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Stewards of a Legacy

BY NIELS-ERIK ANDREASEN

During the 2005 General Conference Session, members of the World Church poured through the Lake Union to visit two icons of Adventism—Battle Creek’s Historic Adventist Village and Andrews University (Andrews). St. Louis and Berrien Springs might not seem like twin cities, but University Relations recorded more than 600 guests who visited campus for a tour. Many more came through unannounced and most also made a stop in Battle Creek.

With the close proximity of Andrews and the Lake Union Conference office, there is a dynamic relationship not possible anywhere else. Andrews is grateful for the generous spirit of collegiality between our leadership and for the generous financial support of the Lake Union. We are pleased to provide global resources in the context of Adventist higher education to the Lake Union.

We are also grateful for the support and partnership with Lake Union secondary institutions. For the past four years, almost 40 percent of all graduating Lake Union academy seniors chose Andrews University, a six per-

cent increase over the previous four years. Our gifted and committed students, with our scholarship support, become the future leaders of our church and community.

Following is a brief quinquennial report of what has been accomplished, with God’s blessings, in partnership with the Lake Union and the General Conference, for the benefit of our Adventist young people.



Niels-Erik Andreassen,
Andrews University
president

EDUCATING FOR GENEROUS SERVICE

Today, more than 3,000 students from nearly 100 countries study at our Berrien Springs campus, in five schools and one division, and choose from 180 undergraduate and graduate programs. The university’s educational strength extends worldwide through affiliate and extension programs where another 1,700 students are working toward Andrews undergraduate and graduate degrees at 16 affiliated institutions on five continents. Andrews alumni number more than 28,000. They work across the globe, with literally thousands serving in the world church in leadership positions.

Andrews enjoys a diverse teaching faculty dedicated to academic excellence and spiritual development. In addition to teaching, Andrews faculty are challenged and committed to scholarly research and publishing. We are proud of our faculty who made the commitment to our students, understanding that during the few years our students are with us the interactions in and out of the classroom will mold our students’ decisions about career, friends, and service to God and society.

Some of our students’ educational success is demonstrated through national standards. Our undergraduate students are entering college with scores consistently higher than national averages on standardized tests. Our retention rates are nearly 15 percentage points higher than similar private universities, reflecting a six point increase since 1999, demonstrating our students’ success and commitment to Adventist education at Andrews.

The Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, which recently commemorated its 70th anniversary, had a record

enrollment of 768 students in Fall 2005. Seminary students come from all inhabited continents of the world to join one of the most diverse campuses in North America.

Creating a physical environment that fosters learning and builds community among students, faculty, and staff is an ongoing challenge in a time of stretched financial resources. Thanks to the generosity of the Lake Union and other university friends who are also committed to education for generous service, we completed two major building projects during the last quinquennium. The facility that houses the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary underwent a much-needed renovation and expansion, spaces that foster intellectual, spiritual, and social community among the students, staff, and faculty of the Seminary.

The second building project remained a dream for over a quarter century. However, in October 2003, Andrews dedicated the Howard Performing Arts Center to the Giver who dreams of a world filled with His song, healed by His music.

“Educated for Service” is demonstrated creatively and practically in various disciplines. Our music students and faculty offer free lessons in their spare time to disadvantaged children; music performance organizations spend vacations bringing music to inspire the hearts of those stricken with AIDS in developing countries; architecture students serve the building needs of small communities in South America; biology students tutor disadvantaged children in the local community; a potpourri of students volunteer their time each Sabbath for street ministries in nearby Benton Harbor; and hundreds more dedicate their varied talents and time for the annual Easter weekend Passion play which ministers to more than 8,000 guests.

FAITHFUL WITNESS TO CHRIST AND TO THE WORLDWIDE MISSION OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Where do Andrews students get the energy and inspiration to serve? It is through the fresh and energetic youthful enthusiasm—an element that brings great joy to the educational work on campus. Students thrive in the Christ-centered classrooms and daily worship services expected on

a Christian campus, but Andrews students also take hold of their faith experience and live it out in bold new ways. Every Sabbath there are nearly 30 worship opportunities in the Michiana community, including eight options right in Berrien Springs. Bible study in the tradition of Sabbath school has enjoyed a revitalized interest through the grassroots initiative and leadership of Andrews students with the support of their families in the community.

LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP

For nearly a century and a half Andrews has provided higher education to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In 1960 that commitment was redoubled by the General Conference, which established Andrews as a comprehensive university charged with serving the needs of a growing and changing denomination.

However, there remains a tremendous need for educated leaders to support the church’s expansion, to bring

Adventist influence to various fields in the public sector, and to provide faith-based education for the world Adventist family. Andrews stands on the cusp of a new era in Adventist education and is uniquely prepared to serve the global needs of our worldwide church.

Andrews looks to the future with confidence. With God’s guidance and grace, we will strengthen Andrews’ academic programs to make them responsive and adaptable to the needs of church and society. We will nurture our outstanding faculty, who embody the academic excellence and spiritual maturity that inspires students and

prepares them for distinctive leadership roles, and we will remain faithful stewards of the physical spaces of our campus, continuing to develop and provide a physical plant that builds community and supports educational values.

At Andrews we are stewards of a legacy of leadership that inspires us to take seriously what Adventist education sets out to do. We are stewards of resources measured in the lives of people and the walls of buildings, and we are stewards of a mission inspired by our namesake, John Nevins Andrews.

Niels-Erik Andreasen is the Andrews University president.



New students get acquainted during Andrews’ All Fired Up orientation week.