

## **Faith Scholarship Foundation History**

The Faith Scholarship Foundation was founded May 20, 2000, when Minister Leroy Butler, Jr. invited several people to Gold Plate Restaurant for a meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to share a vision and a plan to create a scholarship fund to educate and prepare young men to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. It was the culmination of a long-time vision of the founder to insure that Valdosta retains its tradition and reputation as an incubator of faithful gospel preachers.

Nineteen individuals were a part of the first planning group. Members of the first planning session were Minner Baldwin, Carey Barnes, Latesha Bradley, Gloria Butler, Tyrah Butler, Marcus Campbell, Theresa Clark, Corey Ewing, Gene Godfrey, Darthula Henderson, John Iverson, Wilma Kitchen, Addie Marina, Steve Myers, Francis Roe, Coretha Shearry, Fae Shearry, Frankie Shearry, Deldra Sirmans, and Willie Williams.

Others who joined the group later were Alvin Daniels, Irene Miller, Jackie Offut and Damon Miller ('07). Currently, four congregations are represented on the board of directors: Courtland Avenue Church of Christ in Quitman, GA; Southside Church of Christ in Valdosta, GA; Newsome Street Church of Christ in Hahira, GA; and Woodlawn Forrest Church of Christ in Valdosta, GA. The current Chairman and founder is Leroy Butler, Jr., the vice chair is Deldra Leary, and the secretary is Gloria Butler.

The Scholarship Endowment was established May 7, 2001, when the Butler family, Leroy and Gloria, made a \$3,000 donation in the honor of the late Leroy Butler, Sr.

The foundation was incorporated as a non-profit corporation in 2003. The officers were Leroy Butler, Jr., president; C. E. Godfrey, vice president; Marcus Campbell, treasurer; and Deldra (Sirmans) Leary, secretary. Members of the board were Carey Barnes, Latesha Bradley, Gloria Butler, Marcus Campbell, Alvin Daniels, Corey Ewing, Gene Godfrey, Darthula Henderson, John Iverson, Wilma Kitchen, Addie Marina, Irene Miller, Steve Myers, Jackie Offut, Francis Roe, and Deldra (Sirmans) Leary.

The first fundraiser for the foundation, a Valentine's Day banquet, was held February 14, 2002, at Holiday Inn. Willie Davis, minister of Shumate Church of Christ, was the guest speaker. C. L. White of Lawtey, Florida, provided the musical program. More than a hundred people attended the event.

The second annual Valentine's Day banquet was held in 2003 at Mathis City Auditorium. The Christian Brothers of Jacksonville, Florida, provided the musical inspiration. Wesley Leonard of Orlando, Florida, was the keynote speaker. One hundred twenty-nine people attended. Worry Free Weddings decorated and catered the event.

The foundation awarded its first scholarship in 2003 to Tim Knight, a member of West Hill Church of Christ in Valdosta and a student at Southwestern Christian College in Terrell, Texas.

On January 17, 2004, a four man scramble golf tournament was held at Francis Lake Golf Club. Twenty-five men participated. The winning team with a score of 58 was from Orlando/Tallahassee, Florida. The team members were Wesley Leonard, Charlie James, James Thompson, and John Crutchfield. After the tournament a fish supper was held at the Georgia Christian School Cafeteria. Hole Sponsors were BB&T, Bank of America, Colson Printing, Sheriff Ashley Paulk, Mike Hill Real Estate, Bosch Oldsmobile, and Attorney Roy Copeland. Other contributors were Gelana Goddard, Miller Hardware, Stone Creek Golf Course, Tielest Golf, Valdosta Golfer's Association, and Georgia Christian School. Approximately \$3,000 was raised.

In February 2004, a Valentine's Day banquet was held at Central Avenue Church of Christ. One hundred thirty-six people attended the event. Katrina Waller and Soul Purpose provided the entertainment. The South Western Christian College Spring Tour performed at Woodlawn Forrest Church of Christ and a \$1,000 scholarship was awarded to Sharrod Bryant, a member of Courtland Avenue Church of Christ in Quitman and a student at South Western Christian College in Terrell, Texas.

On September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007 the J.C. Mobley Memorial Concert was held at the Valdosta High School Performing Arts Center as a fund raiser for FAITH. COAAC served as the fiscal partner with FAITH and solicited corporate sponsors for the event. We were successful in enlisting 9 sponsors. They were South Georgia Medical Center, Lowndes County Sheriff's Department, Wrights Vaults and Monuments, Branch Bank and Trust, Damon Miller and Associates, State Farm Insurance (Brian Sumner), Central Florist, Colson's Printing and Park Avenue Bank. A total of \$3,350 was raised through sponsorships. The concert was free but a love offering was raised totaling \$1,360.00. The groups that participated were, ASAP, Men of Valor, Chris Turner and the Southside Mass Chorus (Durham, NC), The Sounds of Salvation (South Fla), The Testifiers (Miami, Fl), Hillcrest Singers (Decatur, Ga). There were an estimated 800 people in attendance.