

LUTHER RICE SEMINARY, INC.

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www.LRU.edu



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LUTHER RICE UNIVERSITY AND SEMINARY



PIONEER
JULY 2012 EDITION

**SBC New President Dr. Fred Luter —
LRU's honored guest and commencement speaker**

What a privilege for LRU to welcome Dr. Fred Luter, pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans, as our commencement speaker this past May!

As of this writing, Dr. Luter has just been elected as the next President of the Southern Baptist Convention. This is quite a historic moment for the SBC as Dr. Luter is the first African-American to be elected to the prestigious position.

His dynamic commencement address brought even more excitement to the exercises for the graduating class of 2012, which were held at First Baptist Church of Atlanta on May 18, 2012.

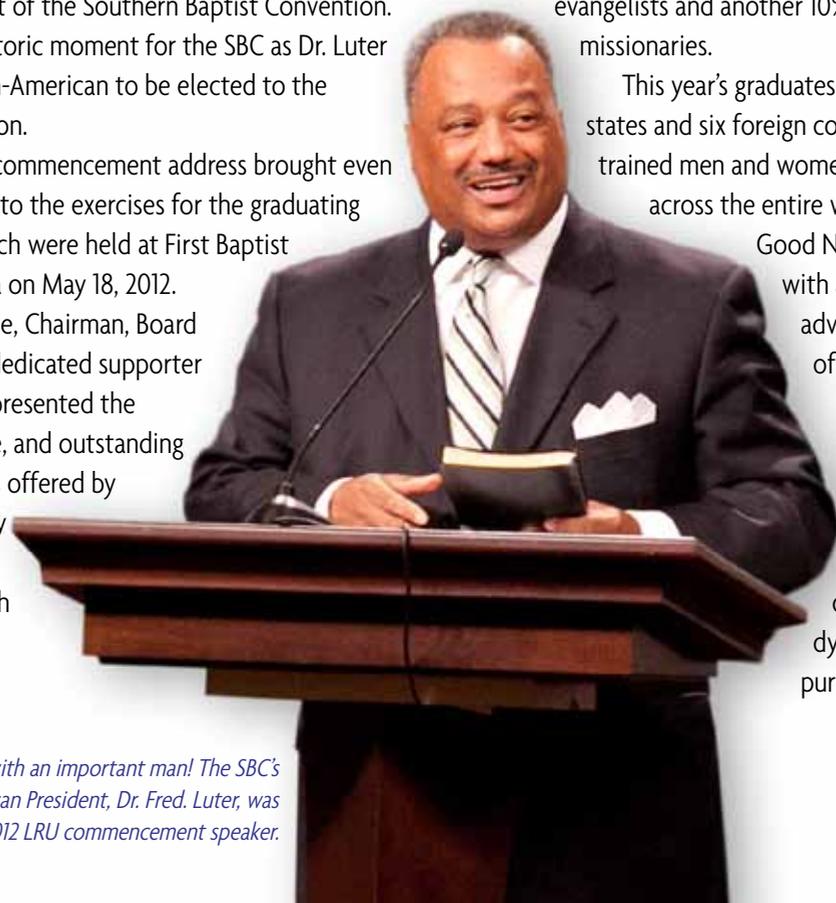
Dr. Jim Waddle, Chairman, Board of Trustees, and dedicated supporter of the seminary, presented the opening welcome, and outstanding special music was offered by soloists Mr. Buddy Mullins and Rev. Billy Johnson, with

prelude and offertory music provided by master pianist, Gary Menzies.

Our 297 graduates in the class of 2012 bring the total of LRU graduates up to over 7,000 alumni serving in various ministries around the United States and the world. Some 50% of our graduates are pastors and evangelists and another 10% are career missionaries.

This year's graduates represent 30 states and six foreign countries. These trained men and women will spread out across the entire world to share the Good News of Christ's love, with a commitment to advancing the mandate of the Great Commission.

Please pray for them as they continue pursuing the Lord's calling on their lives with dynamic courage and purpose.



Historic moment with an important man! The SBC's first African-American President, Dr. Fred Luter, was the 2012 LRU commencement speaker.

Thank you, LRU!

Letter from a student: Melissa Swearengin

God impressed on my heart to start back to school and it seemed impossible!

In calling another Christian university to explain this, they literally laughed at me! The man in registration just discouraged me.

I kept praying, because God would not leave me alone and I asked Him to show me. In a magazine, I saw an ad for LRU, and then I called. The response was completely different.

There was laughter from the man in registration again, but he said, "Of course this is probably God, because if it was easy it would be something you would do in your own strength. God sometimes calls us to difficult things so we learn to rely on Him."

I began registration that day in 2003 and now have completed a Bachelor of Arts in Religion, Master of Arts in Christian Studies, and Master of Divinity, and have prayerfully begun the process to enroll for the Doctor of Ministry.

Dr. Ricketson taught his students this semester that organizational integrity is only as strong as the personal

integrity of those within the organization. Our school is full of people who fulfill the mission, they want to see leaders and servants of Christ equipped to do God's work throughout the world!

I have had professors pray for me through some very difficult times, and they related to me as an individual not just a number on the class roster.

I am on my knees each week praying for God to continue to guard Dr. Flanagan, the staff, administration and especially all of the professors who teach. I know that just as our Father has exhibited his faithfulness over the past 50 years, He will continue to hold this school up and make it stand for 50 more years, or until His glorious return.

There are no words to adequately express my thankfulness

to God for all of the ways He has blessed me through Luther Rice University and Seminary, and the wonderful friends He has given me throughout the adventure.

— Melissa Swearengin



INSIDE THIS EDITION, YOU'LL FIND

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❖ Celebrating the past, present, and future **PAGE 4** ❖ **And much more!**

A Personal Word

Words fail to adequately describe our 50th Anniversary Celebration. It was an amazing evening of celebration and a special time to honor the history of this great institution. Some highlights ...

- Thrilling testimonies by alumni, describing the impact of Luther Rice on their lives and all of the distinctive speakers were dynamic in their own right.
- Alumnus of the Year Award — Rev. Robert Morgan, author, speaker and faithful pastor of the Donelson Fellowship in Nashville, TN for 32 years. Congratulations, Robert!
- Insightful and inspirational remarks from David Ralston, Speaker of the Georgia House of Representatives.
- Student scholarship update: by God's grace and thanks to friends like you, we learned, we *exceeded* our goal of raising \$200,000 for student scholarships. Momentum is strong, so we're reaching for the next level of \$250,000 by year's end.

from **DR. FLANAGAN**

Thank you to everyone who contributed and took part in the festivities. If you have not already given, I encourage you to be a part of our campaign to help make the impossible possible for those who want to come to Luther Rice for their theological education.

Through the visionary and innovative methodology of distance education, we can equip servants of our Lord Jesus Christ all across the globe. Our Founder, Dr. Robert Witty, embraced what was then called non-traditional education. The current popularity of online education gives credence to his foresight. With our over 7,000 graduates and 1,300 current students around the world, the sun never sets on our ministry.

As we enter the next 50 years of providing sound theological education to Christian ministers and leaders around the world, we will build upon the heritage given to us and strive to be all God wants us to be for His glory.

James Flanagan
President



Dr. James Flanagan and Ruth celebrate 50 years of LRU!

Reflection:

Dr. David Phillips, Professor of Old Testament and Hebrew

It was the 50th anniversary of LRU — a real time for celebration!

And it reminded me that this year also marks an anniversary for me: it was 25 years ago I received the call that brought me to Luther Rice as a professor.

I moved to Jacksonville with my young bride and two very small children to begin work on August 1, 1987. It seems like only yesterday ... until I look at my three adult children — one was added in Atlanta — and decide that it was a *lot* of yesterdays.

There is much to reflect on, with many changes to the school and to our world in those 25 years. But as I reflect, I think of those things which have *not* changed.

For one, I think of the Bible, the Word of God. It never changes. This is what I was taught in Sunday School as a child myself, and what I teach my students today.

How wonderful to teach at an institution where every professor loves and teaches the unchanging Word. This commitment to the Bible — and the Christ of the Bible — is something else that has never changed.

For another, the hunger of students to learn the Word

of God has not changed. One of the joys of being a professor is to open up a particular verse or doctrine and observe the students, as they perceive the wonders of the Word.

Yes, some things do change. The make-up of the faculty and staff has changed through the years. Many dear professor friends have moved on for one reason or another. I've discovered an occasional phone call does not take the place of a cup of coffee and good discussion.

An obvious change has been the move from Jacksonville to Atlanta. I loved Jacksonville from the start. I had to grow into loving Atlanta ... but when I found a good church home, I did begin to feel a part of this great city.

Throughout these 25 years — considering the many changes, and the many things that don't change, I've felt God's hand here, and His blessings.

I hope He allows me to teach here for another 25 years if He tarries. As we say in the south, "When you are in God's will, you are in tall cotton," and that's where I feel I am today.



At the 50th Anniversary Gala, Dr. and Susie Phillips celebrated 25 years of serving LRU.

50th Anniversary President's Reception and Gala

It's our year of Jubilee! 2012 marks the 50th Anniversary of LRU, and we have been celebrating all year. The photos show some of the highlights and attendees from the 50th Anniversary President's Reception and Gala. It was held on May 17 at the Evergreen Marriott Resort and attended by over 700 people.

A Jubilee Celebration!



The Honorable David Ralston, Speaker of Georgia House of Representatives, addresses the crowd during the Luther Rice 50th Anniversary Gala.



(left to right) Dr. James Flanagan, President; Russ Sorrow, VP Institutional Advancement



Dr. James Flanagan with Rev. Robert Morgan, award-winning author and recipient of the 2012 Alumnus of the Year Award.



Luther Rice Faculty: Dr. Rusty Ricketson and Dr. Scott Henderson, enjoying the President's Reception during the 50th Anniversary Gala.



Heather Futch, Holly Covington, Tom Covington, and Sherri Humphrey enjoy the 50th Gala Reception



Dr. Jim Waddle, Luther Rice Chairman of the Board of Trustees, with his wife Phyllis, at the 50th Anniversary Gala.



Dr. Ron and Lethia Long enjoy the company of Rev. and Mrs. Tony Monk at the 50th Gala



Congratulations are in order!

Friends respond to 50 years of Luther Rice

We're blessed to have friends and supporters across North America and around the world, and blessed that so many took the time to offer congratulations and notes of gratitude on our 50th Anniversary. Here you'll see some of those heart-felt good wishes.

A former Alumnus of the Year sends his congrats.



O.S. Hawkins
President - Chief Executive Officer

April 12, 2012

Dr. James Flanagan, President
Luther Rice Seminary & University
3038 Evans Mill Road
Lithonia, GA 30038

Dear Dr. Flanagan:

Greetings from GuideStone. One of the signal joys of my life is to have been listed among such friends as Dr. Charles Stanley, Dr. Jerry Vines, and so many others as recipients of the Alumnus of the Year award from Luther Rice. As we approach our 50th Anniversary Celebration, I could not let another moment go by without letting you know how much your integrity and excellence across the years in leading Luther Rice has been a constant source of encouragement and blessing to me personally.

As you celebrate the 50th anniversary on May 17, please know that I wish my schedule had allowed me to be there personally to hold up your hands with the others and give thanks to God for the past, present, and continuing ministry of Luther Rice Seminary & University. Blessings upon you always.

Sincerely,

O. S. Hawkins

mw

Luther Rice University and Seminary

Beyond the Jubilee: \$250,000 for student scholarships!

Yes, Dr. Flanagan, I am rejoicing that we exceeded the \$200,000 *Year of Jubilee* goal for student scholarships so far, and I want to reach to the next level with you and ensure no deserving student is turned away for lack of finances. Enclosed is my gift of: \$ _____

Name _____

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Our Georgia friends and neighbors are so good to us.



February 21, 2012

James Flanagan
Luther Rice Seminary and University
3038 Evans Mill Road
Lithonia, GA 30038

Dear Dr. Flanagan,

Greetings to you my friend!

I just wanted to drop you a note to say what an incredibly professional and first class event the 50th Anniversary celebration was at Stone Mountain. I was so impressed with all that took place that night. Kathy and I were honored to be a small part of the celebration.

It was a blessing to hear how the Lord has used you and others through the years to raise up a wonderful ministry that has aided and influenced so many. All those you honored, past and present, was done in such a loving and Christ honoring way. Thank you so much for including us. To God be praise!!!

I look forward, with great anticipation to all the Lord will continue to do in and through the ministry there. As you think about moving some of your office staff to Woodstock, let me know how I can help. I want to come to the campus soon and get caught up on all that has transpired the past few years.

I pray God's rich and abiding blessings upon you and the ministry of Luther Rice Seminary and University.

In Christ's Love,

Jim Law
Executive Pastor

A tribute poem from an alumnus!



February 14, 2012

Luther Rice Seminary's
50th
Golden Anniversary Ode

Each time I reflect on LRS days
The Spirit of the Lord prompts me
To shout: Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!
Well Glory! Amen! and Yea!

When God brought LRS to being
50 years ago,
He ordained it with love
And encouraged it to grow.

All along the journey were adventures
That He planned,
And in all things LRS was guided by His hand.

After 50 years of educating God's
servants in Love,
LRS is still blessed and guided
From above.

I'm praying for God's blessings
Upon LRS to remain,
And with a grateful heart I say,
Blessed be His name.

Dick Thomassian
Class of 1995

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January 26, 2012

Dr. James Flanagan
Luther Rice Seminary and University
3038 Evans Mill Road
Lithonia, GA 30038

Dear Dr. Flanagan,

I received your very kind and special invitation to attend the 50th Anniversary Celebrate Luther Rice Seminary and University. Unfortunately, I will be in southeast Georgia conference for senior adults on May 17. Otherwise, I would be present to rejoice with you on this very special occasion. I will be praying for you and all of the Luther Rice family as I witness what God has done across these amazing 50 years of ministry.

Thank you for the incredible leadership you are providing at Luther Rice. I am grateful for your devotion to our Lord Jesus Christ, to His Word and to the students. It must bring great joy to your heart to see so many Luther Rice students all around the world serving Christ faithfully.

Please know that Georgia Baptists appreciate and love you very much. We pray God will continue to pour out His grace upon Luther Rice.

Most sincerely,

J. Robert White

JRW:kw

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The whole Georgia Baptist
Convention supports LRU.

A famous alum, Charles Stanley,
hasn't forgotten us.



February 15, 2012

To Dr. Flannigan and the staff at Luther Rice Seminary.

Congratulations on 50 years of ministry. I am personally grateful to Luther Rice Seminary, and what you mean in my life. You have provided me a standard of excellence with theological education, not only for me, but for Christian ministers and leaders around the world. You continually affirm the Bible as the inerrant and infallible Word of God, teaching all programs from a biblical worldview equipping students to carry out ministry around the world.

In 1968 I received my Master of Theology, and in 1971 my Doctor of Theology from Luther Rice Seminary. You have instilled in me, as a Christian, to exemplify excellence in every area of life. You have taught that because all truth has God as its source, the entire body of knowledge is consistent with, and not contrary to, God's revelation.

I praise the Lord for the testimony I hear of your faithfulness to minister to so many students worldwide. So many have received abundantly from you, but the most blessed thought of all is that our Lord will never forget your labor of love.

May our Savior continue to be exalted through Luther Rice Seminary, and your own personal witness to all who know you. I trust that God will continue to give you added strength, wisdom and insight into His Word, and I pray you find that your best years are still ahead.

Prayerfully,

Dr. Charles F. Stanley
Senior Pastor, First Baptist Atlanta
President of In Touch Ministries