

**SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:**

- Donald Musser
—Reflections
on Retirement
- Lost Treasures
of the Bible
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Dr. Donald Musser - Reflections on Retirement

In May 2009, at the end of my 31st year of teaching at Stetson, I plan to step out of the classroom and step into my garden, my boat, neglected books, and writing that is waiting to be completed. These three decades have been a wonderful venture, beginning with my first day on campus in August 1978, when fuzzy freshman Tom Mahoney asked me where I had gone to graduate school. When I said, "Chicago," he asked excitedly in his east Tennessee twang, "Did ya study at Moody Bible Institute?" I replied, "No, the University of Chicago." He said, "I don't think I've heard of that school."

When he left, I fell into my chair, stared at the vintage Remington typewriter, and broke into a sweat in the naturally ventilated

cubicle of 204 Allen Hall, wondering if I would be teaching a classroom full of backwoods rubes. Soon, I discovered the intellectual depth of Stetson students. During that first year, I met Stetson students who were avid to pursue fresh



ideas and unexplored paths in biblical studies, theology, and philosophy of religion. Among them 1978-

1979 were Frank Cepero, Eddie McQueen, Frank Cerio, Tim Ireland, Daryle Scott, Brenda Halbrooks, Mike Hartley, Susan Taylor, Jeff Tyson, and James Toro. Each subsequent year brought a new treasure of students into my classes.

From the onset, students, their lives and careers, have been the central focus of my career. Taking the university motto, "Pro Deo et Veritate," as my mantra [it was the subject of my first Chapel sermon]; I pursued a path of reverent scholarship with the aim of preparing students for great lives of spiritual depth. To the extent I have succeeded, I am grateful.

Continued on page 2 —
RETIREMENT

Lost Treasures of the Bible

A new publication by Dr. Fant and Dr. Reddish

This book provides an examination of more than one hundred archaeological artifacts in world museums related to biblical history, many of them relatively unknown, "lost," to the general public. The story of each of these archaeological finds and a detailed analysis of their significance is located as to its museum site and particularly valuable for lesser-known biblical names, subjects, and texts in-



Statue of the goddess Diana in the Louvre

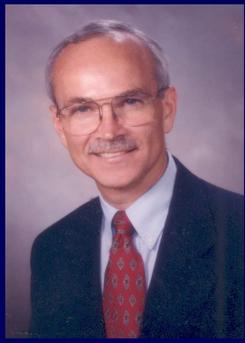
Some of the more spectacular of overlooked by museum visitors—the Code of Hammurabi or Winged Victory the Near East, Berlin), or the great manu-Codex Alexandrinus (British pass by other significant dis-they exist—a mud brick Ramesses II, the same type as Hebrews in Egypt (British Museum), or the silver scroll amulet containing the oldest biblical text ever discovered (Israel Museum). Continued on page 5: Lost Treasures

is given in detail, along with photographs of each artifact. Each artifact also its specific identification number, objects. An index provides access to the included.

these finds are well-known and rarely Rosetta Stone (the British Museum), the (the Louvre), the Ishtar Gate (Museum of scripts of the Bible, Codex Sinaiticus and Library). But many visitors coveries without ever knowing stamped with the cartouche of named in the story of the He-

brews in Egypt (British Museum), or the silver scroll amulet containing the oldest biblical text ever discovered (Israel Museum). Continued on page 5: Lost Treasures

Chair Comments



Several important changes are taking place at Stetson. A search is underway for a new university president to replace Dr. Lee, is retiring at the end of this academic year. The faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences voted last spring to approve a recommended major restructuring of the college's curriculum. Three of the faculty members in our department are playing major roles in this change. Dr. Lucas is one of the members of the Faculty Working Group, which studied the proposal for a change, met with departments and individual fac-

ulty members, presented a recommendation to the faculty, and continues to oversee the development of the plan. Dr. Sutherland serves on the Rubrics Committee, which helps determine which courses meet the new general education curriculum. Dr. Queen-Sutherland is the chair of the Faculty Implementation Group, which will coordinate the planning and timetable for the implementation of this new curriculum. Another big change affecting our department is that Dr. Clyde Fant has retired. Actually, he officially retired at the end of the spring 2000 semester. He has continued to teach, however, on a part-time basis for several semesters since then. Toward the end of last spring semester, he announced that that

semester would be his last semester to teach. A popular teacher, gifted speaker, and careful scholar, Dr. Fant will be missed by students and faculty alike. He has been a great colleague in the department and has certainly left his mark on Stetson. In addition to his teaching and writing (he is the author of several books), he also is the founder and director of the Florida Winter Pastors' School, which each year brings over one hundred and fifty clergy from throughout the nation to our campus for several days of lectures by renowned scholars. Thanks, Dr. Fant for your dedication and commitment to Stetson.

Mitchell G. Reddish

"Friends are the family we choose for ourselves."

Edna Buchanan



Dr. Musser and an eleven pound large-mouth bass

Christina Mixon Receives Award for the Sam R. Marks Prize in Religion



During the Spring 2008 Academic Honors Convocation the Sam R. Marks Prize in Religion was awarded to Christina Mixon from Palm Harbor, Florida, for her essay titled, "Questioning the Past: An Analysis of Augustine's Original Sin Exegesis." Ms. Mixon received her award from Dr. Mitchell Reddish, Professor and Chair of Religious Studies. Mixon graduated in Spring 2008 with a major in Business Administration and a minor in Religious Studies and Business Law.

Continued from front page — RETIREMENT

Changes in the department during my years are astonishing and noteworthy. The department faculty and students now mirror the welcoming diversity of the University. The academic production of the faculty is remarkable. Our leadership in the university is without peer. Students from all academic areas of study flock to our courses and many go on to prestigious graduate program and divinity schools, even to that little known university in Chicago.

I will leave with memories that will stay with me for the remainder of my days - memories of the visit of Benji the dog to a chapel service, memories of being dunked in Holler Fountain by Wade Rowdon and his henchmen on my birthday, conniving with Brad Duncan to sneak a rotting fish carcass onto Cindy Way's dorm room pillow, playing intramural basketball on the championship Running Rebels at age 44 with star player Rick Darlington, while students Greg Sapp and Jaime Clark cheered from the stands, teaming with Dr. Sutherland to whiff wary students in whiffle ball on the Field of Dreams in Allen Hall, directing the university Honors Program for eight years, being the object of prayer and concern during my challenge with lymphoma, conducting weddings for alums, and on and on and on.

Thanks for being great students. And, thanks, colleagues, for your friendship and support. I wonder how Tom Mahoney is? Last I heard he was a counselor to troubled teens. I hope he is having a great life. Shalom, and Amen!

Students Travel to London and Paris...Jesse Paquin

London and Paris- A procession of Stetson students pulling wheeled suitcases rumbled through the subterranean passages of the London underground during the beginning of Spring Break 2008. Following their fearless leaders, Dr Mitchell Reddish and Dr. Clyde Fant, the students, freshmen through seniors, were learning their first lessons on European travel: pack lightly. The purpose of the course was to discover the biblical and historical treasures housed in a few famous museums, the British Museum, British Library, National Gallery, the Musée d'Orsay, and The Louvre.

The course titled, The Bible in Art and Artifact (REL-168), allowed students to see real artifacts that have biblical significance. Such artifacts and manuscripts include the Rosetta Stone,

Winged Victory of Samothrace, and countless important discoveries dealing with ancient Israel, Egypt, Canaan, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. Students gained priceless knowledge in ancient archaeology as well as first-hand experience in culture.



Students were required to keep a journal and seek out paintings that had biblical scenes. Most found this to be an easy task since the museums are covered wall to wall with ancient art depicting famous episodes from the Bible. After spending time in the Louvre and

the British Museum the students enjoyed the richness of London and Paris life. During free time they hiked across the cities to seek out famous landmarks such as Big Ben, Buckingham Palace, the Eiffel Tower, and Notre Dame.

Even though the trip was short, students learned a lot. At its conclusion the Stetson students were tired but were filled with knowledge about the wonders of biblical art and archaeology. One particular student, Angela Malinowski, exclaimed, "This trip not only enriched my academic knowledge of the ancient world, but it also allowed me to grow culturally and visit places beyond our tours that I have only dreamed about!"

Religious Studies Outstanding Juniors and Seniors



Congratulations to our Outstanding Students who were selected by the Religious Studies Department for the 2007-2008 Academic Year.

Senior: Alicia Hickman

Juniors: Kasey Cox, Ian Guthrie, Ryan Lynch,

Theta Alpha Kappa 2008

Theta Alpha Kappa is a national honor society for professors and students of Religious Studies/Theology. Six new members joined Stetson's Alpha Gamma Omicron chapter of Theta Alpha Kappa on May 1st: **Adam Darragh**, a Religious Studies major with minors in Music and Creative Writing; **Ian Guthrie**, a Religious Studies major with a minor in American Studies and Humani-

ties; **Ryan Lynch**, majoring in Religious Studies and History with a minor in French; **Christina Mixon**, majoring in General Business with a minor in Religious Studies and Business Law; **Ryan Rogers**, a Religious Studies major in Math and Religious Studies; **Leslie Strickland**, a Spanish major with a minor in Religious Studies and Finance. To date Theta Alpha Kappa, chapter Alpha Gamma Omicron, has inducted 93 stu-

dents. The chapter was started in 1996. To learn more about Theta Alpha Kappa, go to the national website at: <http://thetalphakappa.net>



FACULTY NEWS

Dr. Reddish Dr. Mitchell Reddish conducted an all-day seminar November 3, 2007, at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. The seminar, "Saint Paul: His Life, Work, and Writings," was sponsored by the Smithsonian Associates.

Dr. Dixon Sutherland gave a lecture to the West Volusia Health Care workers on "The Ethical Implications of the Teresa Schiavo Case" and held a dialogue about it. Dr. Musser and Dr. Sutherland team-taught an "Introduction to Religion" course in the Business School at Celebration in fall, 2006. Dr. Sutherland gave a public lecture in Lake Worth, Florida on "Cosmology in Science and Religion" for the Florida Humanities Council. During the summer, Dr. Sutherland revamped the "Introduction to Christianity" course to fit his outline for the future textbook.

Dr. Greg Sapp Dr. Sapp attended several conferences and was again an invited panelist for a session on Religion and Sports at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion and Society of Biblical Literature in San Diego. He presented a paper on religious themes in *The Legend of Bagger Vance* (film version) at the annual meeting of the Popular Culture Association and American Culture Association in San Francisco. He was also invited to lecture at Whittier College near Los Angeles on alternative Christianities in the early church. Shortly after that lecture, he again went to California and lectured on the professional athlete as hero at California State University at Northridge. This past academic year Dr. Sapp taught REL108 "Introduction to Christianity," REL190 "Self and World" for incoming Bonner students, and REL405 "Augustine of Hippo." Dr. Sapp plans to teach a course on religion and sports in the spring of 2009.

Dr. Kandy Queen-Sutherland Dr. Kandy Queen-Sutherland had an invited article entitled "Naming the Enemy: Esther and the Prophets" published in a Festschrift volume of *Perspectives in Religious Studies* for Old Testament professor John D. W. Watts. Dr. Watts was a former president of the Baptist Theological Seminary in Rüschtikon, Switzerland where she and her husband, Dr. Dixon Sutherland, taught before returning to Stetson in 1991.



Dr. Leena Taneja Dr. Taneja delivered a paper at the American Academy of Religion in San Diego entitled "Reconstructing the Mythical Mountain of Govardhan." She will give another paper presentation in Chicago entitled "Guru Speaks!" A newly published article entitled "The Other of Oneself: A Gadamerian Conversation with Gaudiya Vaishnavism" appears in *Hermeneutics and Hindu Thought: A Fusion of Horizons* (Springer, 2008). During the summer, Dr. Taneja attended a summer institute in Shimla, India conducted by the National Endowment for the Humanities. As part of her trip to India, she also raised money to purchase flip flops for village children in India.

Dr. Phillip Lucas Dr. Lucas published a summation of his 10-year research into megalithic sites in Western Europe entitled, "Constructing Identity with Dreamstones: Megalithic Sites and Contemporary Nature Spirituality." The article appeared in *Nova Religio*, Vol. 11:1 (August 2007). Dr. Lucas spent a month in Tiruvannamalai, India, in December/January, conducting research on Advaita Vedanta teachers and their influence on contemporary currents of American spirituality. He will give a paper presentation of his research at the American Academy of Religion Annual Conference in Chicago in November 2008. In June 2008, Dr. Lucas visited archaeological sites in Turkey and toured Konya, where the mausoleum of the great Sufi poet Mevlana Rumi is located.

Dr. Donald Musser was the featured speaker at Stetson's American Cancer Society's Relay for Life fund-raiser. Presented a paper, "Tillich and Polanyi on the Ontology of Knowing" at a joint session of the annual meetings of the North American Paul Tillich Society and the Michael Polanyi Society in San Diego. Co-Chaired a discussion of his co-authored and co-edited book, *Mormonism in Dialogue with Contemporary Christian Theologies*, at the annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion. He also conducted numerous media interviews on the

The Chappal Project: Changing the Lives of Children One Pair at a Time

The Santimani school is an all-girls school located in the village of Brindavan 15 km from Mathura City near Delhi, India. The school dedicates itself to educating the most needy and neglected segment of Indian society--the girl child. Early child marriage is still a prevalent practice in rural parts of India. Many girls are married off as soon as they hit puberty. This school aims to keep these girls in school for as long as possible with the help of

donations and foreign sponsors.

The chappal project I launched aims to provide these girls with chappals or Indian flip flops. I organized friends and family to donate small amounts of money to buy these inexpensive forms of footwear for the girls who attend this school. A pair of chappals costs about 30 rupees (approximately 80 cents). The chappals provide physical comfort and improve hygiene.

With the generous donations of many whom I wish to thank, we were able to donate 442 pairs of chappals. If anyone is interested in helping this project, please feel free to contact me.



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Welcome to the Stetson University Department of Religious Studies. Our mission is to help students explore the role of religion in shaping human cultures through studies of sacred texts, languages, ethics, beliefs, rituals, spiritual methods, and the history of religious traditions.

Website: www.stetson.edu/artsci/religion

Alumni News

Lori-Jene Brazier '08, is pursuing a master of divinity degree at Vanderbilt University Divinity School, Nashville, TN.—Alicia Hickman '08, is pursuing a master of divinity degree at Vanderbilt University Divinity School, Nashville, TN.—Christina Mixon '08, is pursuing a master of theological studies at Vanderbilt University Divinity School, Nashville, TN.—Valerie Winship '07, has been appointed Develop Coordinator for the Atlanta Habitat for Humanity.—Jennifer Tyre '05, is pursuing a masters degree at Temple University in Philadelphia, PA. —Matt Foreman '05, graduated from Stetson Law school spring of 2008 and is planning a career in Sports Management.— Adriene Zedick '05, interned at Old St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Chicago, IL for the academic year 2007-2008.— John Mills '04 graduated from Cornell University School of Law, Ithaca, NY on May 11,

2008. — Emily Snyder '04, is the West Tennessee regional organizer for the Tennessee Health Care Campaign in Memphis, TN. On August 9, 2008 Emily married James Fulmer, professor of theology and ethics at Christian Brothers University in Memphis.— Charles Myers '03, is in the Ph. D. program at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, CA.— Sarah Jay '00, is the pastor at the First Baptist Church of Girard in Girard, OH.— Adam Saylor '97, is a Human Intelligence Collector for the US Army currently working in Iraq. — William Nieporte '85, is working as a pastor at the Patterson Avenue Baptist Church in Richmond, VA.— Dr. Brenda Halbrooks '81, is pastor at the Three Chopt Presbyterian Church in Richmond, VA.

We ask alumni to visit our website at www.stetson.edu/artsci/religion and to click on the alumni questionnaire located on our home page and fill it out and send it to us at: 421 North Woodland Blvd. Unit 8354, DeLand, FL 32723, or you may e-mail the questionnaire to lguenth@stetson.edu. We would love to hear how everyone is doing, including marriages, children, career moves, graduate work, or anything else you might wish to share. Also please contact Mrs. Guenther, Administrative Specialist II, for any corrections to the Alumni News. We can't wait to hear from you!



Dream as if you will live forever, Live as if you will live only one day." Molana Jalaluddin Rumi

LOST TREASURES of the BIBLE



Understanding the Bible through
 Archaeological Artifacts in World Museums

Continued from front page: Lost Treasures

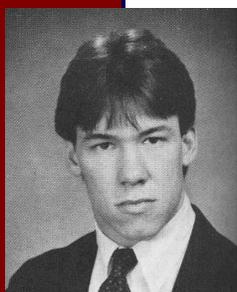
To assemble this collection, the authors traveled to more than thirty museums--some, more than once—whether in St. Petersburg, Russia; Ankara, Turkey; Corinth, Greece; or Cairo, Egypt. There they photographed and studied the Near Eastern and Greco-Roman collections to make the most significant of these holdings, from the viewpoint of biblical history, accessible to a larger public.

The book is intended as a guide both for travelers and for pastors, lay teachers, and students of the Bible to provide new insights into the historical context of the scriptures essential for its interpretation.



Alumni Profile

Daniel
M.
Bell Jr.



After graduating from Stetson in 1988 with a major in Religious Studies, I attended Duke University to earn a Master of Divinity degree in preparation for ordination in The United Methodist Church, and then to earn a Ph.D. in Theology and Ethics in preparation for a teaching career. Upon completing the doctorate, I taught in the Religious Studies / Philosophy departments at several undergraduate institutions before being called to my current position.

Reflecting on my time at Stetson, I am struck by how formative was the time I spent there. The academic preparation I received as well as the life experiences I gained have opened doors and created opportunities for me that would not have materialized had I attended a larger institution.

For example, during my first year of seminary I discovered that the academic preparation I received at Stetson placed me well ahead of my classmates. Whether it was the extensive practice writing or the breadth and depth of the knowledge of the discipline, the religious studies degree prepared me to make the most of my seminary education.

Beyond the excellent preparation for seminary work though I credit my training at Stetson with helping me secure my first teaching positions. Those positions required me to teach everything from Old and New Testament, philosophical ethics, church history, theology, and world religions. Seminary and graduate school did not prepare me for all of that. Rather it was Stetson that helped me succeed.

What I most value about my time at Stetson, however, is the sense of community, the friendships, and the genuine interest in students displayed by the department's faculty.. At Stetson, I first experienced the joy of a vibrant community of conversation where we could wrestle with matters that really mattered. Many of the friendships that formed in the midst of those conversations – with faculty and students – continue to this day. Perhaps the single gift I cherish most is the genuine care and compassion expressed by the faculty for me and my classmates. If the academic preparation I gained at Stetson opened the doors to my present career, it is the profound care expressed by the faculty that most inspires and shapes how I try to live out this career.

Looking back from twenty years, I am convinced that I could not have gotten a better education anywhere else.

Marchman Program for Civic and Social Responsibility

The Marchman Program was again busy this year in support of community engagement across the campus. We held monthly meetings for faculty who teach courses with a service-learning component to them in order to discuss ways to make our teaching more effective. We have also discussed the possibility of Stetson offering a Community Engagement Certificate program in the next couple of years. While there were no natural disasters in the community, the Stetson Ready Team, along with others, assisted new students and their parents as they moved into the dorms at the beginning of the semester. The Marchman Program also hosted the first annual CASE (Carter Academic Service Entrepreneur) grant competition funded by the Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter Partnership Foundation (JRCPF). JRCPF awarded two grants of \$1000,00 each to two Stetson students for their proposals to link academic preparation with community service. Dr. Sapp also taught the first-ever First-Year Seminar course for incoming Bonner Scholar students. The course, REL 190: Self and World, helped students consider the formation of the individual vis-à-vis the community and the individual's role in shaping the community. Amanda Reece worked to develop web sites for the Marchman Program as well as for the Community Engagement Council and served as Teaching Assistant for the Bonner First-Year Seminar. Amanda continues to work with the Marchman Program but will focus on developing the Encyclopedia of Academic Service-Learning in partnership with JRCPF. Sara McKechnie was hired as a second Marchman Assistant and is currently working on Stetson's application for the Community Engagement classification of the Carnegie Foundation.



Mary Gossett receiving the JRCPF Award from Dr. Greg Sapp.