

# focus

THE ANDREWS UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

WINTER 2008, VOLUME 44, NO. 1 | CAREER OF SERVICE | CONVERSATIONS WITH LES & GREG | COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE



## Committed (in a good way) to Andrews

Employee loyalty, a lifelong career—these are concepts which are almost obsolete in our day and age. Today, the norm among workers in their 20s is to switch jobs every two years. But at Andrews University, many faculty and staff have spent the majority of their professional lives at this one institution. What has prompted that type of commitment?

Not all occupations are exciting, but they need to bring some type of fulfillment—either in the form of a pay check, making a difference in other people’s lives, learning a new skill or being part of a team. Employees need to feel that they are making a contribution to the overall success of their organization. Everything from developing proper filing systems to teaching anatomy and physiology has an impact. No job is insignificant.

The effect of employee turnover on an organization can be substantial. In the positive sense, it can bring an influx of new ideas and approaches, and often adding “new blood” revitalizes and brings positive change. On the other hand, the cost of turnover definitely affects bottom-line performance. When an employee gives notice of their departure they are already mentally “checking out” and starting to concentrate on the challenges of their upcoming position. This affects their job performance and may also impact the productivity of their coworkers. The cost of the search for a replacement is significant as well, both in time and money.

So how do we retain quality employees? For many, I believe it is key to affirm their contribution and foster a connection with the institution’s core mission and goals. They need to have a sense of purpose to stay dedicated to their job.

Having collaborated on *Focus* magazine for more than a decade, I’m continually amazed at the number of individuals who have expressed that dedication by working here for 25+ years. Bill Richardson served as a teacher and administrator for 29 years, Delmer Davis taught English and worked in administration for almost 30 years, George Knight taught for 30 years at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Esther Tyler worked at the James White Library for nearly 42 years, Greg Constantine inspired budding artists for 43 years in the art department, Merlene Ogden (who is featured in this issue) served for half a century, and Daniel Augsburg taught at Andrews for a record 60 years. These are just a few names who spring to mind; there are many more.

Current employees who are still actively serving were recently recognized at the awards reception featured in the Faculty/Staff section of this issue. There are now three more names to add to the 25+ category: Greg Offenback, who started at the dairy and is now in transportation; Michael Harrington, who works at the dairy; and Susan Murray, who teaches in the behavioral sciences and social work departments.

What kept them here? I believe they felt a calling, a desire to further Adventist Christian education at Andrews University, to change the world through the students they interacted with. The wealth of knowledge and respect they gathered during their tenure has benefitted future generations of faculty and students.

Merlene Ogden exemplifies that passion for influencing others. For five decades, she worked tirelessly (and I mean that in the literal sense) to make a difference in the lives of thousands of students. As a teacher, dean, administrator, honors director and tour maestro, she was the force behind countless positive and innovative initiatives at Andrews. The benefits of her loyalty to this institution truly can’t be measured.

All these individuals have taken the phrase “bloom where you are planted” to heart. No matter where you work or what your occupation is, I hope you’re inspired to make a difference.



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THE ANDREWS UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

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### Features

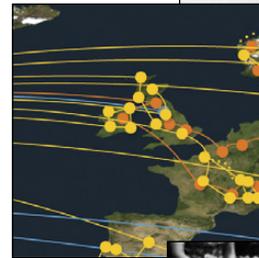
- 14** **A Career of Service and Leadership**  
by Delmer I. Davis
- For five decades Merlene A. Ogden devoted herself to improving the caliber of academics and broadening student's horizons. Davis, professor of English, emeritus, provides a comprehensive overview of the effect her contributions have made to the lives of students, staff, faculty and alumni worldwide.
- 19** **Conversations with Les and Greg**  
by Leslie Rollins and Gregory Snell
- Two alumni give us a firsthand glimpse into the tour genius of "Mother" Merlene Ogden. The benefits of international tours greatly enriched their general education experience and instilled a love of travel and other cultures.
- 20** **A Commitment to Excellence**  
by Meredith Jones Gray
- Honors at Andrews University has a history of excellence and dedication. From Paul Hamel, the visionary who began the program, to L. Monique Pittman, the current director, students have been inspired to dig deeper, learn research and presentation skills, and challenge themselves.
- 43** **Andrews in the Rear View Mirror**  
by Jack Stenger
- Reminisce with Jack as he relates the story of his time spent at Andrews through the wear and tear on his AU sweatshirt.



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#### On the cover

**Donald May** (MA '87), director of general education and student retention and assistant dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, captured the quintessential spirit of Merlene Ogden on a 1984 European academic tour.