

today



Fall 2020



**Mission TEN:
To Every Nation**
Initiative Draws
to a Close

MILESTONES:

Celebrating Twenty Years of
Dr. Kermit Bridges' Presidency



A CELEBRATION AND REFLECTION OF

DR. KERMIT BRIDGES



20 YEARS OF PRESIDENCY

This past May marks 20 years since I assumed the office of SAGU president. As a student on this campus, I never imagined becoming the longest-serving president in the history of the institution or the longest current serving president of all AG colleges and universities. My wife, Jan, and I consider my election to this office with the privilege provided us to serve this institution as the greatest honor in our lives.



LOOKING BACK

Our journey to serve SAGU actually began in June 1994 when my predecessor, Dr. Delmer Guynes, invited me to serve as Vice President for University Advancement at a lunch meeting during the North Texas District Council. That afternoon Jan and I sensed an immediate confirmation that God was moving us to SAGU. Something happened that night in the Council's final service that I have never shared with anyone but Jan in 26 years. God unmistakably spoke into my spirit that one day I would come to serve as president.

It was a privilege and honor to serve under Dr. Guynes, and my role in advancement was the most satisfying job assignment I had ever filled. So five years later, when he announced that 1999-2000 would be his final year, I found myself doing my best to convince him to remain in office. It's not that I had come to doubt what God had spoken to me; it was a matter of suddenly facing the responsibility of leading this institution. In retrospect, Dr. Guynes had a better sense of God's timing than I did.

From 2000 to 2020, SAGU has been blessed to achieve many significant accomplishments, and we have much of which to be thankful. In terms of academic offerings, we now offer 49 baccalaureate degrees, 20 master's degrees, including the MBA and the Doctor of Ministry degree. Some of our academic programs achieve specialized programmatic accreditation





reflecting the highest standards in curriculum and faculty, and approximately 80% of full-time teaching faculty have terminal degrees. This period has been marked by extensive expansion of facilities with 50% of this campus' under roof square footage constructed since 2000, including Bridges Residence Hall, Teeter Residence Hall, Garrison Wellness Center, and Hagee Communication Center.

Since our founding, Southwestern has also always been a missions-minded university. I am grateful to say that we have not just stayed true to this core component of our identity, but we have further developed our missions vision. In the last decade, we accomplished a remarkable feat in Mission TEN (To Every Nation). We sent our students to serve and reach the lost through this effort to reach every nation of the world. They ministered, worshipped, prayed with, and spread the gospel to thousands of people. By continually stepping out to faithfully fulfill the Great Commission, I truly believe that God has blessed our students and our community. Please read more about this inspiring feat on page 3.

There is not space to reference all those who have helped us realize success during these last 20 years, but I must mention the following servant leaders who have loyally and faithfully served the mission of SAGU. Dr. Paul Brooks and Rev. Terry Phipps have served alongside me all these years to this day, and former employees Dr. LeRoy Bartel, Dr. Robert Harden, and Rev. Eddie Davis, served with me for most of these 20 years. It is

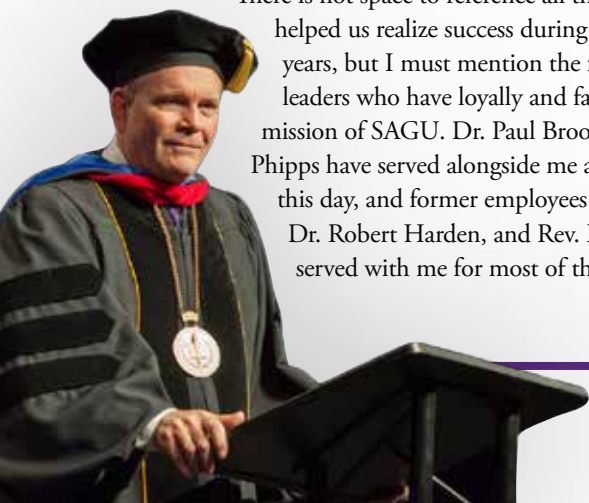
humbling to see gifted faculty, staff, and administrators giving the best years of their lives to advance SAGU's Kingdom mission.

LOOKING FORWARD

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, we are witnessing signs that suggest the coming decade will see SAGU achieving new levels of influence. I am convinced we are poised to witness something remarkable. We have the most highly credentialed and mission-oriented faculty in the history of this institution. Men and women of great faith and skill are filling key leadership roles. We are blessed to have numerous young leaders bringing a new level of God-inspired energy and creativity to their roles. Persons of great influence embrace this mission and step up to help us, and I strongly believe that this new engagement and support will only increase.

I am excited about our future and am more convinced today of the importance of SAGU in training Spirit-empowered students to impact our world than I was 20 years ago. Our students are equipped to excel in their profession and are being employed in outstanding career positions. But what truly distinguishes our graduates is their commitment to Christ and His will for their lives.

May the next 20 years see a record number of SAGU graduates shine the light of Christ throughout this nation and our world as they serve through education, business, counseling, community services, church leadership, criminal justice, media, the arts, government, or wherever His path takes them! ■





2010

MISSION TEN: TO EVERY NATION

2020

In 2010, SAGU committed itself to a mission so great that the only way to accomplish it would be through God's supernatural hand. We set out to send student workers to every nation within ten years (2010-2020). This initiative was called Mission TEN (To Every Nation).

Within a ten-year span, we sent students to 165 nations, including 20 states of India, 15 provinces of China, and 28 U.S. states. More than 900 of our students participated in Mission TEN trips and internships. SAGU Lions traveled worldwide, witnessing firsthand the power of missions.

While we are proud of these accomplishments and our students, the ultimate goal for Mission TEN was never to reach a specific number - it was to simply obey the Great Commission.

“There have been so many amazing moments in this ten-year initiative as students have been a part of God’s work around the world,” said Rennae de Freitas, SAGU’s Ministries Coordinator.

Of the 900 participants, we are proud to announce that over 30 of these students later returned to the mission field to serve missionary assignments. Many of whom now serve as career missionaries!

Joshua Rodriguez, a 2010 SAGU graduate, was the

President of the Student Missions Association when the Mission TEN initiative launched. Today, he and his family serve full-time in missions work overseas. Reflecting on his time at SAGU, he believes that Mission TEN was instrumental in his spiritual development and training for a career in missions.

Even while being a student, he was able to help oversee and develop the training for student mission trip leaders. Joshua shared how God carefully orchestrated his steps at SAGU and Mission TEN to prepare him for the mission field today.

“This all may sound a little cheesy, but as I reflect on how the Lord got my family and me serving in missions...

...it's clear to see how simple acts of willingness and obedience is what God used to lead me to where He wanted.

“The heart behind MTEN wasn’t to check



countries off a list; it was to open our eyes to the nations. My prayer is that all believers would see that the nations are waiting for us to respond.”

During the course of Mission TEN, Rennae de Freitas shared how one student had the privilege to lead a prayer with two Muslim men and lead them to Christ. The two men then asked to be baptized, and since there was no body of water or pool available, the student used a water bottle! During a separate trip, a SAGU student befriended a young man from Northern Asia and that friendship grew into discipleship over social media. Later, the young man flew from Northern Asia to attend the student’s wedding in Texas.

“These are just two of so many life-changing stories that were the result of our project to send students to every nation,” said Rennae.

While Mission TEN has reached its conclusion, we believe that our efforts to send Lions across the world has just begun. We have yet to fulfill the Great Commission, and we know that as long as we are faithful, God will continue to open more doors, reach more of the lost,

and impact so many more lives through our exceptional students and initiatives like Mission TEN.

“We are excited to build upon the accomplishments of Mission TEN as we look ahead to strategic partnerships with a focus on what Jesus said in Luke 10:2 is the answer for the plentiful harvest that lies before us....more harvest workers.”
-Nelson de Freitas, SAGU’s World Ministries Director ■



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Alumnus Presents “What Makes Love Last” on TedX Talks

Brad Robinson, LMFT, a Marriage and Family Therapist based out of Tulsa, Oklahoma, recently reached a unique milestone in his career. In April of this year, Robinson shared a short presentation titled “What Makes Love Last” for TEDx Talks, a household and professional resource that has taken the internet by storm in the past decade.

Robinson began his presentation by posing thought-provoking yet straightforward questions:

Why do people stop loving each other?

What makes a relationship stand the test of time?

From there, he told his life’s biggest “aha” moments—personal revelations that shaped his understanding of relationships and would also direct his practice specifically in helping to



restore broken trust within marriages.

After graduating from SAGU in 2004, Robinson received his Master’s in Marriage and Family Therapy and opened up his private practice, Marriage Solutions, nine years ago. Robinson’s expertise eventually opened the door for a podcast, “Healing Broken Trust.” When the show was regularly produced, it was more popular than Depok Chopra and one of Dr. Drew’s podcasts. Since its launch, the podcast has had a total of over 1.6 million downloads and now averages over 30,000 downloads per month. Robinson stated that its success has allowed him to work with couples from all over the world and in all 50 states.

“What I enjoy most about what I do is people don’t stay in crisis. If they did it would be a very difficult job to have. What drives me is having grown up in a broken family and knowing that there are people who need help and solutions and knowing there are solutions to give them. We hear every day about how our podcast has helped someone I’ll never meet repair their marriage.”

To date, Robinson’s Ted Talk has had over 150k views. He hopes that the information shared will provide value to couples searching for answers. ■



Student Spotlight: Michael Southerland

“After being called into ministry, I knew that it would be essential for me to pursue a degree that helps me in ministry. During welcome week, I got the opportunity to hear from Dr. Clarensau (Dean of Bible and Church Ministries) and I made the decision that a Church Leadership degree was the right choice for me.

So far, I have loved my experience as a Church Ministry major! SAGU has provided me with the tools to help me grow in my relationship with God. Everything from chapel, to ministry classes to Christ-like friendships - SAGU has helped me grow into the person who I know God wants me to be. ■”

SAGU Receives the “Stand Up for Texas Public Schools” Award

For over 30 years, SAGU has supported and partnered with local public schools especially in the university’s hometown of Waxahachie. In recognition of these efforts, the Texas Association of School Boards presented SAGU with the “Stand Up for Texas Public Schools” award.

“We’re very honored to receive the award,” said Terry Phipps, SAGU Vice President for Student Development. “We don’t do these things to receive awards. We do it because that’s who we are. We’re grateful that they have allowed us to be a part of all they’ve done for the next generation of students and the impact they’ve had in our community all of these years.”

SAGU was nominated for the award through the Waxahachie Independent School District (WISD). “Southwestern Assemblies of God University is a longtime partner to WISD,” said Melissa Cobb, Director of Partners in Education for WISD. “We are thankful for the strong and faithful partnership with SAGU.” Dr. Strange, Interim Chair for SAGU Teacher Education Department, stated that SAGU’s partnership with WISD has provided valuable field experience for the university’s education students through clinical teaching and various programs.



As both of our institutions look to the future, we are excited to continue partnering together even during the COVID-19 pandemic. “Many projects continue this year virtually, and we look forward to continued work together during this unique time and in the future,” said Cobb. ■

GLOBAL COMPASSION LEADERSHIP

A New Degree In Partnership with Convoy of Hope



In conjunction with the Hope Education Network, SAGU launched a new degree program this fall to equip our Lions for a career in compassion ministries. Our undergraduates can now learn how to provide for the needs of the disenfranchised and hurting people across the world through our Bachelor's in Global Compassion Leadership.

We recently had the opportunity to meet with **Dr. Wayde Goodall, Executive Director for the Hope Education Network at Convoy of Hope**, to discuss this exciting new learning opportunity for our students!

Q: What is the heart behind the Global Compassion Leadership degree?

A: We are passionate about raising up a generation of leaders who deliver compassion in everything they do — believing that God has called each of us to serve the hurting and treat each other with respect, dignity, and kindness. The vision of Hope Education Network is to train and educate students to think, communicate, and solve human needs through faith-based compassion ministry. We partner with like-minded organizations and institutions to provide mission-focused curriculum.

Q: What distinguishes this degree program?

A: Our **fully-online program** provides compassion-focused vision, tools, and training to university partners and enhances instructor knowledge through coaching and mentoring. Courses incorporate perspective from domestic and international contexts, enriched by Convoy of Hope's years of investment in humanitarian work. Our degree creates a collaborative environment for like-minded experts to offer internships, real-life experiences, and skills. All of this prepares graduates for positions in a broad range of compassion-based organizations.

Q: What is the ultimate goal for a student who completes this degree program?

A: We have developed and implemented our program with one key objective for students in mind — that they be equipped with not only the knowledge, but the mindset and the skills to become the world's next leaders in compassion work. Through our curriculum and excellent university partners, students are challenged, instructed, supported, and prepared for a life of humanitarian service. Convoy of Hope has a driving passion to feed the world; the heart of this program is to train students to propel that work forward, standing on our shoulders.

Q: As you look to the future, what excites you the most about this partnership with SAGU?

A: One organization or university on its own can certainly make a difference, but we see the future in collaboration. Diverse voices and experiences contribute to a rich perspective of the world and the ways it can be served. SAGU's mission is built upon innovative education with a spiritual foundation. Convoy of Hope lives out its name on a global scale by delivering hope with a passion for the under-served and under-resourced. Together, we can empower a new generation to become leaders in compassion. ■





2020 Homecoming and Golf Classic

Despite challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, we were grateful for the opportunity to enjoy many of the same traditions and events with our dear alumni. This year, we were able to host our Homecoming Chapel and announce our alumni award honorees.

The Alumni Association recognizes individuals each year for outstanding service and support of the university, as well as for their contributions and noteworthy success within their respective industry, vocation, or service. The Alumni Association conferred seven awards this year.

Our 23rd Annual Golf Classic also took place during the week of Homecoming Chapel. This annual event is an exciting time of golf and fellowship, and it greatly benefits SAGU Athletics. Thank you to all of our alumni who participated in this event and helped us raise support! If you did not have a chance to participate, we strongly encourage you to consider joining us next year! You won't regret it! ■

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HOMECOMING CHAPEL

- 1 **DR. GAYLAN CLAUNCH**, Superintendent of the North Texas District of the Assemblies of God, received the P.C. Nelson Distinguished Alumnus Award
- 2 **DR. DENNY AND SANDY MILLER** received the P.C. Nelson Distinguished Alumnus Award
- 3 **JOHN ASHBROOK** received the Distinguished Alumnus Award
- 4 **DR. PAULA MANLEY** received the Distinguished Faculty Award
- 5 **REV. ROBERT PURVEY** received the Outstanding Young Alumnus for Vocational Ministry Award
- 6 **ROBIEN CHRISTIE** received the Outstanding Young Alumnus for Marketplace Ministry Award
JOSHUA RODRIGUEZ (not pictured) received the MTEN Mission Award

GOLF CLASSIC GALLERY





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institutions thrive
on both tuition and
financial contributions
from alumni and partners.**

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