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New James White portrait unveiled at the James White Library

In a continuation of this year's celebration of the James White Library's 75th anniversary, a new portrait of James White, an Adventist pioneer and the library's namesake, was unveiled on Thursday, Oct. 18, at the library on the Andrews University campus.

Months ago, Larry Onsager, dean of libraries at Andrews University, envisioned a new portrait of White that would resonate with students and faculty and help them feel a new connection with White. "My hope is that the James White portrait reminds students and faculty of the origin of the library name. Having the opportunity to utilize the talents of an award-winning artist like Harry Ahn is a bonus," said Onsager.

Ahn is known as one of the leading portrait artists in the United States. He is internationally recognized and has won numerous awards, including the Michelangelo Buonarroti 500 Celebration International Award in 2008, the Leonardo da Vinci International Award in 2009, and the Grand Prize in the International Portrait Competition in 2010, to name a few. He has been a contract teacher for the Art Department at Andrews University since 1990.

Kathy Demsky, director of the Architecture Resource Center, and a friend of Ahn, initiated the conversation about the portrait with him during the 2011–2012 school year, and was intricately involved in the planning for the portrait. "He brings the human spirit into his paintings," remarked Demsky. "We knew of no one else that could paint James in such a manner."

Ahn's response to the portrait idea was immediately positive. "As a Christian and a Seventh-day Adventist, it's an honor for me to be asked to



A new portrait of James White was unveiled at the James White Library on Thursday, Oct. 18. Harry Ahn, a leading portrait artist in the U.S. and internationally recognized, expressed his honor in being asked to paint the portrait. He also remarked, "God helped me do this."

do the painting," Ahn said. The Center for Adventist Research provided Ahn with background materials about James White, including a photograph. But the portrait came out very differently than the photograph. The portrait was created in Ahn's heart and mind. "God helped me do this," he said. Ahn used oil paints to create the 30 x 40-inch portrait, and also constructed the custom frame. Ahn hopes to create a companion portrait of Ellen G. White.

During the unveiling ceremony, Ahn was presented with the President's Medallion, an honor that recognizes individuals who have distinguished themselves in causes that the University views as congruent with its own idealism, mission and Christian outreach. Ahn was surprised by the medallion presentation. "I don't know if I deserved that," he said. "You just do your best. To me, just doing the painting was an honor."

"I believe art is another source of information that helps define who we are as a people," says Onsager. "This portrait contributes to the integration of faith and learning at Andrews, and

helps provide an account of our history for the next generation."

White became a minister in 1843 and married Adventist pioneer Ellen G. Harmon in 1846. When the first Adventist college was established in Battle Creek in 1874, White was the chief promoter of the college that would eventually become Andrews University. A committed worker for God, traveling widely to preach and encourage, White died in 1881 at the age of 60.

The James White Library holds print books, bound periodical volumes and multimedia materials totaling more than 1.6 million items. The Seminary Library, the Center for Adventist Research and the Mary Jane Mitchell Multimedia Center are housed in the main library. The library also operates two extensions: the Architecture Resource Center, located in the Architecture Building, and the Music Materials Center, located in Hamel Hall.

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