

2016 HONORED ALUMNI

Leaders in Christian Education

The Andrews University Alumni Association Medallion is presented to honored alumni who have been nominated by fellow alumni and approved by the Alumni Board of Directors to be recipients of this award. Please contact the Office of Alumni Services to nominate a fellow alum for this award. Honored Alumni are selected on the basis of outstanding service to the University, unusual achievement in a profession or occupation, and contributions to the community or church. Congratulations to this year's recipients.

Gordon G. Bietz

(BD '68, DMin '76)

Gordon Gale Bietz recently retired in May 2016 as president of Southern Adventist University after serving in that capacity for 19 years.

Gordon was born in New Clovis, New Mexico and earned a Bachelor of Theology in 1966 from La Sierra University. During his undergraduate education he attended the Seminaire Adventiste in Collonges, France in 1964. He went on to earn master's and doctoral degrees from Andrews University and also received a Merrill Fellowship from Harvard University.

Of his time at Andrews University, Gordon says, "The intellectual stimulation from faculty mentors and the fellowship with other ministerial students shaped my ministry in significant ways, providing the foundation for lifelong learning and a career that spanned pastoral and academic leadership."

Gordon pastored three California churches in the Northern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists from 1968–1981, before transitioning to ministry in the Southern Union. He became president of Southern Adventist University in 1997.

Since becoming Southern Adventist University's 25th president, Gordon has followed an ambitious agenda to update facilities, grow the university's academic offerings, and maintain the campus' focus on spiritual development. Under his leadership, enrollment increased by over 1,200

students, and facilities experienced record renovations to accommodate that growth.

The academic programs at Southern Adventist University were strengthened by earning top accreditations for the professional schools. The graduate studies program grew from a handful of classes to 10 master's degrees and numerous concentrations within those degrees.

Before accepting the position as president at Southern, Gordon pastored the Collegedale Adventist Church and served as president of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference. To encourage Christian growth on a large campus, Gordon oversaw the creation of an increasing number of small-group studies.

Gordon was also instrumental in developing Vision 20/20, a strategic plan outlining 16 specific initiatives designed to strengthen the campus in a variety of ways.

Gordon assumed a number of off-campus leadership roles as well, including membership on several boards for hospitals and non-profits in the greater Chattanooga area. He also serves as executive director of the Adventist Association for Colleges and Universities, a consortium of 14 Seventh-day Adventist institutions that collaborate on marketing and enrollment projects, career development initiatives, data sharing, and higher education mission conferences.

He is in high demand as a speaker at workshops and seminars all across the country.

He has authored two books, "Witness" and "Parables of Fenton Forest," as well as numerous articles.

Gordon and Cynthia have twin daughters, Gina (BS '94, MSPT '95) and Julie.

Jon L. Dybdahl

(MA '66, BD '67)

Jon L. Dybdahl was born in Oakland, California and earned a BA in theology from PUC in 1965 and two graduate degrees from Andrews University shortly after: an MA in systematic theology in 1966 and Master of Divinity in 1967.

Jon began his ministerial career in the Northern California Conference where he served as an associate pastor, quickly transitioning to mission work from 1968–1974 at the Thailand Mission where he was an evangelist, pastor and school founder. Continuing the theme of taking on multiple jobs at once, he became the college church pastor, department chair of theology and a professor at Southeast Asia Union College in Singapore in 1974.

He joined the faculty at Walla Walla College in 1976 as associate professor of theology and while teaching there he earned a PhD from Fuller Theological Seminary in 1981, majoring in Old Testament with a minor in missions and Semitic languages. Leaving Walla Walla in 1989 as professor of theology, Jon returned to Thailand for a short stint as administrator/president and professor of theology at Thailand Mission College.

Andrews University invited Jon to be the director of the Institute of World Mission as well as chair the Department of World Mission in 1990.

"Andrews not only impacted me academically and vocationally in a positive way, but offered a rich social environment that has given me friends for life. These friends continue to bring joy," he says.

In 2002, Jon became the president of Walla Walla College. Since "retiring" in 2006, he has taught and preached in at least 35 countries. From 2006 to 2008, he was also professor of world mission (half-time) at Andrews University. He continues to serve as president of Gospel Outreach, an Adventist supporting ministry located in College Place, Washington, which sponsors over 2,000 workers in the 10/40 window.

Jon is a prolific author, having published eight books and served as the general editor of the Andrews Study Bible, as well as contributed dozens of chapters, book reviews and professional journal/magazine articles in multiple publications.

Jon is married to Kathy (Trefz) Dybdahl and they have three children and nine grandchildren.

Benjamin F. Reaves

(MA '66, MDiv '73)

For more than 50 years Benjamin Franklin Reaves has served as a distinguished preacher teacher, speaker and leader. He currently serves as special advisor for mission and ministry to the president of Adventist Health System.

Reaves was born in New York City in 1932. After graduating from Pine Forge Academy in 1950, he earned a Bachelor of Arts from Oakwood College in 1955 and two degrees from Andrews University: a Master of Arts in 1966 and Master of Divinity in 1973. He also holds a Doctor of Ministry from Chicago Theological Seminary in 1974 and a diploma from the Institute for Educational Management at Harvard University in 1987.

He served as a pastor with the Lake Region Conference of Seventh-day Adventists from 1956–1972, and for the Michigan Conference as the associate campus pastor for college youth at Pioneer Memorial Church from 1972–1973. He segued to teaching preaching and urban ministry as an associate professor at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary for the next four years. When his undergraduate alma mater, Oakwood University, came calling, he returned there as a professor from 1977 to 1985.

Recognizing his wide range of talents, he was appointed president of Oakwood University in 1985, continuing in that position

until 1996 when he was asked to serve as field secretary for the world church for a year. Adventist Health System snagged him as vice president for mission and ministry from 1997 to 2010.

Always active in his community, he has served in multiple key positions, including chairman of the members, United Negro College Fund; vice chair, National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education; member of Rotary International and Academy of Homiletics; visiting professor, Chicago Cluster of Theological Seminaries; and was selected by the U.S. Army Board of Chaplains to conduct workshops in homiletics and liturgics. Reaves was also very involved in the Huntsville community and was a featured speaker for 21 years on the Chicago Sunday Evening Club television broadcast.

Reaves authored one book, “Scalpel Moments” and was published in *Review and Herald*, *Ministry* and *Message* magazines.

His positions provided opportunities for travel around the world. As a representative of Adventist college presidents he visited Adventist Colleges Abroad institutions. He also taught at Helderberg College in South Africa as an Andrews University graduate extension professor. Reaves has accepted preaching appointments and given workshops in Bermuda, the Caribbean, Canada, Europe, Australia, the Philippines and across North America. He is the only African-American to chair a General Conference Nominating Committee, at the 1995 GC Session in Utrecht.

“My years at Andrews, first as associate pastor for college youth at Pioneer Memorial Church, then as assistant professor of preaching and urban ministry, provided a quality academic and Christian environment with exposure to a broad international family. Those family threads of Andrews University alumni contacts and association have literally encircled the globe,” Reaves says.

Benjamin was married to Jean Manual Reaves for 58 years before her death in 2013. Jean earned a BA from Andrews University and MA from Alabama A&M. They have three children: Terrilyn Reaves Jackson, Benjamin Franklin Reaves Jr. and Pamel Reaves Walker.

Lily Hok-Neo Wong

(EdD '76)

Lily Wong is the executive director/professor of Advent Links, the Southeast Asia Union College Education Center for Children and Family Studies in Singapore. She has held her current position since 1999.

Lily’s secondary education took place at the Sultan Ibrahim Girls School, where she obtained a Cambridge Certificate in 1961. She received a diploma in education from Southeast Asia Union College in 1963 and furthered her education at Philippine Union College, earning a Bachelor of Science in 1966 and a Master of Arts in 1971, both in education. Her master’s thesis subject was teacher educational training



LEFT–RIGHT: Andriy Kharkovyy, Alumni Services director, Gordon Bietz, Andrea Luxton, president



LEFT–RIGHT: Andriy Kharkovyy, Alumni Services director, Jon Dybdahl, Andrea Luxton, president

and qualification for elementary schools in the Philippines. Lily then attended Andrews University, where she earned an EdD in educational psychology and counseling in 1976. Her doctoral dissertation topic was on adolescent concepts of the family.

She has worked in the field of education and humanities for her entire career, beginning as professor of education and department chair at Southeast Asia Union College in 1976. Additional institutional appointments include Hong Kong Adventist College, La Sierra University, Sonoma State University California, Walla Walla College and Nanyang Technical University.

Lily also received fellowships for post-graduate studies at Stanford University in 1992 and Syracuse University in 1998. She holds current membership in many professional associations and has served on many additional boards and committees.

Lily is honorary director of education for the Southeast Asia Union of Seventh-day Adventists. In that capacity, she manages and supervises all the Adventist universities, nursing schools, secondary, primary and preschool education in Malaysia, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore. She also developed and manages family education programs for the Southeast Asian Union of Seventh-day Adventists.

Lily has presented more than 50 professional papers around the world and has worked for major Asian countries in early childhood education, teacher

training and administrative training.

Of her time at Andrews, Lily says, “We had a great integrated, holistic education that challenged and pushed my limits and potential in social, intellectual and spiritual development. I made many good friends from around the world and had spiritual, caring teachers.”

Lily is married to Yew Chong-Wong and they have one son, Sydney, who works in business development.

Yew Chong Wong

(EdD '76)

Yew Chong Wong was born in Penang, Malaysia and attended Philippine Union College for his undergraduate education. He earned a BA in history and philosophy in 1965 and two graduate degrees from the same university shortly after: an MA in history & philosophy of religion in 1966 and an MA in guidance (education). He went on to further his studies at Andrews University where he earned his PhD in education in 1976.

Wong joined the faculty at Southeast Asia Union College in 1969 and worked as an instructor, dean of men and assistant college dean, eventually becoming academic dean at the college in 1976. He served as academic dean and president at Hong Kong Adventist College in 1979.

During the late 80s he worked as a stockbroker with Dean Witter Reynolds in San Bernardino, California and shortly

following this Wong worked as chair of the business department at Walla Walla College. In 1995 he returned to Southeast Asia Union College as vice president.

In 2001 Wong served as president and CEO of Adventist Health in Hong Kong and returned to the position of academic dean at Hong Kong Adventist College.

He received an Honorary Doctor of Philosophy from Asia-Pacific International University (Thailand) in 2010 for lifetime contributions in management and entrepreneurship in the non-profit sector of higher education and healthcare.

More recently, he taught as an adjunct professor at Walla Walla University in the School of Business and currently works as deputy director of Advent Links-SAUC in Singapore.

Wong has started his own consulting company and completed several projects in Southeast Asia. His work has taken him all over Asia, Europe and the United States. He speaks four Chinese dialects with different degrees of fluency as well as conversational Thai.

Wong maintains that Andrews University gave him a worldview of Adventism and the challenges that faced Adventist educational institutions around the world, helping him understand systems and strategy as important components of planning and change.

He is married to Lily Hok-Neo Wong. Together they have one child, Sydney Philip Chih-Chung Wong, who lives in Singapore.



LEFT–RIGHT: Benjamin Reaves was presented with his medallion at AHS headquarters in Florida by Enoc Lopez (BA '09, MA '14), project liaison for Florida Hospital Innovation Lab



LEFT–RIGHT: Andriy Kharkovyy, Alumni Services director, Yew Chong Wong, Lily Hok-Neo Wong, Andrea Luxton, president