arrived at Harding in its first year in Morrilton and later served as matron of Pattie Cobb Hall and dean of women. Upon the move to Searcy in 1934, the opening lines were updated to "Near the foothills of the Ozarks, midst of hill and plain."



### WOODSON HARDING COMRADES JERSEY

An important part of the Harding experience for many, social clubs provide opportunities to develop Christian friendships and make lifelong memories. This handmade jacket belonged to Louise Nicholas Ganus ('42) who was a member of the first social club — Woodson Harding Comrades — named for the school's first first lady in 1926. Ganus later served as first lady herself from 1965-1987.



### THE BULLETIN

Just a few weeks before the first day of classes in 1924, the Harding Bulletin was first published to announce the plan and expectations for this new Bible college in Morrilton, Arkansas. Articles highlighted the excellent facilities, location near Mt. Petit Jean and opportunities for fishing and hiking, as well as excellent faculty and curriculum and high standards for moral conduct. The Bulletin was published and mailed monthly to alumni and friends of the college for the next seven decades until the Harding Magazine debuted in 1993.



Harding Academy primary class 1924-25

## HARDING ACADEMY

A part of the Harding community since 1924, for many years the Academy had more students than the college. Sharing faculty, classroom and auditorium space, and all resources, the schools were fully integrated. As the schools continued to grow, the Academy became more independent. A new building was constructed across Park Avenue on the east side of the Searcy campus in 1980, and the Wildcat yearbook began its own publication in 1985. The school is still overseen by the Harding Board of Trustees, and its mission and values remain unchanged. Today, HA is known for its academic excellence, strong Christian community, and exceptional extracurricular and athletic programs.

Don't Miss These  
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## MORRILTON ARCH

A stone archway still stands at the Morrilton campus entrance, echoing the well-known Harding College arch on Searcy's front lawn. Handmade and dedicated by the class of 1933, the arch and accompanying wall showcase the students' dedication to and love for their school. They likely did not know theirs would be the last class to graduate in Morrilton, and this wall stands as a testament to their hopes for the future.

**WELCOME  
HARDING STUDENTS**

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YOUR STORE**

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Get Quality Workmanship and Prompt  
Attention at the Old Reliable—  
Ned Bower's Shoe Shop**

Meet All College Students at Ray's Place  
**Ray's Good Bar-B-Q**  
Snappy Service  
Phone 168 We Deliver

## THE MORRILTON CONNECTION

Harding's strong relationship with the city of Morrilton was an asset in the early years. Faculty, staff and students attended church, did their shopping and enjoyed restaurants and other entertainment in town, boosting the economy. In return, the citizens of Morrilton rallied together to raise \$10,000 to help keep the school open in 1928. Despite their help, the administration decided to move to Searcy to accommodate increasing enrollment and plan for the future. Many members of the Morrilton community were disappointed when the school moved to White County and even brought disputes over rights to the property, but ultimately the matters were resolved.

**Harding To Move  
To New Location**

**Fourteen Buildings Are  
Included in Plant To  
Be Purchased**

Harding College will open its doors for the 1928-29 session, September 24 in the plant recently acquired at Searcy, Arkansas. Due to the necessity of improvement in order to maintain the standing of a senior college, and the increase in the student body enlargement was imperative.

People who have inspected the plant have praised it very highly. J. F. Sewell, member of the Board of Trustees of Alabama Christian College, in speaking of the move said that not only would it afford the best facilities in the history of the school, but also would enable it to maintain its standing as a senior college.

The school at Searcy was formerly owned and operated by Gateway Women's College, which consolidated with Hendrix College, Conway.

On a campus of twenty-nine acres are fourteen buildings. The administration building was erected in 1926 and provides space for class rooms and administration rooms for the college department. It is fireproof, well lighted and ventilated and second to no administration in the state. It is well equipped and modern in every respect. The home economics, physics, and biological departments are exceptional. This building has been valued at one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars.

The girls dormitory is a brick and re-inforced concrete building that is fireproof. It is located in a dining hall large enough to accommodate the entire student body. It is said to be one of the finest in the south and has been valued at one hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

With a frontage of two hundred feet and one hundred and seven rooms, the boys dormitory will be remodeled to house the boys and al-

(Continued on Page Four)

1934

# AT HOME IN SEARCY

## MOVING FROM MORRILTON

In April 1934, the board of directors decided to move Harding College from its original Morrilton location to the vacant campus of Galloway Women's College in Searcy with its population of about 4,000. The property was valued at \$500,000, but Harding purchased it for \$75,000 to be paid over time. With 14 buildings on 29 acres, the move would enable growth in the student body and help maintain senior college status. A group of students visited the Searcy campus that spring and were warmly welcomed by the town's leaders and business owners. Shop windows were decorated in black and gold, and cars were offered for them to tour the town and surrounding area. Harding and Searcy have experienced significant growth in the last century, and look forward to a bright future together.

## GALLOWAY GATES

Students at Galloway Women's College, the original inhabitants of the Searcy campus, were welcomed by a set of decorative iron gates — their own version of the iconic Harding arches. After Harding's move to White County, the gates fell into disrepair, and Dr. George S. Benson gifted them to a concerned alumna, Willie Mae Walker Collison, who repaired and painted them. They sat in her garage for decades before being returned to Harding following her death in 2006. Today, they stand in the History House garden, a testament to the Galloway girls, their high standard of educational excellence and love for their alma mater.



## BURNING THE MORTGAGE

This iconic photo marks a significant moment — the day the mortgage on the Searcy campus was officially paid in full. The move to White County provided more space for the growing school, and two years later, President J.N. Armstrong stepped down to serve as dean of Bible, calling on Dr. George S. Benson to lead the college. His first order of business was paying off the \$68,000 still owed on the property. Through a major fundraising effort, the Lord provided. On Thanksgiving Day 1939, the community gathered on the front lawn for an impromptu bonfire. Benson handed Armstrong the mortgage papers to drop in the fire as students and faculty gathered to celebrate.



## PATTIE COBB HALL

One of the original buildings on the Searcy campus, Pattie Cobb Hall was named for James A. Harding's wife in recognition of her love for young people and her deep commitment to Christian education. Built in 1919 as part of Galloway Women's College, Pattie Cobb Hall is the oldest building on Harding's campus. It has a long history as housing for female students. The basement cafeteria was known for peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and canned green beans as well as fellowship and camaraderie until its closure in 1988.



Ma Chandler and Mrs. Bonnie Thornton

### STRAWBERRY JAM

↑ In the early years, Harding struggled financially, and by the time Dr. George S. Benson became president in 1936, his primary focus was on fundraising. He secured financial support in many creative ways including purchasing both Camp Tahkodah and Memphis radio station WHBQ-AM. In 1942, he coordinated with a local strawberry farmer to have students help pick his berries because they were spoiling in the fields for lack of workers. As payment, Harding kept half the berries, and the next day students helped Ma Chandler, the school's dietitian, cap them all. She froze some and also made jam to be added to biscuits in the cafeteria.



Evan Ulrey with Robert Street, manager of the Harding farm



### HARDING FARM

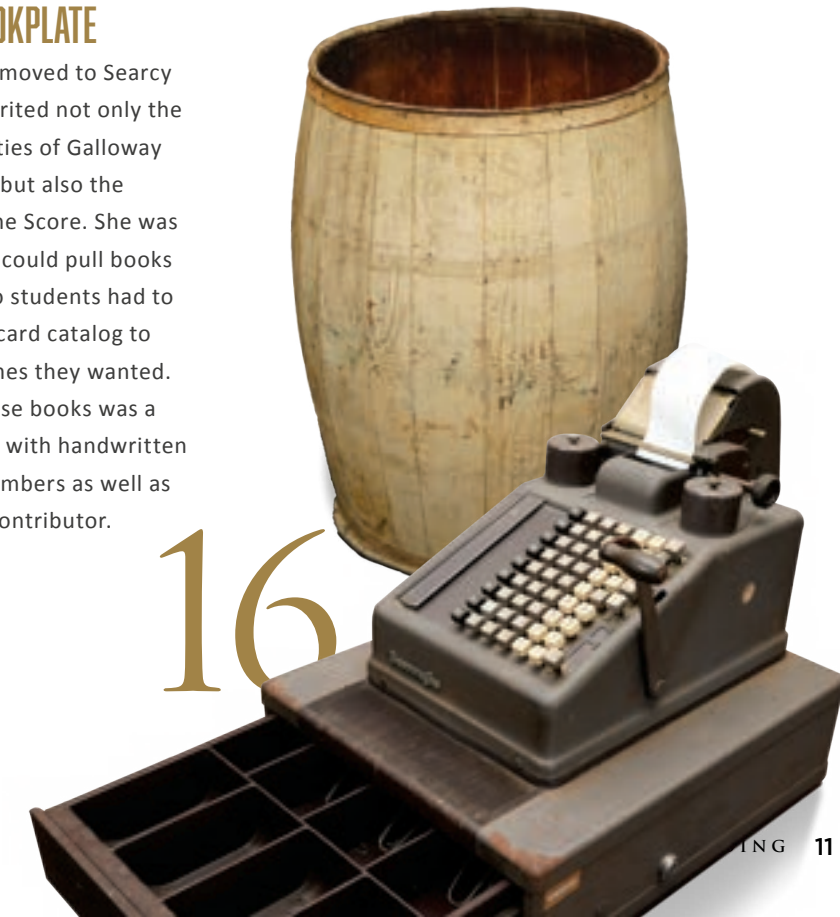
← Thanks to a generous donation from Sterling Morton, vice president of Morton Salt Corporation, Harding purchased 51 acres of land just half a mile from campus in early 1945. Morton Farm, as it was initially called, allowed students to earn their education through farm labor. They grew fruit and vegetables for cafeteria meals and supplied milk from the dairy. Robert Street managed the farm operations with the help of student workers, and over time it expanded to include more than 860 acres and produced pork, beef, milk, cotton and more than 14 varieties of fruits and vegetables to feed the growing student body.

### GALLOWAY BOOKPLATE

↑ When Harding moved to Searcy in 1934, it inherited not only the campus and facilities of Galloway Women's College but also the librarian, Catherine Score. She was the only one who could pull books off the shelves, so students had to look through the card catalog to request the volumes they wanted. Inside each of those books was a plate like this one with handwritten book and shelf numbers as well as the name of the contributor.

### LAUNDRY PLANT

↓ Another of the facilities Harding gained in the Galloway plant was a laundry that served both the school and the community. As a revenue source, it helped provide funds for the college and also provided jobs for students who needed help paying tuition. This barrel and cash register were used in the Harding laundry business in the late 1930s.





Pilot Burrel Dykes and President George S. Benson pose with the plane donated by friends of Harding in 1947.

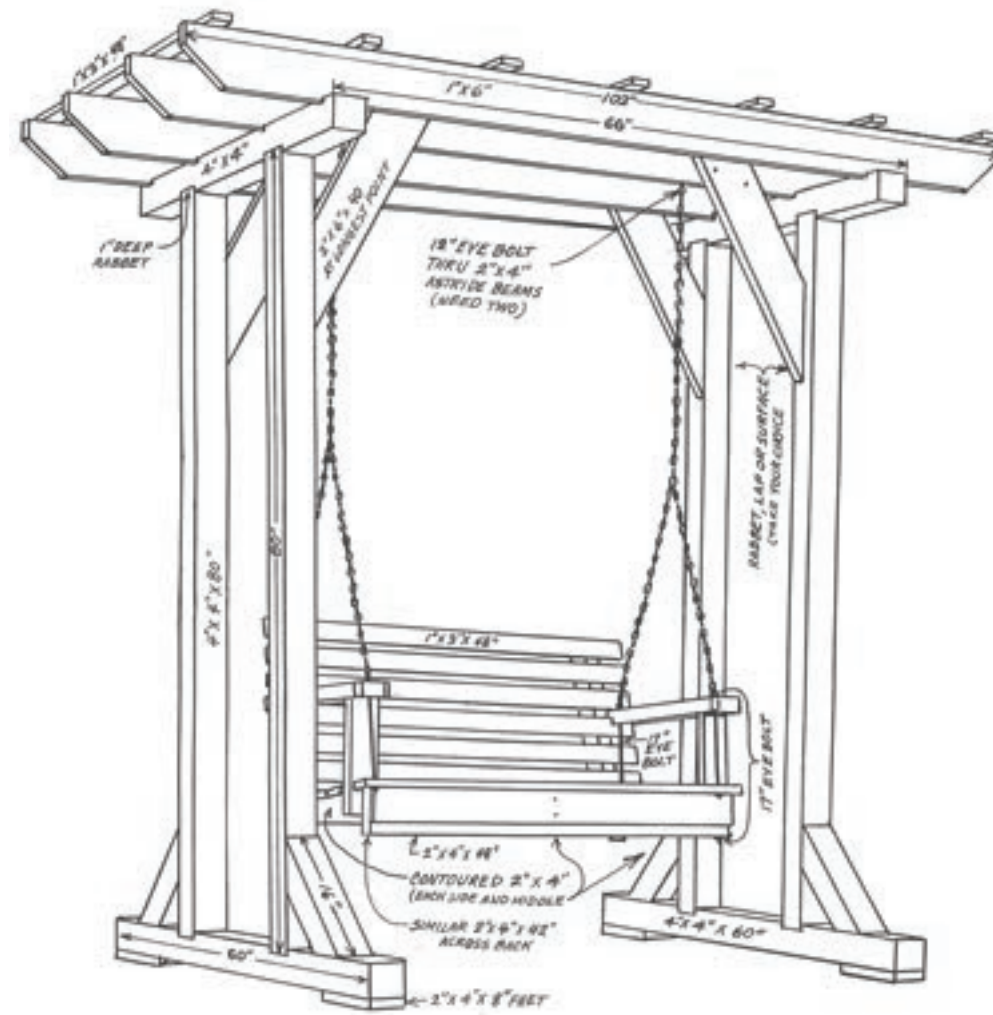
## HARDING BAND BEGINS

➔ The classic shako worn by marching band members represents the many instrumental ensembles assembled by the department of music over the last 70 years. The first band was organized in 1951 with members from both the College and the Academy led by G.E. Baggett. When he enrolled at Harding in 1946, the band was simply a group of students who owned instruments and gathered in the basement of Old Godden Hall. Upon earning his master's degree from the University of Missouri-Kansas City, he was invited to return to his alma mater to begin a program that he led for the next 42 years. Performing as a marching band during football season and transitioning to the stage for concerts the rest of the year, the group also inspired additional ensembles such as the pep band for basketball games and a fan favorite, holiday band that performs a variety of festive tunes during chapel each December.



## HARDING PLANE

⬆ In 1947, Dr. George S. Benson announced the donation of an aircraft to be used for college personnel transportation. Donated by friends of the school, the plane had previously been used in the Second World War as a U.S. Air Force cargo plane. Burrel Dykes, co-owner of Searcy Flying Service, became the first pilot. The two-tone blue aircraft was fully equipped for night flying and had a range of 1,000 miles and was upgraded with additional safety features including radio compass equipment for all-weather flying.



## THREE SWINGS AND A RING

➔ Legend has it that if you sit in the same Harding swing with the same person three times, an engagement ring is guaranteed. Scattered across the front lawn, these swings have always been great places for young couples to spend time together, especially when dates were restricted to dinner in the cafeteria and walks to church. Concerned about proper conduct, Presidents J.N. Armstrong and George S. Benson placed lights in front of every swing to help students avoid the very appearance of impropriety. Nevertheless, many alumni come back every year to sit in “their” swings where so many love stories begin. If you'd like to build one for your own front lawn, the plans are available at [harding.edu/alumni](http://harding.edu/alumni).

## PREACHER ROE'S DODGER JERSEY

➔ This Brooklyn Dodgers jersey was worn by Elwin “Preacher” Roe who pitched for the team from 1948-1954. As a Bison in the late 1930s, he was 9-5 with 217 strikeouts in 17 appearances. In 1951, he had the fourth-highest winning percentage by a left-hander in Major League Baseball history — .880 and a 22-3 record. He was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1979.



## GODDEN HALL

Built in 1889 and named for Galloway Women's College president, Dr. Charles Conway Godden, Old Godden Hall loomed large over the Searcy campus as Harding College made its home here in 1934. In those early days, it provided student housing, classrooms, offices, the library, music studios and an auditorium for both Academy and the College students. In 1951, the student body helped with the deconstruction process, and the bricks were repurposed to build both the Claude Rogers Lee Building and the Bell Tower. Many alumni remember stories President Clifton L. Ganus Jr. used to tell from his time as a student about chasing the bats out of Godden Hall with a tennis racket!



## YOU'VE GOT MAIL

In 1951 student mailboxes were part of the central hub for student life on campus. After chapel, students would rush over to the Ganus Student Center for camaraderie with their peers whether they were expecting mail or not. When it came time for social club bids, many freshmen would eagerly await invitations from the club of their choice. During pledge week, the potential new members would be required to sing in duos, trios, even quartets to large crowds in the mailroom as part of their initiation. Mailboxes were relocated in 1973 with the addition of the Hammon Student Center, and in 2000, the space was expanded so students could have their own mailbox numbers rather than sharing. Today checking mail in the stu while grabbing coffee and a chicken biscuit continues to be a rich part of the Harding experience.

## CAMP TAHKODAH

Located near Floral, Arkansas, Camp Tahkodah is the site of cherished memories for many in the Harding community. Purchased by Dr. George S. Benson, the camp was originally established to serve boys ages 9 to 17. Its core mission was to foster strong character, physical fitness and outdoor skills. Over the years, it has also been the host of music camps, faculty retreats and social club activities. In 2002, Harding University Tahkodah began offering third-world poverty simulations to prepare missionaries for fieldwork. Today, Camp Tahkodah continues to thrive as a summer camp with college students serving as counselors for hundreds of young people each year.

Dr. Ed Higginbotham stops for a chat with Dr. George S. Benson.



Jerry Woodward gives tennis tips to campers.

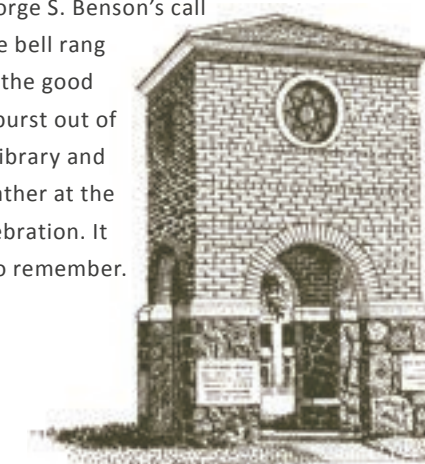


## FIRST HARDING FLAG

Officially adopted in 1954, the college flag design was selected by a faculty committee. Though the school's colors had not originally held particular meaning, it was determined that the black would represent mourning at the death of Christ and the gold would symbolize the purity of the Christian life. The cross — slanted to be seen from a long distance — represents the college's dedication to the ideals of Christian education. For years it flew along with the American flag at Alumni Field and was displayed on stage in the Administration Auditorium.

## BELL TOWER

A monument to Harding's first days in Searcy, the bell tower is made from Old Godden Hall bricks and houses the bell from one of its grand turrets. In March 1954, anticipation mounted as the entire Harding community waited to hear whether the College's proposal for accreditation by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools had officially been approved. Following Dr. George S. Benson's call from Chicago, the bell rang out to announce the good news. Everyone burst out of classrooms, the library and dormitories to gather at the bell tower in celebration. It was truly a day to remember.



## ALUMNI AWARDS

In 1959, the Harding University Alumni Association decided to recognize graduates who excel in their fields, church and community. The first recipient was L.O. Sanderson ('37) from Amarillo, Texas, who composed the music for Harding's alma mater. He was presented with a plaque during commencement in Spring 1960. As the alumni base has grown, representatives from each college are now honored, as well as distinguished alumni, outstanding young alumni and the recipients of the Botham Jean Inspiration Award. Awards are presented at the Black & Gold Banquet during Homecoming weekend.



# 27

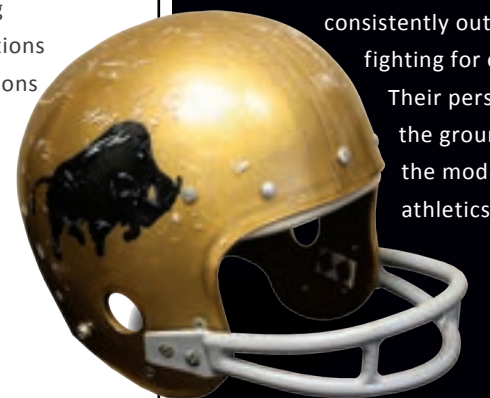
## BELLES & BEAUX

Organized by Dr. Kenneth Davis Jr. in 1959, the Belles & Beaux have long been one of many outstanding music ensembles. The group was originally formed for USO shows to provide entertainment for U.S. servicemen overseas. They toured the world for many years paving the way for other groups — including the Skyrockets and the Time of Day trio — whose more local performances for high school students aided in recruiting. Many alumni stories begin with “I heard about Harding when students performed at my school ...” and they were so impressed that residence halls were crowded for years.

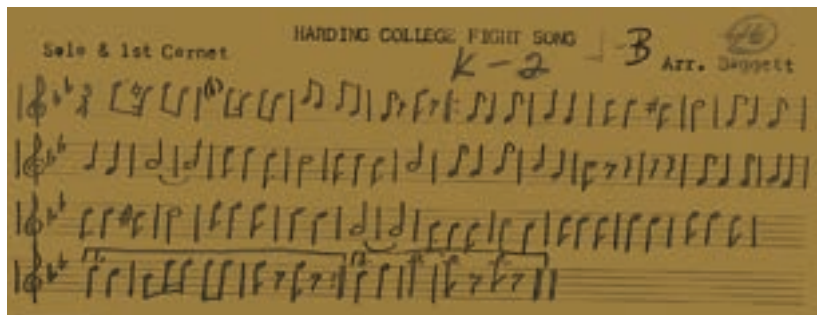


## LETTERMAN JACKET

In 1957, the board of trustees approved Harding’s post-war return to intercollegiate athletics. Harding joined the Arkansas Intercollegiate Conference in baseball, track and field, and basketball. Two years later, in 1959, the Bisons returned to the football field. This team included young men such as Jim Citty, Lathan Garnett, Jerry Mote and Billy Joe Thrasher, who would go on to be great supporters of the University and upstanding members of the Searcy community. The 34 young men on that squad battled teams who consistently out-sized them, fighting for every yard. Their persistence laid the groundwork for the modern era of athletics at Harding.



GO, HARDING BISON. GO BISON, FIGHT. FIGHT ON TO VICTORY. PROUD OF OUR NAME, WE’LL WIN THIS GAME FOR THE BLACK AND GOLD, YOU’LL SEE. FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT! GO HARDING BISON. GO BISON, FIGHT. FIGHT ON TO VICTORY. SURRENDER NEVER, FIGHT ONWARD EVER. PROUD OF OUR TEAM WE’LL BE.



## FIGHT SONG

One night in September 1962, band director G.E. Baggett got a call from Dean of Students Virgil Lawyer who sang a tune and asked if Baggett could write the music. The resulting arrangement was the Harding fight song, adapted from North Texas State University’s school song and with new words appropriate for Harding College. Today, most of the words have been forgotten, but some alumni will still remember.

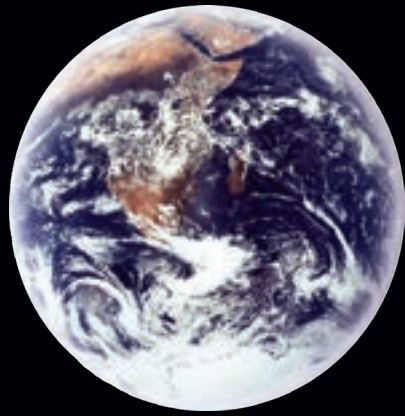
## “AT HARDING, WE SING.”

Music has been an integral part of the Harding experience since the beginning. In fact, “At Harding, we sing,” was considered an unofficial school motto for decades. From outstanding choral ensembles to chapel services to impromptu hymn sings at the lily pond, our alumni remember fondly the camaraderie experienced in acappella worship.



## FIRST HOMECOMING

Harding University celebrated its first traditional Homecoming in 1959, marking the return of intercollegiate football to the campus. Since then, it has become a cherished tradition of school spirit and unity. The first queen, Carolyn Barton Ayers, was honored during halftime of a football game, and the practice evolved over the years with queens being crowned at pep rallies and sometimes even in chapel, as was the case for 1990 queen Lori Griffin. Today, the Homecoming queen is selected from nominations made by social clubs, organizations and various groups from across campus to reflect the diversity of the Harding community.



## GLOBAL MISSIONS

▲ The school's first international mission was in 1963 when Dean L.C. Sears led a group of 30 students to Edinburgh, Scotland. They had spent nearly a year preparing to knock doors and lead Bible studies, and in five weeks, 45 Scots were baptized. In the 60 years since, thousands of students and their faculty mentors have traveled all over the world to serve and share the gospel with others.

## NASA RESEARCH

➡ In 1966, three faculty members submitted a proposal to NASA offering expertise and assistance in evaluating astronauts to prepare them for space flights. NASA approved this idea in 1967, and the grant was set for two years, but NASA was so impressed with the work that the project was extended for an additional 10 years. The research focused on discovering the best types of exercises to help astronauts stay fit during long space missions. Specifically, they aimed to improve astronauts' cardiovascular health and respiratory fitness, which are crucial for enduring the challenges of space travel.



## PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL

▲ First meeting on Aug. 10, 1965, the President's Development Council was created at the request of Dr. Clifton L. Ganus Jr., who had just become president June 3, 1965. Approved by the board of trustees, its purpose was to assist the chief executive in planning the growth and progress of Harding College. According to Ganus, it was "to be the eyes and ears of the College." Now known as the President's Council, the group still meets at Homecoming and Spring Sing and is committed to advancing the mission of the University.

## BOWLING BISONS

➡ In 2023, the Bison Football team were NCAA Division II National Champions, but they were not the first team to advance to a national stage. In 1970, the Harding bowling team won their sixth Arkansas Intercollegiate Conference championship, qualifying them for a national title. In May of that year, the keglers became the first AIC team to win a national title. Senior Charles Burt also won two individual national titles and was inducted into the NAIA Hall of Fame in 1977. Their success may have led to the addition of Campus Lanes, the bowling alley in the Hammon Student Center until renovations in 1999.

## DISTINGUISHED FACULTY

➡ At the recommendation of the faculty, the board of trustees approved three inaugural Distinguished Teacher Awards in 1966-67 to be presented with a \$1,000 prize at spring commencement each year. The first were awarded to Dr. Bob J. Gilliam, John H. and Marjorie Ryan, and Dr. Edward G. Sewell. Special recognition is given to those who have received the award three times, and only 16 faculty members have earned distinguished professor status. Staff achievement awards were added in 1974, the first two going to Gertrude Dykes and Edwina Pace. Now, faculty and staff awards are presented in chapel each fall as the entire Harding community celebrates the high standard of excellence.



## WOMEN FOR HARDING COOKBOOK

▼ Women for Harding (formerly Associated Women for Harding) has a long history of organizing successful fundraisers ranging from hat shows to email campaigns, each designed to support Harding and its mission. Among their most enduring initiatives is the beloved cookbook, first introduced in 1965. This collaborative effort featured a rich collection of recipes contributed by members from all chapters of the organization. The initial volume was met with great enthusiasm, leading to the release of a second volume in 1974 and a third edition in 1999. Over the years, these cookbooks have remained cherished items, often given as gifts and symbolizing the hospitality of so many women in the Harding community.





### A/C IN THE DORMS

In the 1960s, students learned to live in luxury! As part of the Decade of Development that included the construction of more than 10 buildings on campus, Keller Hall opened in 1966. It was the first dorm to have air conditioning, an essential for August in Arkansas. Female students got cooler in 1968 when Stevens Hall opened and they could be educated for eternity without the need for fans or window units.

### BENNY THE BISON

In the late 1960s, the football team entered the stadium accompanied by a real, live bison named Benny. In 1965, Dr. George S. Benson had traveled to Kansas to retrieve the three-month-old bison, but when Benny was placed in the trailer, he bucked and kicked the trailer apart, the first sign of the bison's stubborn antics. He came to live at the College's dairy farm, spending his days with the cows and calves. On game days, Benson would ride on horseback and lead Benny out onto the field, guiding him by a rope. As time passed, Benny grew too big and too mean to control, so he was placed in a horse trailer for football fans to see on their way into the stadium. Sadly, he never learned to cooperate, and President Clifton L. Ganus Jr. issued an ultimatum: "Behave or be barbecue." And Benny didn't behave. So his life was prematurely ended so no harm would come to his caretakers. "I got a quarter pound of him," said Ganus. "It was some of the most tender meat I've ever eaten."



### MRS. LOMAX'S CINNAMON ROLLS

In the 1960s and 1970s, Mrs. Lomax's cinnamon rolls were the morning staple for every student. Baked fresh each day at the College Inn, this special treat was a highlight of the Ganus Student Center. This hub of activity provided space for students to get to know each other while also checking their mailboxes and consuming hundreds of cups of coffee. In more recent years, the Hammon Student Center — which opened on the other side of campus in 1973 — has carried on the same tradition with the unmistakable silver wrapper of the Chick-fil-A chicken biscuit.

### HARDING ARCH

By the late 1970s, Harding's professional programs and academic offerings had expanded enough for the board of trustees to officially declare a transition to university status. On University Day, Aug. 27, 1979, a new arch was added to the east entrance to the front lawn, continuing the legacy of the Harding College arch on the west side, and a time capsule was buried south of the Olen Hendrix Building. It was opened on Founders Day 2024 to mark Harding's 100th birthday. Mark your calendars for 2074 when the new one will be opened!



Barbecue lunch is served during Lectureship 1959.

### LECTURESHIP

Lectureship — now called Inspire — is an annual tradition as old as Harding itself. For half of the first century, it took place during Thanksgiving week — complete with a barbecue lunch on the front lawn — as most students could not afford to travel home for the holiday. As time passed, students received a longer break, and many were not present for Lectureship. In 1973, it was moved earlier in the semester, and now it is traditionally held during the last week of September. Today, with a weeklong break for students and faculty in November,

campus is empty on Thanksgiving Day. Instead, the cafeteria serves the traditional fare, complete with turkey, dressing and pumpkin pie, the week before.



Inspire



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## AZALEAS

➔ Our beautiful campus is well known for azalea blooms, the result of a landscaping effort led by Virgil Lawyer, professor of history and dean of students. Thanks to donations from a Little Rock garden club, 290 bushes were planted in June 1977. Since then, hundreds of plants have been added, and their vibrant blooms are among the first signs of spring, along with hammocks, blankets and picnics on the front lawn.



## CHAPEL SEAT

➔ For 100 years, chapel has been a staple of the Harding experience. When Harding first came to Searcy, chapel was held in Godden Hall. In the 1970s, chapel was held in the Administration Auditorium until it moved to Benson Auditorium in 1980. Throughout the school year there are special events held that have become iconic on their own — like the Christmas concert band, muffin chapel and graduate send-off chapel. Regardless of location changes, the goal of chapel has remained constant; it is a place in which the whole student body, faculty and staff come together to worship God, connect as a community and grow spiritually.



## HILARITY

⬇ In the 1970s following long days of standing in line for registration, the Student Association sponsored Hilarity — an event designed to help students loosen up and have some fun as the academic year began. Freshman went head-to-head against upperclassmen in events such as three-legged races, water balloon throws, wheelbarrow races and pie-eating contests. As registration moved online, there was no longer a need for blowing off steam, but first week events still encourage fellowship and fun to kickoff the year. From music and a watermelon party on the front lawn to the 2024 First Friday Fair that included shopping and samples from local businesses, the details may change, but the festivities continue to bring students together.

## PANTS FOR WOMEN!

➔ In Spring 1977, a harsh February cold prompted President Clifton L. Ganus Jr. to temporarily allow women to wear pants to class and chapel. The Bison conducted a poll to gauge overall approval of the new policy. Among the students, 65% of men supported year-round pants for female students, while 80% of women preferred wearing dresses. Although female students viewed the pants policy as a temporary measure, they were eager to return to dresses when the weather warmed. Many students believed that attire reflected classroom performance and upheld high standards of distinction. By 1981, perspectives had shifted, and women were permitted to wear pants to both class and chapel year round.



photo from istock.com/Lalouetto



## STILL GREAT!

⬇ In 1974, Dr. Jimmy Carr's phrase "It's Great to Be at Harding" was featured on the first batch of buttons, and they quickly became a hit among students and faculty. Evolving into an iconic Harding tradition that has endured for decades, this phrase symbolizes not only Carr's legacy but also what makes Harding truly special: its warm and open-hearted community. Carr was recruited from Florida College to serve as assistant to President Clifton L. Ganus Jr., and what was meant as a brief stay turned into a lifelong commitment.

## IN THE BENSON

⬅ In Summer 1978, construction began on the Benson Auditorium which included building "Mount Benson" to raise the foundation above the water table. The major project saw several delays, and conversations about continually shifting plans often began with "Once we're in the Benson..." Faculty, staff and students signed the steel beam for the roof, representing their hopes for Harding's future, and watched for months as the structure grew around it. When the Fall 1979 schedule was made, they were counting on the auditorium — which also included classroom space — being ready for use, but bad weather extended the timeline. After 15 years of separate chapels because no single space could accommodate the student body, the entire Harding community finally assembled in the Benson on Jan. 10, 1980, marking the unofficial transition to full university status.



Harding in Greece director Daniel Adams's sketchbook

### STUDY ABROAD

◀ In 1980, the first study abroad location was launched in Florence, Italy, thanks to the efforts of Dr. Don Shackelford and President Clifton L. Ganus Jr. A program in Greece followed in 1993, and today, six semester-long programs are offered in Italy, Greece, Europe, Latin America, Zambia and Australasia. The opportunity to study abroad is a highlight of many students' college careers. These programs have enriched the academic and personal lives of students by allowing them to experience diverse cultures and see the beauty of God all over the world.



# PIED PIPERS 50

◀ "1, 2, 3, Once Upon a Time" In bright-colored jumpsuits, Pied Pipers, a children's theatre troupe, spreads the joy of theatre to children of all ages. They turn the pages on familiar tales, rhymes, poems, games and songs. The Pipers are improvisational, so you never see the same show twice. Imagination and crowd participation are key to their performances. The troupe travels overseas at the end of each school year to entertain students in Scotland.

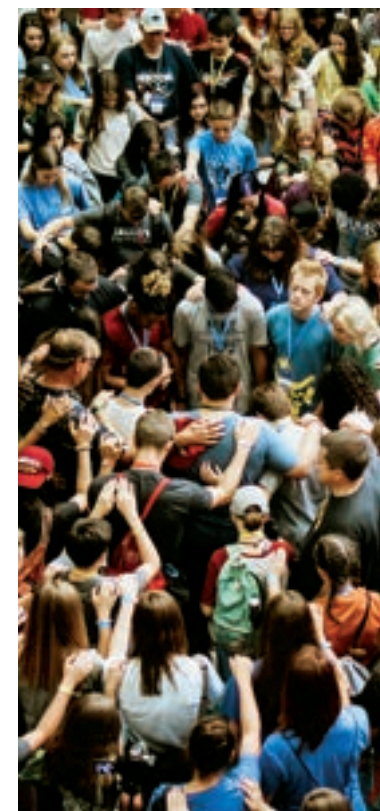
### THE PRESIDENTIAL MACE

◀ Made from a beam taken out of Godden Hall, the presidential mace was created for the inauguration ceremony of Dr. David B. Burks. Carved by biology professor Dr. Bill Rushton, the mace is handed off to each incoming president at his inauguration with his name carved in it.



### SNOW DAY

◀ It only took 13.5 inches of snowfall over 24 hours for Harding to see its first official snow day. On Thursday, Jan. 14, 1988, Dr. David B. Burks made the call to cancel classes, giving students the opportunity to sleep in, have snowball fights and go sledding. Until this point, the only previous weather-related dismissal of classes was following severe damage from a tornado in the early 1950s. While students were able to enjoy the day, the weather event wreaked havoc for the physical plant, which saw several frozen and burst pipes across campus.



### UPLIFTING

◀ In Summer 1985, Dr. Alan Isom, with the help of youth ministers from across the state, hosted a two-week camp for teenagers called Uplift. That first session included 200 campers, and now the camp has expanded to serve more than 1,500 students in two sessions each summer. Along with their youth groups, students attend Bible classes, enjoy fun activities, eat in the cafeteria, perform in a talent show and make friends that last a lifetime.

## THE LAST MEAL

➔ For 54 years, “Cobbers” were treated to all the green beans they could eat in Pattie Cobb cafeteria. Having served more than 35,400 meals since its opening in 1934, the facility was the social hub for generations. Divided into “saints and sinners” sides, the right side of the cafeteria was where the men in line were asked to lead prayer about every 15 minutes. The sinners, of course, sat on the left. From talent shows to Sunday night PB&Js, candlelit dinners and singing in lines that stretched to the Lily Pool, Pattie Cobb cafeteria offered a homey atmosphere until it served its final meal Jan. 31, 1988, where they most likely served green beans.

photo from istock.com/ncognet0



## THE INTERNET ARRIVES

➔ You’ve got ... fiber optic cables! While not fully developed into the worldwide web we know today, 1994 saw the initial introduction of the internet to campus as efforts to connect campus with fiber optic cables began. This new communication system would allow students to access the internet, library and the academic computer center, all from their dorm rooms, using the fiber optics system. Students were able to cut the cord in 2005 when wireless access was added in six buildings on campus and later expanded to cover the entire campus.

photo from istock.com/Collage\_Best

## MAY FETE

➔ A hallmark of campus life for decades, the last May Fete was held in 1990. Sponsored by Ju Go Ju social club, it began in 1936 as an end of school year celebration that included winding the May Pole and crowning a May Fete queen.



## STUDENT IMPACT

⬆ Stepping onto campus as a new student can feel overwhelming, and that’s exactly why a dedicated group of students launched Student Impact in 1986 — to create a welcoming, supportive environment right from the start. Freshmen and transfer students were placed into Energy Groups led by upperclassmen to learn the ins and outs of Harding life. Renamed Stampede in 2011, the orientation includes social and recreational activities to bond with their peers, campus tours, and opportunities to get to know classmates and roommates.



## FIRST HARDING MAGAZINE

⬆ The University’s transition from The Bulletin to *Harding* magazine marked a pivotal shift in the way the University shared its stories. In 1993, Harding embraced the idea of a magazine, driven by a desire to elevate its communication with alumni and friends. With support from President David B. Burks, the team transitioned to the new format. *Harding* has since become a staple in sharing the University’s journey.

# ca·ma·ra·de·rie

/kämə ‘ rädərē ’ kamə ‘ rädərē/

noun

high-spirited fellowship

## HONORS SYMPOSIUM

⬇ Honors Symposium, now a staple of summer activities on campus, hosted its inaugural class in Summer 1993. Forty-two students from 24 states were taught by Dr. Ray Muncy, Dr. Larry Long, Dr. Don England, Dr. Lambert Murray, Dr. Mike Plummer, Dr. David Tucker, Jan Fortner and Dr. Jeff Hopper, who was director of the program.



## CAMARADERIE

⬇ A word meaning high-spirited fellowship. Can you spell it? Many alumni will remember feeling the secondhand anxiety as President David B. Burks started the year by choosing a freshman to spell and define camaraderie in chapel. This sentiment runs deep in Harding culture and came to characterize Burks’ presidency. It was the title of his book, the theme for Spring Sing 2007 and the inspiration for a social media campaign called “Cart”araderie where the president visited with students around campus on a public safety golf cart.



# INSPIRED BY EPHESUS

## MCINTEER FOUNTAIN

One of the most memorable aspects of Harding University's McInteer Center is its fountain, a symbol of both faith and community. As president during the early 1990s, Dr. David B. Burks constructed the McInteer Center, designed to provide a state-of-the-art academic facility for the College of Bible and Ministry. The new building, located across from the Benson Auditorium, was accompanied by a plaza that was intended to be a central gathering place for the University.

As the project progressed, it became apparent that the McInteer plaza needed a focal point. Although budget constraints initially prevented the inclusion of any additions to the project, Burks felt a fountain was a necessity. Determined to integrate a meaningful feature into the design, he worked with now director of the architecture program Mike Steelman to create a fountain with the exact dimensions of a baptistery similar to those seen in Ephesus.

This baptistery-style fountain, with steps leading in and out on one side, was envisioned as both a striking architectural feature and a functional

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:19-20

space for baptisms. Thanks to additional funding, the fountain was completed and has since become a cherished element of the McInteer Center. Since its dedication in 1994, it has been the site of numerous baptisms, embodying Harding's commitment to its mission and serving as a reminder of the University's spiritual focus. The dedication ceremony, marked by a chorus performance and an inspiring speech from board member Jim Bill McInteer, highlighted the fountain's significance, making it a lasting symbol of the University's faith and community spirit.

## MIDNIGHT OIL

A key part of the Harding experience is creating your own small-town fun, whether it's gathering at favorite food spots or ice cream joints. In the past, popular choices included milkshakes from Frozen D's, late-night breakfast at Waffle House, or a slice at Pizza Pro. Today, favorites include Alaskan dumplings from Slader's and midnight runs to Sonic. Among the most popular stops is Midnight Oil Coffeehouse, a staple in the Searcy and Harding communities since 1997. Known as MO, it offers students a cozy environment to chat over coffee. The venue has also long supported local musicians and artists. Whether over a cup of coffee or a slice of pizza, students come together to strengthen friendships and enjoy their time at Harding.



## THE BUS

Anyone who has been on a chorus trip, athletic team or American Studies excursion at Harding has had the pleasure of riding on the Harding bus. It's changed and been updated a few times over the years, but the memories and experiences don't differ much. The Harding bus has served thousands of University and Academy students since the 1930s. Some early student travelers may remember bus driver Orville Coleman, but many will never forget Greg Rhodes' wide smile and friendly face that greeted them every time they stepped into the

bus. Known as "Uncle Greg", he became an honorary member of every group he chauffeured. He took his responsibilities as bus manager very seriously and tended to the beloved bus fondly named "Aunt Rena". Guilford Rice took the wheel in 1975 and served until the early 2000s, sporting his curly mustache and browline glasses. During that time, he drove more than one million miles through 48 states. In more recent years, Jeremy Sivia has joined this elite club and makes sure fun travel memories continue into the next century!

## THE CHICKEN BISCUIT

Since Fall 1997, Harding students have rushed from chapel to grab an iconic Chick-fil-A chicken biscuit before class. With no time for a balanced meal, students may stop by the market for candy, drinks or chips. Einstein's Bagels has healthier options, but there's no doubt millions of dollars in DCB have been spent on chicken biscuits over the past 25 years, and there's no sign of stopping.

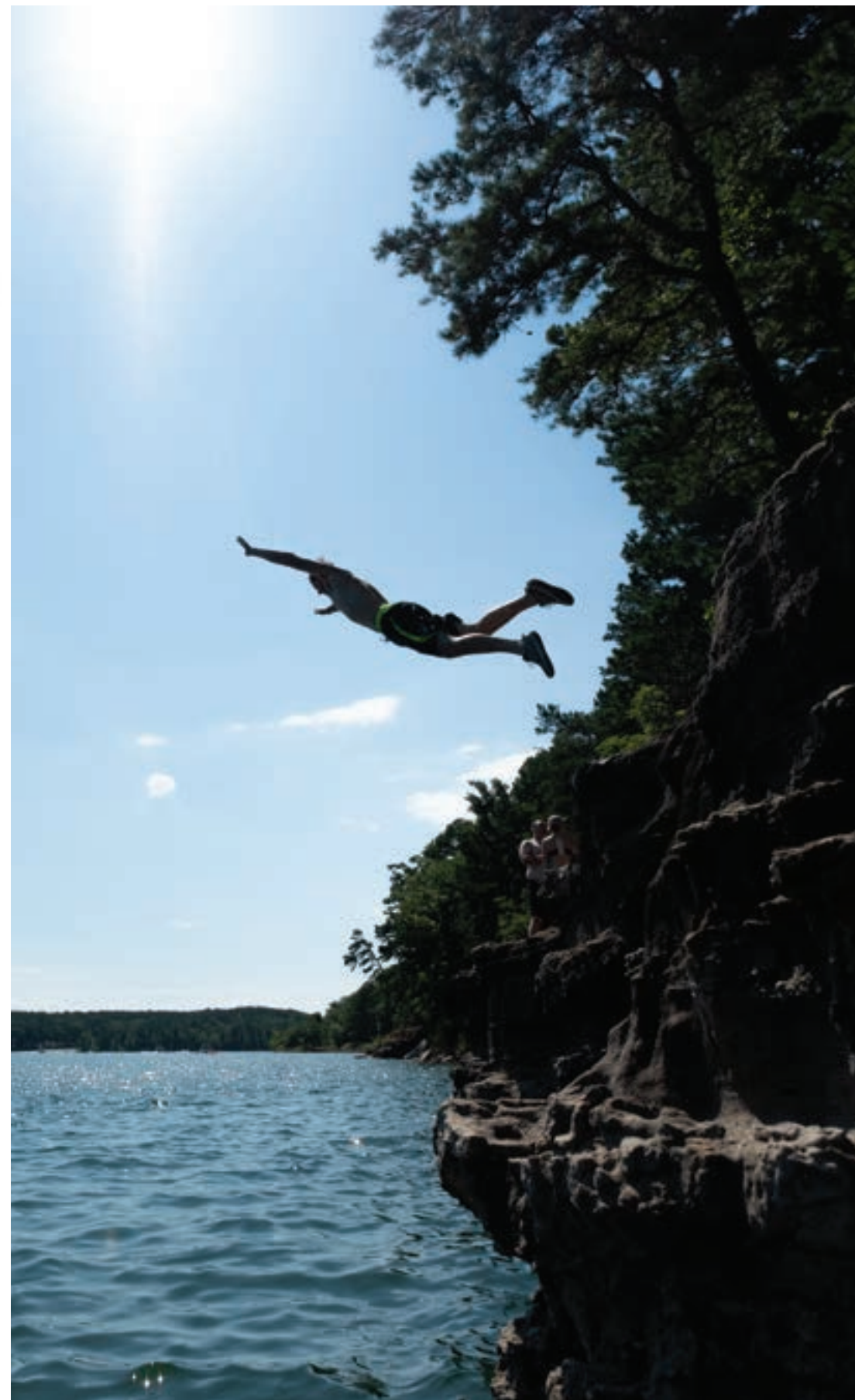


PHOTO BY ASHEL PARSONS

## HEBER SPRINGS

Just 29 miles away, the Heber Springs cliffs are the perfect place for students to visit. For many years, students have enjoyed visiting the cliffs at Heber. The cliffs are the ideal spot to take in the beautiful views of an Arkansas sunset, to have a picnic, to conquer your fears or fulfill your adrenaline quota by jumping into the lake below. Along with the cliffs, many enjoy water sports, hiking and camping on the amazing landscape Heber Springs provides.



## JOINING THE NCAA

In a significant move for collegiate athletics, Harding University officially joined the NCAA in 1997. This

movement from the NAIA marks a pivotal moment in the institution's sports history, as the University had previously been invited to join in 1990. The proposal was initially rejected by Dr. David B. Burks due to concerns over the financial implications and ethical considerations associated with such a transition.

The decision to join the NCAA came after considerable deliberation and a reassessment of the benefits and challenges involved. By becoming part of the NCAA, Harding embraced new opportunities for its athletic programs, enhancing its competitive edge and gaining national recognition.



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## LIVING WORLD RELIGIONS

← Launched in 1998, the Living World Religions course has offered decades of students more than an academic study — they are given a journey into the hearts and minds of people from all walks of life. Students step beyond textbooks and into places of worship, including those of the Baha’i, Islam, Hindu, Sikh, Jewish and Buddhist religions. Whether they traveled to Chicago, St. Louis or Dallas, students return citing the experience as a formative moment in their faith journey.



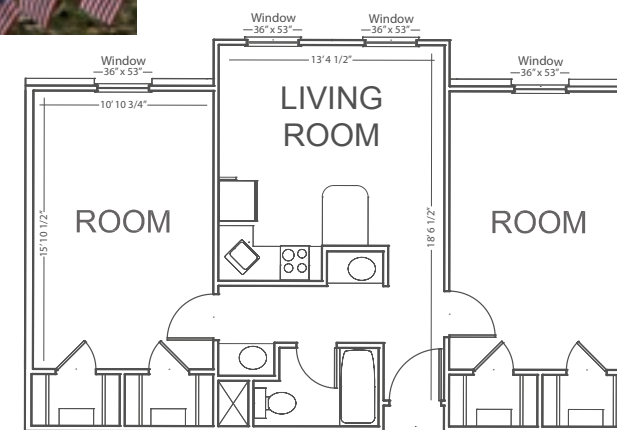
## NEVER FORGET

← While going through their standard Tuesday morning routine, Harding students found themselves frozen along with the rest of the nation as they learned about the attacks on the Twin Towers in New York and on the Pentagon in Washington D.C. For many, they first heard of the 9/11 terrorist attacks from Dr. David B. Burks in chapel. Some classes were canceled while others met and discussed the day’s events. Several members of the Harding community had family and friends associated with the World Trade Center or the Pentagon who

escaped injury. The attack grounded all air traffic in the nation, leading to a delay for students who were scheduled to leave the next day for Harding University in Florence. In the years since, the University has participated in a 9/11 flag display in commemoration of the victims of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. This memorial stretches across the front lawn to honor the 2,977 individuals who lost their lives on that day.

## BACK TO THE RHODES

↓ Having played in the Ganus Athletic Center since 1976, the basketball and volleyball teams moved back to the Rhodes Field House following a renovation in 1997. It was later enlarged in 2016 with more than 11,000 additional square feet of space that included a new practice court, locker rooms and a hospitality suite. It was also renamed the Rhodes-Reaves Field House in honor of board of trustees chairman Roy and Becky Reaves.



## WELL READ

← The Harding Read aimed to foster a sense of community through shared reading experiences. A selected book served as a common text for students and faculty, encouraging discussions both inside and outside the classroom. The first book chosen was Eric Metaxas’ *Amazing Grace: William Wilberforce and the Heroic Campaign to End Slavery*. In addition to on-campus events, the Harding Read also spread beyond Searcy with Facebook alumni discussion groups moderated by University faculty.

## APARTMENT DORM

↑ For many campus residents, their experience with apartment living (and burning their first attempt at solo cooking) comes in the form of the apartment-style dorms. Searcy Hall was the first apartment dorm, offering female students a kitchen and living space previously not available in the residence halls. Shores and Pryor halls followed with their open-air courtyards in the center of the complex, and men are able to get their own (perhaps burnt) taste of apartment life in Cone Hall.





# LIGHT IT UP

## HOLIDAY LIGHTS

Families from every generation eagerly anticipate this annual celebration, which marks the beginning of the holiday season. The lighting ceremony began in 2005 and started with around 60,000 lights. Today, the display features more than 500,000

dazzling bulbs. Students enjoy the festive ceremony, and the Searcy community, faculty, staff and students gather on the front lawn with friends while listening to their favorite Christmas carols, sipping hot chocolate and enjoying carriage rides around

campus. Each year, the lighting ceremony brings joy, camaraderie and community to all who attend. This tradition is beloved by many generations, and each year, the event continues to create cherished memories for all who attend.



## ULREY THEATER

➔ Theatre's history began with a 1925 production of "The Importance of Being Earnest." The Campus Players, one of Harding's oldest student organizations, was formed in 1926 and remains active today. In 1930, Dean of Women Woodson Harding Armstrong directed "The Spy," using ticket sales to repair the Morrilton Auditorium.

In 2007, construction began on the Ulrey Theatre, designed to house the theatre program, Little Theatre and the Searcy Summer Dinner Theatre. Dr. Evan Ulrey, the former chair of the communication department and building's namesake, expanded the theatre program by establishing a theatre major and launching the Searcy Summer Dinner Theatre.



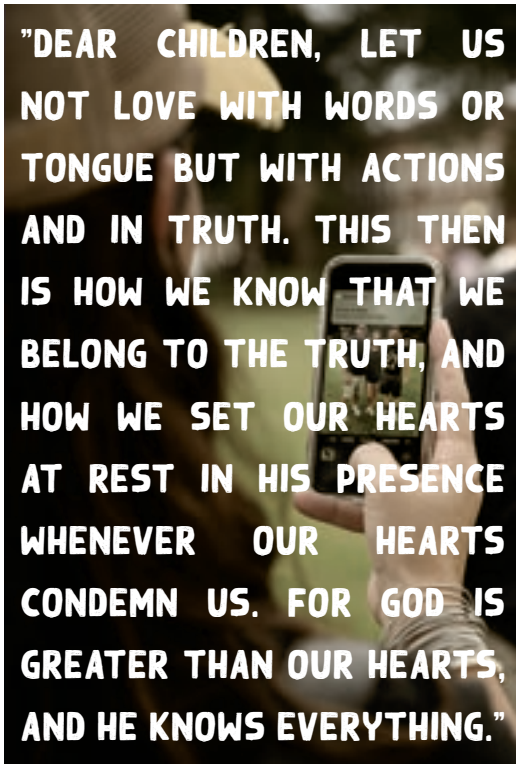
# 76

## HANGING AROUND

➔ Students upgraded their traditional front lawn blankets when hammocks surged in popularity across campus, offering a more relaxing and elevated way to enjoy their downtime. As more students embraced the trend, "hanging out" took on a whole new meaning, transforming the landscape and creating a laid-back, social atmosphere in the fresh air.

## PAVING THE WAY

➔ Expanding on previous brick walkways near Benson Auditorium and the American Studies Building, alumni and friends were given the opportunity to be part of the University's history through the Paving the Way campaign in 2009. Two new brick-paved walkways were created around the Kenneth Davis Fountain and the Bell Tower. This project allowed participants to leave a lasting mark on the campus while contributing to the University's mission.



## FIRST FACEBOOK POST

➔ In October 2008, Harding University made its first step into the digital world of social media with a simple image. The photo, a banner with the words "Engaging Heart and Mind," marked Harding's initial step onto Facebook — a platform that would soon become a crucial part of how the University connects with its community.

By Sept. 20, 2010, Harding was using its presence to share more than just images and updates. 1 John 3:18-20, was the first Scripture posted. By Aug. 22, 2011, Harding began sharing daily Bible verses with its growing online audience, and the tradition continues today.



PHOTO BY MIKE JAMES

## THEY DID

➔ When the American Heritage Building was renovated in 2006, it picked up where "three swings and a ring" left off by adding Cone Chapel to be used for weddings and other campus events. The first couple to tie the knot in the chapel was Thomas ('05) and Sara Matheny ('03) Ritchie. With floor-to-ceiling windows on three sides, the chapel overlooks the front lawn providing a look back at where it all began for many couples.

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## PHONE HOME

➔ Once a vital link between students and home, landlines were phased out of dorms in 2009. In the past, students had to share a single phone with their entire dorm floor, often leading to missed messages and disruptions. By the late '80s, in-room dorm phones were more common and still central to student life. As students began to rely almost entirely on their cell phones for communication, the University decided to cut the landline cord.



## SIGNING THE BEAM

➔ The construction of the Swaid Center for Health Sciences highlighted the institution's commitment to expanding its health programs. Home to the College of Nursing and department of communication sciences and disorders program, the building is more than just infrastructure; it showcases Harding's mission to provide top-tier health sciences education, benefiting both the University and the surrounding community.



## THE BURKSYS

➔ What do you get when you combine a student talent competition with an awards show and a bobblehead? The Burksys, of course. With categories honoring bands, music videos and production teams, students were able to vote for their favorites, watch performances and even walk the red carpet.



## CREATING THE GAC

➔ On July 13, 2010, a historic agreement was reached as nine universities — including Harding — decided to form a new NCAA Division II athletic conference. The University of Arkansas at Monticello, Arkansas Tech University, East Central University, Henderson State University, Ouachita Baptist University, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Southern Arkansas University and Southwestern Oklahoma State University joined Harding in this pivotal move, leaving the Gulf South Conference and Lone Star Conference upon their departure.

## MOUNT RUSHMORE: THE HARDING VERSION

➔ In 2013 a Mount Rushmore-style foam sculpture was erected in the center on the front lawn. This sculpture depicted all five Harding University presidents to date. Alumni, faculty, staff and the student body enjoyed taking pictures with their favorite presidents. One crisp morning on the way to chapel, students found the sculpture adorned with white facial hair. Dr. Clifton L. Ganus Jr. with a fu manchu, Dr. David B. Burks with a handlebar mustache and McLarty with a goatee.

# ROWDIES



## YOU CAN'T DO THAT!

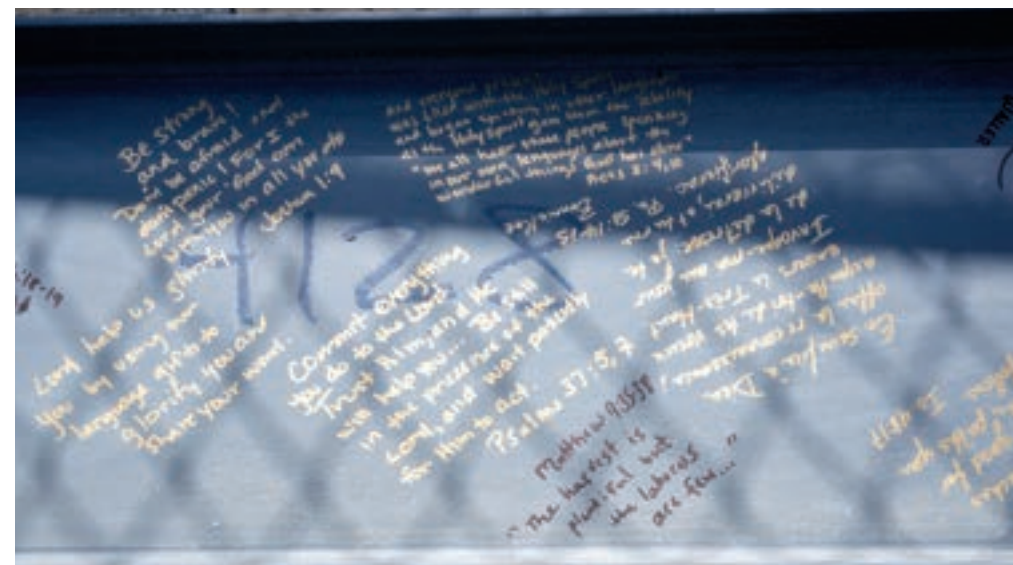
The Rhodes Rowdies, the spirited student fan base of Harding basketball, was established to bolster school spirit. The Rowdies created a loud and lively atmosphere in the Rhodes Field House, often sporting Kiss-level face paint or leading the chant of "You can't do that!" in response to an opposing team's foul. Their creativity in cheering and support has been recognized beyond campus as they led Harding to be named "The Best Road Trip Destination" for college basketball in 2013.

PHOTO BY JAMES DOBSON



## KNIGHTS SWEEP SPRING SING

➡ “The Show Heard ‘Round the World” was an American Revolution themed Spring Sing show performed by Knights men's social club. This is the first Spring Sing show in history to sweep first place in every category, winning the John H. Ryan Sweepstakes Award. It even won the spirit award voted on by show participants. Best known for their off-stage antics, Knights found themselves celebrated for their choreography under the leadership of theatre major and show director Harrison Waldron ('15). To this day the “The Show Heard ‘Round the World” is better known as “The Sweep Heard ‘Round the World.”



## BUILDING BLESSINGS

⬆️ The Holland Waller Center was blessed on Nov. 12, 2022, with a beam signing ceremony. Members of the Harding community inscribed their names and Bible verses on the building's beams as prayers of blessing for those who would teach and study there. The building is infused with inspiration from Romans 12:1-2, which calls for living a life of spiritual worship and transformation. The Scripture reflects the building's purpose—to foster an environment of growth, renewal and dedication in the academic and spiritual lives of its occupants.



Artist's rendering of new HST library on Searcy's campus

## TURNING TASSELS

⬅️ Commencement ceremonies mark the culmination of years of hard work, closing one chapter of a student's Harding experience and opening the first chapter of their future careers. Commencement ceremonies have been held in Godden Hall, Administration Auditorium, Benson Auditorium and the Ganus Activities Center. During 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Harding briefly shifted to virtual ceremonies. Wherever the ceremonies are held, one thing remains; equipped with a strong academic foundation and guided by Christian principles, graduates turn their tassels prepared to enter various fields and make a positive impact in their communities and professions.

## IN THIS TOGETHER

⬇️ On March 6, 2020, Harding students were preparing for spring break. Just days later, the world began to change rapidly due to COVID-19. Students were instructed not to return to campus, as on-campus classes transitioned to virtual for the rest of the semester. Events like Spring Sing and commencement were postponed. When students returned for Fall 2020, it was to plexiglass dividers, social distancing, masks and even a virtual Homecoming.

As board member and physician Mike Justus stated, “A touchless campus does not keep you from touching the hearts and minds of your students.” Despite all the unprecedented changes, Harding continued to care for its students.



## HST MOVES

⬅️ In 1952, Harding launched a graduate program in theology based in Memphis, Tennessee. The L.M. Graves Memorial Library was built on campus in 1964, with upgrades in 1978 and 2006. The library houses 150,000 print volumes, 25,000 bound periodicals, numerous digital resources, and the Meredith Restoration History Archive. After careful consideration, Harding School of Theology moved to the Searcy campus in Summer 2024. The library is scheduled to relocate to Searcy by Fall 2025. As one of the crowning jewels of HST, the library will continue to serve students for generations to come.



### JUNETEENTH

In a gathering on the front lawn June 19, 2020, students, faculty and staff, while physically distancing, honored Juneteenth's history and meaning for the first time on Harding's campus. The celebration became an annual event, commemorated with singing, prayer, Black literature and encouragement.

### PARADES RETURN

In 2021, the University revived its traditional parade to celebrate the first Homecoming after the pandemic, marking a return to a cherished event. Historically, Homecoming parades featured decorated floats, marching bands and student groups, creating a vibrant atmosphere. The parade had been a staple of Homecoming festivities for decades, drawing alumni, students and the Searcy community together. However, the pandemic forced the cancellation of many in-person events in 2020. The 2021 parade brought back the excitement and nostalgia of past years, as colorful floats and cheering crowds once again filled the streets.



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### CRUISING

As the University has grown, so has its students' modes of transportation. Whether opting to walk from class to class or cruising down campus paths on a skateboard or bike, students navigate campus while staying active.



### SWIM TEAM

The swimming and diving team made a splash as it returned as a club sport in 2020. The original program, which ended in 1988, included a remarkable championship win in 1976 under head coach Arnold Pylkas.

### TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE

Searcy found itself in the path of totality for the 2024 Total Solar Eclipse. Events included a cosmic cookout with food, entertainment and a NASA-themed bounce house. First Security Stadium served as the eclipse viewing site where attendees received eclipse glasses and watched as the sky grew dim, eventually dissolving into complete darkness. The eclipse's totality lasted from 1:52 p.m. until 1:55 p.m. The celebrations also featured lectures by former NASA chaplain Mike O'Neal and astronaut Jerry Linenger. The Harding Chorus concluded the festivities with Music of the Spheres accompanied by the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra.



### 1924 EXPERIENCE

To celebrate our 100th year, the Clifton L. Ganus Department of History and Political Science hosted the 1924 Experience, a year-long series of events that embodied the lifestyle, culture and atmosphere of the year 1924. This series included notable guest lecturers, musical performances and exhibits people could attend to fully understand the era in which Harding was founded. Also a part of the experience, the Clifton L. Ganus Jr. Distinguished Chair of History and Political Science funded a trip around the



world for two randomly-selected students and a staff member. The 1924 Experience culminated with a "party of the century," where faculty, staff and students dressed in 1924 attire and enjoyed 1920s-style entertainment and dining.





## FLAVOR OF HARDING

➡ In celebration of the University's 100th birthday, Bison Hospitality teamed up with Searcy staple Yarnell's to develop a Harding themed ice cream flavor. Students were invited to submit names and descriptions of the flavor, with Dr. Mike Williams voting on the final version. The result? Bison Tracks. The flavor features chocolate ice cream, brownie bits and caramel ribbons.



## ARAMARK RETURNS

➡ Having served students for decades prior, Aramark made its return to campus in Spring 2024. With its return also came a new feature: unlimited meal exchanges. To prove to the student body that Aramark was committed to their satisfaction, students can use a cafeteria "swipe" at any of the retail locations on campus, such as Chick-fil-A, Panda Express and Tacker's Shake Shack. Aramark's return also facilitated a redesign of the University Dining Hall and revitalized menu.

## NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

➡ Bison football's national championship-winning season could be defined by a number of things: an undefeated season (15-0), NCAA record for most rushing yards in a season (6,160), or a national championship ring. But to ask the team, it could only be summed up one way: brotherhood. This unity, shaped on the field and strengthened by shared history, echoed the dedication and perseverance of those who built the program's foundation.



## "... OR FREE WITH THE PASS!"

➡ As a way to make the most of the on-campus entertainment, the Campus Activities Board introduced The Pass, allowing students to pay a flat rate each semester for unlimited access to campus movies and events. When CAB transitioned to Campus Life, The Pass was revamped into The Passport. Now students can collect stamps by attending sporting events and other campus activities. These stamps earn entries into prize drawings held at the end of the school year, adding an extra layer of excitement and engagement to campus life.

## INTRAMURALS

➡ Intramural sports are a cornerstone of student life, providing a fun and inclusive way for students to stay active and build lasting friendships. Offering a wide range of activities — from basketball and soccer to Ultimate Frisbee and volleyball — intramurals provide a way to build community and live out the University's mission through play and fellowship.



AND FINALLY ...

# 100

## SQUIRREL!

The Harding experience in a nutshell, the front lawn squirrels have become the unofficial mascot of the University. Known for their, well, squirrely antics and larger than average size, the squirrels have been caricatured, memorialized as stuffed animals, and nearly domesticated from a steady diet of Chick-fil-A swiped from unsuspecting students.

# FOUNDERS DAY

We celebrated Founders Day 2024 – the culmination of our yearlong Centennial Celebration – by digging up the University Day time capsule from 1979 and burying a new one to be opened in 2074. It was a wonderful way to honor the legacy of our founders and countless others who established and fortified this distinctly Christian institution. The following pages feature moments from the days celebration, as well as items from both time capsules.



## CHAPEL

Students, faculty, staff and alumni gathered for chapel as the 1979 time capsule was opened live. University archivist Hannah Wood displayed several items including one of Dr. Joe Pryor's iconic bowties.



## BISON FOOTBALL SEASON OPENER

Founders Day 2024 culminated in the Bison football season opener as the 2023 NCAA Division II national champions took the field against Southern Nazarene University. Following a 59-0 win, a fireworks display at First Security Stadium was the grand finale of a yearlong Centennial Celebration.



## PICNIC LUNCH

The University community gathered for a picnic lunch on the front lawn including performances by the Belles & Beaux and Mitch Washer ('84) and friends who presented an original song about a Harding swing.



Scan to view the "Happy Birthday, Harding!" video.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY, HARDING!

The main event of the day was a big bash on the front lawn complete with the Thundering Herd marching band, Bison cheerleaders and a surprise appearance by Buff the Bison who jumped out of a giant birthday cake. The new time capsule was then buried at the south end of the Olen Hendrix building to be opened in 2074.





## 1979 TIME CAPSULE INCLUDES:

- Signatures and pictures of everyone present that day
- An aerial photo of the campus
- One of Dr. Joe Pryor's bow ties
- A 50th anniversary medallion
- The 1979 catalog
- The official University proclamation
- A 1979 *Pett Jean*
- Documents donated by the president's secretary
- A lock of hair from Dr. Jimmy Carr
- Aug. 28, 1979, edition of the Daily Citizen
- 50th anniversary tabloid
- 1979 almanac
- August and September 1979 bulletins
- 1978 Little Black Book
- Bisons bumper sticker
- Policies and procedures brochure
- Harding University bookmark
- Harding Graduate School of Religion pamphlet
- 1979 Lectureship program
- Harding Spectrum brochure
- School of Business brochure
- Football press guide for 1979
- A Bible
- 1979 student handbook
- Polaroid snapshots taken immediately before the capsule was sealed

Scan to explore 1979 time capsule items.





# THE BIG QUESTIONS

## A HARDING EXPERIENCE FOR THE NEXT CENTURY

By DR. HEATH CARPENTER  
ASSISTANT DEAN OF ACADEMIC INNOVATION  
AND COLLABORATION IN THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

In a centennial year of reflection, we also look toward our next 100 years. Our first step into the future is to anchor our academic experience in the pursuit of life's biggest questions.

By asking these fundamental questions in all aspects of campus life, we create a mosaic in which all disciplines and pockets of influence contribute nuanced approaches to these conversations. By the end of a typical four-year student experience, we have collaborated on something beautiful. Since these questions are the kind we spend our whole lives pursuing, students leave with a continued desire to explore the mysteries of what it means to live a good life grounded in the teachings of Christ.

We have a solid foundation of academic excellence both in the liberal arts and in our more than 110 majors as well as an unmistakable Harding experience outside the classroom. Embracing a questions-based, purpose-driven approach helps us craft a common story with shared language. Some of the best schools in the country are rediscovering what we at Harding already know to be true. Notre Dame has a popular course titled "God and the Good Life" taken by more than 80% of their students. Harvard launched a program on human flourishing, and Yale has a Center for Faith and Culture. Christian universities such as Hillsdale and Wheaton are doing the same.

At the same time, many schools are leaning heavily into political polarization. A new Pew Center Research survey shows that "only half of American adults think that colleges and universities are having a positive effect on the country." Their research indicates that opinions fall along divided political lines. Other universities are abandoning a purpose-driven approach for a professional skills model.

A recent headline from "Inside Higher Ed" announced that Amazon and Google are encouraging students to skip college and go straight to work for them. Yet the most recent Gallup State of the Global Workforce Report found that 77% of workers are either "not engaged" or "actively disengaged" from their work. It's not surprising that a generation of students who have been told education is merely a means to an end would experience higher rates of burnout and unhappiness in their jobs.

Fortunately, the best schools are following a different trend. Recently IBM's AI chief advised that "people who want a tech job in 2024 [should] learn the language and creative thinking skills you get with the liberal arts." Furthermore, Google's self-study Project Oxygen and Project Aristotle recently named communication and listening skills, empathy, critical thinking, and problem solving as the greatest characteristics of success.

The world needs wise people. It needs excellent professionals who seek to live out the teachings of Christ. This is a pivotal moment for higher education, and The Big Questions initiative helps us recommit to our core, Christ-centered values while pursuing innovative classroom, campus and alumni experiences. People of character who can think and communicate well are positioned to significantly affect the global marketplace. At Harding, we're preparing for a second century that will change the world.

WHO IS GOD?

WHO ARE WE?

WHAT MATTERS?

HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT WE KNOW?

WHAT ARE OUR RESPONSIBILITIES?

SCAN TO LEARN MORE.





**Avery Nathaniel Martin**, 21, of Tulsa, Oklahoma, died Oct. 6. He lived a life filled with adventure, compassion, dedication and love. He was a Bible and family ministry major at Harding whose love for golf, playing the guitar, Oklahoma State Football and fishing was only surpassed by his love for travel. He and his fiancée, Mckensey Davis, enjoyed visiting Australia, New Zealand, Japan and Thailand. His compassionate nature and dedication to serving others shone brightly in his passion for ministering to teens and young adults. He is survived by parents, Nate and Lori; two brothers, Addison and Asher; a fiancée, Mckensey Davis; grandparents Mike and Carol Martin and Peggy and Jerry Griggs, and Steve and Elaine Jones.



## CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

On Oct. 10, the Harding community gathered to honor the life of Avery Martin with a candlelight service on the Benson steps. Martin, a senior Bible and family ministry major from Tulsa, Oklahoma, died in a car accident Oct. 6. Bradley Cole, an integrated marketing communication major from Richardson, Texas; Lloyd Stenglein, an international business major from Apache Junction, Arizona; and Ben Shappard, an interdisciplinary studies major from Boise, Idaho, were injured in the accident.

1977

Dr. **William H. Searcy** was appointed to the North Carolina State Board of Examiners of Fee-Based Practicing Pastoral Counselors on July 1. He will serve in this role from Oct. 1, 2024, to Sept. 28, 2028. A missionary, professor and international psychotherapist, Searcy has served in 80 countries on all seven continents. He has also been on the referral list of counselors for many international embassies and the United Nations. He currently has offices at Brooks Avenue Church of Christ in Raleigh, North Carolina and Westside Church of Christ in Rocky Mount, North Carolina.

1986

**Emily Waites Gifford** has been a real estate agent for the last eight years. She is CEO and owner of Emily Gifford Homes. She and her husband, **Michael** ('82), live in the Atlanta area and have two adult children.

1991

**Sandi Wallace** was named Outstanding Ally for 2023 by Circles USA, a nationwide poverty alleviation nonprofit. She volunteers with Circles West Orange in Winter Garden, Florida. She is a senior manager for business integration and optimization at The Walt Disney Co. She and her husband, Michael, attend West Orange Church of Christ. Michael is a systems analyst at The Walt Disney Co., and they have been married for 33 years.

1993

Dr. **Amy Shollenbarger** was promoted to professor at Arkansas State University. She earned a master's degree in communication disorders from ASU and a doctorate through the Arkansas Consortium of Communication Sciences and Disorders at University of Arkansas in Little Rock. She has 16 years of experience as a speech-language pathologist in the public school setting and joined the faculty at ASU in 2011. She and her husband, Keith, live in Paragould, Arkansas.

2000

**Garret Myhan**, CRNA, NSPM-C, completed the Advanced Non-Surgical Pain Management Fellowship at Texas Christian University in August 2023. He is one of only 208 board certified pain management certified registered nurse anesthetists in the United States. Currently in private practice in Fayetteville, Arkansas, he also is director of pain management at Cedar County Memorial Hospital in El Dorado Springs, Missouri.

2002

**Sam** (MBA '12) and **Hannah Dixon Wood** announce the birth of a son, Peter Wesley, on April 30.

2013

**Joshua Jackson** has joined Hosto & Buchan Law Firm as an associate attorney in their Little Rock, Arkansas, offices. After graduating from Harding, he earned his law degree from the University of Arkansas. In this new role, he handles commercial litigation and other matters for the regional law firm, which manages credit and collections matters in multiple states.

2021

**Audrey Jackson** has been appointed managing editor for the Christian Chronicle. She joined the Christian Chronicle as an associate editor in August 2021. In her three years, she has traveled around the world to pursue interesting and important stories. In her new position, she plays a key role in overseeing production of the monthly print edition.

## PASSAGES

**Doris Coward Wheeler** ('52), 93, of Searcy, died June 23. While at Harding, she was a member of A Capella Chorus. She served as director of alumni and parent relations until her retirement in 1996. She volunteered for Mothers Against Drunk Driving and was a member of the Republican Party of White County. She was preceded in death by husbands, **Bo Coward** ('58) and Pete Wheeler; siblings, Wanda Hart and Bob McInturff; and a grandson, Jeremy

Hogue. She is survived by two daughters, **Cherri Hogue** ('79) and **Denise Winter** ('83); a sister, Cindy McInturff; four grandchildren; three step-children; and 11 great-grandchildren.

**Charles Pittman** ('54), 92, of Searcy, died April 2. He retired from Harding as professor emeritus of English after a 35-year career. He also served as sponsor of Knights social club for 20 years. He was a longtime member of West Side Church of Christ where he served 23 years as an elder. After he retired from that position, he served as the elders' secretary and in other behind-the-scenes capacities. He was preceded in death by his wife of 28 years, Janet Watts. He is survived by his three children, **Gary** ('85), **Laura Rowan** ('86) and **Kristen Arnette** ('92); five grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

**Marcie Crawford Lloyd** ('57), 89, of Searcy, died June 12. She taught elementary school at Harding Academy in Searcy for 28 years. She loved to travel, visiting many places with her husband and faculty and students from Harding. She also taught Sunday school at College Church of Christ. She is survived by her husband of 66 years, **Ted** ('57); two children, **Rees** ('84), and **Melissa Master** ('91); five grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

**Tillie J. Watson Stone** ('58), 88, of Vine Grove, Kentucky, died March 18. She earned a master's degree from the University of Michigan and taught for many years at Michigan School of the Deaf. She was a member of Bristol Road Church of Christ and Swartz Creek Church of Christ in Michigan. She taught Bible school for the deaf and served as an interpreter for many years. She is survived by her husband, **Larry** ('58); three sons, **Greg** ('82), Steven and Jonathan; a sister, Peggy Powers; six grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

**Judith Dreher Crowson** ('62), 83, of Searcy, died March 24. She, along with her husband, served as a missionary in Kingston, Jamaica, for nine years. While in Jamaica, they and several others founded a new congregation in Mona Heights. They also served at the Jamaica School of Preaching and Biblical Studies.

She was a longtime member of the National Speakers Association as well as a corporate trainer and consultant who owned her own company. A gifted teacher, mentor and coach, she worked as an independent consultant with Image and Performax administering personality profiles and building teams. She won many awards for her sales, service and business leadership. She served as sponsor for GATA social club at Harding, of which she had also been a member. She is survived by her husband of 63 years, **Marvin** ('62); two children, **Murphy** ('93) and **Georgia Wolfe** ('96); siblings, **Hugh** ('70) and **Roseanne Dreher** ('75); and seven grandchildren.

**Kelby Smith** ('63), 83, of Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, died Dec. 27, 2023. He also earned degrees from Itawamba Junior College in Fulton, Mississippi, and Harding Graduate School of Religion in Memphis, Tennessee. He served as a minister in Dewitt, Arkansas; at Shiloh Church of Christ, Florence Boulevard Church of Christ and Jackson Heights Church of Christ in Florence, Alabama; and North Jackson Church of Christ in Jackson, Tennessee. He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Martha Smith; two children, Doug and Kelly Parrott; seven grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

**Reba Suanne Smith Walker** ('63), 82, of Searcy, died March 20. She was valedictorian of her high school class in 1959 and a National Merit Semi-Finalist. While at Harding, she was a proud member of Belles & Beaux, A Capella Chorus, Chorale and Kappa Phi social club. She earned a master's degree from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in 1965. She taught every grade from pre-K to graduate school in her 37-year career. She taught at Riverview's Judsonia (Arkansas) Elementary School from 1976-2001. Following retirement, she served in various capacities as a reading teacher, adjunct instructor, early childhood consultant, grant reviewer and advanced trainer. She was honored by the Cannon-Clary College of Education as Outstanding Alumna in 2001. Her professional memberships include Alpha Chi, Omicron Nu, Cambridge, Southern Early Childhood Association,

Arkansas Early Childhood Association, Mid-Arkansas Early Childhood Association, Arkansas Advocator for Children and Families, Child Care, and CASA Volunteer. She was preceded in death by her husband of 40 years, Charles; and siblings, Beth Smith ('66), and **Rick Smith** ('71). She is survived by three children; Chris ('90), **Joanna Raynes** ('89) and **Jennifer Floyd** ('97); siblings, **Kay Gowen** ('68) and **Steve Smith** ('72); 10 grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren

**Ronald Douglas Coleman** ('73), 72, of Hot Springs Village, Arkansas, died March 27. While at Harding, he was a member of Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities, Alpha Chi and Delta Mu Delta. He was a member of the 1973 national championship team at the Emory University Intercollegiate Business Games in Atlanta. He became a CPA and an associate in risk management and served in the U.S. Naval Reserves. He is survived by his son, Stephen.

**Renee Lindsey Wallace** ('82), 63, of Bullard, Texas, died Feb. 19 after a two-year battle with brain cancer. While at Harding she sang with the A Capella Chorus and Belles & Beaux and was a Spring Sing hostess. She worked as a staff accountant with Mary of Puddin Hill in Greenville, Texas. In September 1990 she began her career with the University of Texas at Austin where she served as assistant manager, manager of payroll, associate director of accounting, director of payroll, associate vice provost, and associate vice president over the workday implementation. She is survived by her husband of 34 years, Rick; and two children, Jake and Paige.

**Ricky Dewel Wood** ('93), 59, of Searcy, died April 14. He received his master's degree in education from Harding in 1993 and was working on his doctorate from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. He worked for Darraugh Co. from 1987 to 1991. He began his teaching career at Riverview School District in 1993 as a high school teacher. In 1999, he moved to the Pangburn (Arkansas) School District and was the high school principal for six years and then superintendent for three

years. In 2009, he moved to the Bradford (Arkansas) School District as principal until 2022. He finished his career at Arkansas State University-Newport as a career coach. He was a member of Four Mile Hill Church of Christ where he worked and preached from a young age. He was very active in horse showing at the local and state levels. He is survived by his sister, Sheila Wood.

**Daniel Lindsey** ('96), 51, of Paragould, Arkansas, died May 16. He worked as a paramedic and managed the County Natural Health Food Store. He was a member of the Commissary Church of Christ and was a black belt in taekwondo. He was preceded in death by two siblings, Thomas and **Renee Wallace** ('82). He is survived by his parents, Thomas and Pat; and three siblings, **Eric** ('91), Deric and Amber.

**Clarence Wayne Johnson Jr.** ('10), 47, of Bearden, Arkansas, died Jan. 26. He loved fishing, computers and gaming. He is survived by his parents, Clarence and Amelia Johnson; and two siblings, **David** ('04) and **Angela** ('08).

**Jesse Bucy**, 93, of Searcy, died April 2. He played center field for the minor league teams of the Detroit Tigers. After three years, he returned to his hometown of Rector, Arkansas, where he coached basketball. He was a professor of education at Harding from 1969-1996, and served as basketball coach from 1969-1990 and then as baseball coach from 1994-1996. He served as an elder for the Fifth and Pine Church of Christ in Rector and College Church of Christ in Searcy. He was preceded in death by his wife, Sue Long; a daughter, **Beverly Frizzell** ('77); and a grandson. He is survived by a daughter, **Carol Knight** ('74); a grandson; and three step-grandchildren.

**Joyce Springer Johnson**, 93, of Searcy, died April 3. She worked in the office of student services from 1969 to 1993. She enjoyed playing golf and camping in her spare time. She was a member of West Side Church of Christ in Searcy for more than 20 years. She is preceded in death by her husband, **Richard "Dick"** ('60); daughter, **Nancy Ratliff** ('74); and a grandson. She is survived by a son, Bill; four grandchildren; and 11 great-grandchildren.

**Louise Nicholas Ganus** ('42), 102, of Searcy, died Friday, Sept. 6. She grew up in Strawberry, Arkansas, and came to Harding College in 1938. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in English and a minor in French, she taught school in Wynne, Arkansas. On May 27, 1943, she married Clifton L. Ganus Jr. in Godden Hall on Harding's campus just an hour and a half after his graduation — and in the same room.

As first lady of Harding from 1965-1987, Ganus was a full-time mother, wife and hostess of many including students, parents, faculty, board members and their wives, church family, and visiting dignitaries. She was also a social club sponsor, founded Associated Women for Harding (now Women for Harding) and Searcy's first chapters of Boy and Girl Scouts, was secretary of the White County PTA Council, chartered the Green Keepers Garden Club and was instrumental in starting the first PTA at Harding Academy and Searcy Public Schools.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 76 years, **Clifton Jr.** ('43). She is survived by three children, **Clifton III** ('66), **Debbie Duke** ('72) and **Charles** ('76); 10 grandchildren; and 21 great-grandchildren.



## *A trusted friend and model of hospitality*

By ALICE JEWELL,  
RETIRED PROFESSOR  
OF ENGLISH

When I arrived in Searcy as a new teacher in 1968, Louise Ganus was the first lady of Harding University. I remember standing in line on the sidewalk with other faculty members and waiting our turn to greet President Clifton L. Ganus Jr. and Louise at the annual faculty tea at their home. I was impressed by the amazing hospitality and the grace with which Louise managed the huge reception. She became my true friend, just as she was to all other faculty wives. The last time I spoke to her was at The Crossing at Riverside nursing home. It was my turn to be hospitable. I had brought her a piece of fresh strawberry pie, the kind we all learned to make back in the '70s when faculty wives would head for the strawberry fields near Searcy to pick three quarts for \$1. She enjoyed it!

Louise was very successful in her public life but perhaps even more successful in her private one. Treva Pryor describes her as strong and dedicated to the Lord and her family. She remembers her as the next-door neighbor who shared a clothesline and would bring baby Alan back to her when he escaped to Louise's yard.

Marge Ryan remembers her as the mentor who sent a three-page letter of valuable suggestions when Marge asked for help in dealing with church problems while she and her husband, Jack, were in graduate school. She also remembers Louise being the one who made sure a shower would be given for a bride who might be forgotten.

Ellen Walker remembers her as the dear friend whom her mother Nancy entrusted with the task of informing the family that her husband, Richard, had died suddenly. Bonnie Ulrey Barnes remembers the Ganuses as the ones whom her parents had designated as legal guardians for her and her siblings had anything happened to Betty and Evan Ulrey. She also remembers the faithful care Louise gave her mother for years.

All of these friends noted how strong Louise was for being able to rear the three children so successfully with Cliff being absent so much. Louise was a trusted friend, known for her strong faith, dependability, hospitality, graciousness, serenity, generosity, wisdom, strength, genuineness and impeccable integrity. She truly modeled Jesus for us all.



**Leah Gentry Burks** ('65), 81, of Searcy, died July 10. She served graciously as first lady of Harding for almost 28 years. She served as president of Associated Women for Harding, and the Power of Ten Scholarship was created in her honor. She was also the recipient of the Worthy Woman Award. As a sponsor for Zeta Rho social club for more than 30 years, she affected thousands of young ladies. In 1998, David and Leah received the University's Distinguished Alumni Award. In 2013, the First Ladies Garden was approved by the board of trustees as a tribute to Leah and the other first ladies who graciously served the University. She is survived by her husband, **David Burks** ('65); three children, **Bryan** ('89), **Stephen** ('94) and Marleah Teeter; six grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

Donations can be made in her memory to the David and Leah Burks Endowed Scholarship for Architecture at [harding.edu/givenow](http://harding.edu/givenow).

## *A gentle spirit, compassionate heart*

By LIZ HOWELL, FORMER VICE PRESIDENT  
OF ALUMNI AND PARENT RELATIONS

In 1961, Leah Gentry boarded a train bound for Harding College. It was there she met her future husband, David Burks, while serving as queen for his social club. She graduated in 1965 with a degree in English and art; married in August; and moved to Austin, Texas, where David went to graduate school. They returned to Searcy in 1967 when David began teaching for Harding University. Leah taught English at Bradford and White County Central schools and art at Harding Academy for several years before becoming a stay-at-home mother.

When David became president of Harding in 1987, Leah served graciously as first lady for almost 28 years. She was an incredible support and encouragement to her husband in this demanding and public role. As a testament to her gift of hospitality, she hosted guests in her home from all over the world including many international world leaders, dignitaries, and thousands of Harding faculty and students.

My bond with Leah began through a shared love for nature and developed into an enduring friendship. Her gentle spirit, compassionate heart and gift for listening endeared her to all who knew her.

When she was undergoing cancer treatments about 25 years ago, I invited her to come to my house and see the daffodils. We became friends that day, and it was the beginning of many adventures. We traveled together on many Harding trips. If a garden was near, we figured out a way to go see it. When we were in Alaska on a Harding alumni cruise, we took a taxi to see the Upside-Down Forest of Glacier Gardens in Juneau. When we called for a taxi to take us back to the ship, we learned they were not coming to get us. Fortunately, we had met some college students in the garden who were with a group called, "Jesus + Nothing = Everything." They had come to Alaska to do mission work and had to find jobs to support their living expenses. When we asked if they could help us, they did, and we were thankful.

We traveled to Bentonville, Arkansas, to visit Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art with June Carter, wife of former board member Paul Carter. As we were walking around, I whispered to June, who is also a garden club member, that a garden would be the perfect way to honor Leah. The First Ladies Garden concept began that day.

Leah was very shy and talented beyond measure. She hosted many Greenkeepers Garden Club meetings and Harding events in her home and always made something extra that made everyone feel special. Every home she and David lived in was on the Women for Harding's tour of homes. No matter what was going on, she would always ask me, "What can I do to help?"

Her love for art and things of beauty would rival Pinterest. She was a good listener and trusted friend. One of my greatest blessings from Harding was Leah. We shared our love for Harding, bubblegum petunias, Greenkeepers Garden Club, planning parties and road trips to see P. Allen Smith at Moss Mountain, Chris Olsen's Edgemont house or the Women for Harding Tour of Homes. Her sweet spirit touched many lives, and she was dearly loved. My heart aches for her family and all of us who loved her. I know heaven is a better place now that she has received her eternal reward.

Dr. **Jeffrey T. Hopper** ('74), 73, of New York, New York, died Aug. 22. He served Harding University for 45 years in various roles including distinguished professor of music and director of Honors Symposium. He retired in 2019 as dean of the Honors College and dean of International Programs.

A California native, Hopper attended the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music for two years and earned a bachelor's degree from Harding. After graduation, he joined the faculty and later earned a master's degree in piano performance from Southern Illinois University and both a master's in philosophy and a doctorate in musicology from Rutgers University where he also served as a lecturer.

During his time at Harding, Hopper received the Teacher Achievement Award three times — in 1984, 1991 and 2001. He also served as musical director for theatre productions and was the advisor for Spring Sing hosts and hostesses from 1975-85. Throughout his career, he performed as a concert piano soloist and accompanist across the country as well as abroad in England, Italy, Poland and Austria.

He is preceded in death by his wife of 52 years, **Judy Griffith Hopper** ('72). He is survived by his two children, **Cara Pauls** ('02) and **Benjamin** ('09).



## *Around the world, across a lifetime*

By DR. JACK SHOCK, ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT FOR  
UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

In 2012, Dr. Jeff Hopper helped me get a passport, put me on a plane with 40 students and sent us to live together in a big house on a hill in Tuscany. We were off to see the world with our passports, cameras and Moleskins. Our lives were changed forever.

I am one of thousands of Harding students and professors who received the same kind of life-changing send-off from Jeff. From my front row seat in the International Programs office, I watched him build programs around the world. "Give them something they can't get at home," he would say. And he did exactly that. From the Taj Mahal to the earliest catacombs in Rome, Jeff helped make the world a little smaller for us all.

"When Jeff took on a task, he could stay inside the box, if required, but he was happier, and most effective, when he was able to chart his own path," said Dr. Cliff Ganus, distinguished professor emeritus and long-time friend and colleague. "His energy was contagious. Jeff's legacy is one of creative excellence, and he influenced the lives of many. We were professors, friends and ferocious handball competitors."

Dr. James Wiser ('00), dean of library sciences and educational technology at Abilene Christian University, traveled with the first group to Harding's program in England. "I graduated 24 years ago, and Jeff was still teaching me things about beauty and truth just this summer. He unleashed generations of Harding students on a needy world, and if you're curious about his legacy, just look around."

Dr. Jeff Hopper helped us see the world and change it, one passport application at a time.



# HARDING

U N I V E R S I T Y

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Following in their fathers' footsteps, Charles Ganus and Stephen Tucker bury the new time capsule on Founders Day 2024. On page 54, see the items included in the new time capsule that will be unearthed in 2074.