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NEW CENTER FOR LIFE AND WORK OF WILLIAM CAREY TO BE NAMED AFTER HATTIESBURG COUPLE

The newly constructed Donnell Hall, which will house the Center for Study of the Life and Work of William Carey, will be dedicated with an official ceremony Wednesday, May 3 at 3 p.m. on the Hattiesburg campus of William Carey College.

The 2,412 square foot building, designed by Landry and Lewis Architects, P.A., will house a museum and research collection of artifacts from and about the British cobbler, botanist and linguist who became known and the "father of modern missions" for his work in India.

Donnell Hall is named after Hattiesburg residents Dr. Linda and Robert Donnell, owners of Vital Care Compounder. "We feel totally humbled and a bit unworthy of such distinction," said Linda Donnell. "It is quite an honor. We will take great pride in having our name associated with such an outstanding missionary and scholar as William Carey and are very excited about the opportunities of study that the center will provide."

Dr. Bennie Crockett, co-director of the Center, said, "In a compelling and unique way, the Donnells' gift highlights the interrelation of William Carey, the Baptist missionary, Bible translator, educator and social reformer in India, with the College's identity as a Baptist institution of higher learning."

The building is equipped with temperature and humidity control, a fireproof vault, a reading room, and state of the art German manufactured display cases in two exhibition galleries.

"Faculty, staff, students, scholars, and people from every corner of the world now have a place to celebrate, study, and find inspiration for a holistic perspective of Christian mission, intellect, and socialization," said Crockett. "For the large part that Robert and Linda Donnell have in the telling of Carey's remarkable life and story, the Carey Center is grateful and we are eager to share the ideals of its namesake."

"We have always felt that Christian education for young people is a very worthwhile cause since it is an investment in our future," said Robert Donnell. "We feel that the college does a great job in placing the emphasis on the development of its students and we feel that the administration serves as good stewards of their financial assets."

Donnell Hall will house an impressive collection. Dr. Myron Noonkester, co-director of the Center, said, "Highlights that will be featured in the premier exhibition include original letters from William Carey, Carey's childhood spelling dictionary, rare Indian botanical prints, coins, medals and stamps associated with Carey, and an extensive collection of Serampore Bibles, dictionaries and grammars."

The Center has already received local, national and international acclaim. After the public release of the Center's web site in March 2001, the Australian-based Asian Studies Monitor, a clearinghouse for academic study of Asian-related materials, awarded the Center a "Five-Star, Essential" rating. The Center's website receives an average of over three hundred unique international visits per day and since its inception more than half a million people have visited the site.

Initiated in the summer of 2000, the purpose of the Carey Center is to promote an understanding of the accomplishments of William Carey and to enhance appreciation of the religious, cultural, scientific, and historical contexts in which Carey worked in Britain and India.

The Donnells, both active members of University Baptist Church and supporters of missions work around the world, participate in Baptist Medical and Dental Mission International, Christian Women's Job Corps, and many other community helping agencies. "It is truly an honor to be a part of the William Carey family," said Linda Donnell.

Linda serves on the WCC Board of Trustees and Robert was the second recipient of the Small Business Leadership Award given by the Area Development Partnership and WCC for excellent business practice. Both are natives of Morton.

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The Center will continue to provide primary and secondary source materials for local churches, Christian mission enthusiasts, students of all ages, scholars, and international researchers. The Donnells feel that they are a part of that teaching tradition and understand its importance. "We feel that WCC is an excellent Christian educational institution," said Robert Donnell. "It is college that gives attention to the total development of its students and a school where students receive personal attention from its faculty and staff."

"The Carey Center now has an impressive, Serampore, India style, home in Donnell Hall from which, as William Carey would say, 'to enlarge the tent' of Christian identity, scholarship and a Christian missionary understanding of the world," said Crockett.

The public is invited to the May 3-dedication at 3 p.m. For more information call 601-318-6192.