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Romans 12:2
what’s inside...

4 Carey 250
6 Scholarship Dinner
   Featuring Senator Trent Lott
8 Global Carey
   William Carey students
   traveling to Chile, Greece,
   Italy, Peru and Rwanda
10 Homecoming
11 9/11 Service
19 Faculty News

21 Chapel Fund
   Plans to build a chapel on the
   William Carey University Campus
22 Carey’s
   Great Revival

24 Alumni Spotlight
28 Alumni News & Class Notes
William Carey University celebrated the 250th birthday of William Carey, the “Father of Modern Missions” and namesake of the institution, with an exquisite birthday cake.

The event was led by Dr. Myron Noonkester, dean of the Noonkester School of Arts and Letters and chair for department of history, and Dr. Bennie Crockett, professor of religion and philosophy and vice president for institutional effectiveness and long range planning. Dr. Noonkester and Dr. Crockett, co-directors for the Center for the Study of the Life and Work of William Carey, D.D., recently purchased a lithograph of a painting of Carey, dated 1813, from a print shop in London. At the party, they unveiled their new treasure to WCU faculty, staff, students, and guests.

After a short lesson on the rare portrait, guests watched in awe as the 250 candles on the Carey-themed cake were lit and blown out, one section at a time. Everyone had a chance to admire the detailed cake, which included a portrait of Carey and other decorations representing his life, before enjoying the delicious masterpiece.

In October, WCU hosted a reception to celebrate the opening of the “Carey 250 Exhibition” in the Lucile Parker Gallery. The show featured artwork inspired by the accomplishments and career of William Carey. There were 125 items of various media in the show.

“The exhibit included work from Carey teachers, students, and alumni, as well as pieces submitted by artists from all over the state,” said Tracy Williams, assistant professor of art and exhibit coordinator. “My favorite part about the show was the variety; there was a mix of paintings, photography, woodcarvings, three-dimensional pieces, and more, so there was something for everybody.”

Chatham Kemp, curator of the Lucile Parker Gallery and instructor of art at WCU, commented that she
also loved the variety of work in the exhibit and the unique interpretations featured artists have of William Carey’s life.

“‘It is interesting to see the different ways Carey’s life is represented through artwork,’” said Kemp. “The exhibit showed all aspects of Carey’s life: as the cobbler, the botanist, the Bible translator, and the linguist.”

Additional events are planned throughout the remainder of the academic year including a mission trip to India, a William Carey exhibition, a scholarly symposium, and homecoming activities.

Rev. David J. Gamston, minister of Carey Baptist Church in Moulton, England, was the guest speaker for William Carey University’s Carey Lecture on Wednesday, October 12, in Smith Auditorium. A question and answer session followed the lecture in the Lucile Parker Gallery. Rev. Gamston and his wife, Beth, also had the opportunity to participate in other activities including tea time with the WCU soccer players who are from the United Kingdom and a tour of Donnell Hall, which houses the Carey Center.

During the lecture, Rev. Gamston shared some of the legacy William Carey left behind in England at Carey Baptist Church. The church was the first church William Carey pastored, and it adjoined his cobbler shop. Today, Rev. Gamston continues to preach the same values in that same church, while embracing new ministry programs such as youth and adult outreach groups. A well-known Baptist minister since 1984, he trained for ministry at Bristol Baptist College and held pastorates at Blaby in Leicestershire, Stourbridge in the West Midlands, and Cheltenham in Gloucestershire before accepting his position at Moulton in 2000.

Before becoming a minister, Rev. Gamston was trained as an electric engineer and worked in the steel industry for 16 years. Outside of church activities, his passions include old British motorcycles, playing the mandolin, and spending time with his family. He and his wife Beth have one daughter and two grandchildren.

ABOVE: Nancy Barnard, a junior from Laurel, poses for a photo with her piece entitled “Sharing Christ with India.”