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## *The Spirit of Missions*



### ***Spirit of Missions – Going Abroad - BELIZE!***

*Phil Wilhelm, FA Principal (compiled from Facebook Entries)*

Where did you go on your Senior Class trip? Remember the fun. This year our seniors wanted to go on a Mission Trip to Belize. All in the Spirit of Missions here at Fletcher Academy we were going abroad to spread the love of Jesus. Our trip started off very early on a Sunday morning, 2:30 a.m. to be exact. Fifty students and eight staff had a good flight and bus ride to Belize. We finally made it to Concepcion where we were warmly greeted by the church members with a banner they had made and the Belize national anthem. The students awoke the next morning and were ready to work. First there was the wall to demolish inside the church. Block, rebar, and concrete can be tough to knock down. The students worked really hard and had great attitudes. The girls in this class definitely shine. They were hard working and didn't shy away from swinging a sledge hammer or pushing a wheelbarrow full of broken block and concrete down to the rubble pile. Another group of students had been working on digging a septic tank for the church. It had to be 8 feet deep and the ground was pretty hard. Our main goal was to help put a roof on their newly expanded church by building and installing seven trusses that spanned the main sanctuary. The students helped cut the metal pieces and locals welded them

*(cont. pg. 2)*

# FLETCHER Spirit





# FLETCHER Spirit

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(continuing cover story)

together. It took everyone working together to get the trusses up on the wall and ready for roofing material.

Another group of students and some local women went around the neighborhood and invited the children to a nightly VBS. As soon as we got there, the children in the community enjoyed the interaction with our students. The VBS was well attended and we had 40 children on the first night. There were almost no cars that came to the meetings, so almost all the children came on foot.

One of the highlights of the trip was when the students wanted to help the community by putting gravel sidewalks down in the muddy yards for the people to get between their house and their outhouse. They quickly ran out of gravel, but the students took up a collection among them and raised the \$200 needed for another load of gravel. This was such a touching sight to see the students digging deep to reach out to others in such a simple but meaningful way.

The students also had a little time to relax. We took them swimming in a nearby river. When we got there the bus driver backed the bus to the edge of the river so the back of the bus hung out over the river. The water was deep enough for us to jump off the back of the bus, which was a lot of fun. We also took an excursion to an ancient Mayan ruin; something that old was most impressive. We also got to go on a snorkeling expedition on the second largest coral reef in the world.

On our last day when we arrived back at the church we found a banquet set up for us in appreciation. We sang the Fletcher Academy song for the locals and they responded by singing the Belize National Anthem at our request and then it was time for final good-byes. Lots of tears were shed and hugs given. This experience will not soon be forgotten. Even though the students were anxious to see their loved ones back at home, they were very sad to say farewell to their new family in Belize. Suddenly, going abroad didn't seem so far away.





# Spirit of Missions – Going Abroad - HONDURAS!

*Bill Bass, FA Teacher (compiled from Facebook Entries)*

Another group from Fletcher Academy went out abroad to be a blessing in Honduras. Leaving the campus at 4am they flew out of Greenville to Atlanta and then to San Pedro Sula in Honduras. In the morning they split into different groups for the day. At the orphanage they had a school for the grade school aged children, they also had a special needs school for those kids that need a little more time and attention. A group of students went to each of these schools to help out where they could. A third group of students helped take care of and play with the younger children who aren't in school yet. Other students worked on weeding a garden bed which needed a machete for use as a clearing tool, clearing debris out of a chicken coop, cleaning up debris and trash around the orphanage, and helping out in the kitchen.

Later in the week the dental team did some screening at the orphanage. They screened thirty to forty of the children, a lot of whom were really scared. They were set up on the porch at the Hogar in the open air where a nice breeze was blowing leaves in their cleaning solutions. Six of the children allowed their team to treat them and pull six

teeth. There were a couple of them that allowed numbing, but wouldn't allow the rest of the treatment.

There was also a group of students that led out in a local VBS program. The kids seemed to really enjoy the songs, skits, crafts, painting and science experiments of the chemical reactions of Pepsi and Mentos.

Every day they kept wondering how they could improve on the day before and struggled to come up with a way to make it better, yet every day was more spectacular than the day before. Whether it was how they were able to minister to the kids or just the general experience of the day; they were constantly reminded of how great God is and how much they had to be thankful for.

Bill Bass, the sponsor of the trip, had this to say in closing, "As I have been observing the students and how they are changing the lives of those they came into contact with it is amazing how the students are changing as well. This trip has impacted them for the rest of their lives and for that I cannot express how grateful I am to each and every one of you who have had anything to do with this trip at all, you have helped impact these students lives forever."







## Being Molded Under The Potter's Hand: Alumni Weekend 2015

Shawn Collins - Alumni President

It is often good to put things into context as we still move forward, and in early October this past year, alumni from Fletcher Academy once again returned to their alma mater to visit with old friends while remembering we are, and have been, molded by the potter's hand.

"The Potter's Hand" was the weekend theme as pots and bowls were seen on tables and the platform throughout the LPC. On Friday evening, Rebekah Bonjour ('05) presented the vespers program as she remembered her days from Fletcher Academy.

Sabbath morning brought the prayer breakfast, an annual event that brings together past and current students, faculty, and staff in lifting up to God Fletcher Academy and those who currently and have in the past walked its halls.

The rest of the Sabbath was inspiring as well, with over 800 people at the church service to hear beautiful music from the Fletcher Academy groups and a message from the new Fletcher Academy principal, Phil Wilhelm. The afternoon found people visiting with each other, and enjoying an afternoon concert by the band (including former members!).

The Saturday night games were exciting, but even more so was the Sunday morning business

meeting breakfast, where the turnout was the greatest in many years, with all of the FA wish list being met to bless the students. We look forward to seeing you at this fall's alumni weekend!





# Bob Hansen is the Alumnus of the Year 2015

Jon Smith, Corporate Secretary

The recipient of the 2015 Alumnus of the Year Award moved to Fletcher, NC when he was just a toddler. Bob attended the grade school and graduated from the Academy in 1956.

When he was 4 years old he went with his mother, Gertrude Hansen, to work at the Sanitarium Kitchen. He was put to work moving oranges from crates to storage. One morning he told them he wasn't doing it any more unless they paid him – so they agreed to pay him a penny per hour. He also helped plant the old apple orchard on the property where Park Ridge Health now stands.

He graduated from Southern Missionary College in 1962 with a major in accounting and a minor in religion. He then went to work for Knight and Davidson in Woodbury, TN. About 3 years later he moved back to Fletcher with his wife and daughter and worked in an Asheville accounting firm prior to he and Gary Pearson forming their own accounting agency called Hansen and Pearson. They became the largest Adventist CPA Firm in the United States. The firm became Hansen, Johnson & Assoc. in the early 1980's. He worked in the same firm until he retired in 2002.

Since his retirement, he has been enjoying yard work and helping with the great grandchildren. Bob Hansen has served on and chaired the Board of Directors of Fletcher Academy, Inc. for many years. He is currently the Chairman of the FAI Finance Committee and serves as a valued and dedicated FAI Board Member.

Bob, thank you for your dedication to Fletcher Academy over these many years. You are a blessing. We are proud that you are the Alumnus of the Year 2015!



# Welcome to Arthur Gibbs

Gary Carlson, FA CEO



Please join with us in welcoming Arthur Gibbs as our new Director of Development & Alumni Relations. Pastor Arthur Gibbs is an ordained minister and has served in various churches in the Carolina Conference for over 20 years. Most recently he pastored the Tryon, NC church for the past 8+ years.

Pastor Arthur brings a willingness to learn, and a desire to build the relationships that will result in funding the many needs of our schools and businesses. In his own words, "I'm very eager to work for Fletcher Academy as I have a personal testimony where Adventist academy education saved my life. And with our children we have ten straight years of academy ahead of us. So to help us choose a school and discover the

Lord's will for us, we personally traveled to eight different academies in five states over the past 24 months. Adventists are blessed to have so many wonderful schools, each with strengths and challenges. I believe God has an Adventist school for everyone. After much serious prayer, we felt God had Fletcher in mind for us. And we are joining a long list of our friends who have chosen the same. We are excited to join the Fletcher team and to work more directly in helping our young people develop a life-long friendship with Jesus Christ and become His disciples for eternity."

Arthur and Ashley met when they were working at Nosoca Pines summer camp and have been married for 23+ years. Ashley works as a mom and as a pediatric physical therapist. They have three children. Laura is 15 years old and is a freshman at Fletcher Academy. Rachel is 11 years-old and Seth is 9 years-old, both are enrolled at Captain Gilmer Christian School.

## Entire Wish List Comes True Thanks to Alumni!

Arthur Gibbs FA Director of Development and Alumni

Almost \$20,000 worth of equipment has been purchased and installed thanks to the generous gifts of family and friends of Fletcher Academy. Most of the donations were given or promised at alumni weekend this past fall. These gifts along with endowment funds voted from the leading alumni officers has allowed the entire wish list to be fulfilled.

With almost 200 students enrolled the new chairs and desks have removed the need to move chairs around. It has also created a more comfortable learning space which helps students focus. Forty new desks and matching chairs were installed in the science room.

In the past in the LPC gymnasium you would see parents and patrons setting along the side on the floor because we were missing any benches or bleachers. Thanks again to the kindness and support of alumni we have four new fifteen foot benches that can seat around 20-30 people. These benches can also fold up quickly along the wall to allow for maximum space for needed events.

If you join us for worship on Friday night vespers in the historic chapel, you might not even notice what is above your head. A brand new digital projector is hanging quietly down. The bright crisp images are used multiple

times each week for instruction and song services. There is now no need for a cart in the middle of aisle. This is both safer for our students and the projector itself.

The last item that was purchased and assembled in place were the new picnic tables. These days our cafeteria is often easily filled to overflowing with students and staff. And what better way to enjoy the beautiful rural setting of Fletcher than the outdoors? The one lone white picnic table is now joined by three large square tables that sit on the lawn and allow folks to enjoy a meal in nature as weather permits.

Thanks again for the loving gifts that made these projects possible.





## Missions at Home

**Eileen States**  
*FA Chaplain*

Fletcher Academy has a mission to educate our students for life here on this earth but also for their eternal home. God's character is to be reflected in how we choose to live our lives on this earth if we hope to spend eternity with Him. For us to become like God we seek to become other's centered. We provide many opportunities for the students to get involved in ministry to others on our campus, to those in our community, and to those in the countries we visit on mission trips.

Many Sabbath afternoons you will find a large group of our students in downtown Asheville passing out hot soup and bread to the homeless, intentionally praying with those they are handing water bottles to, or handing out GLOW tracts with a message of hope or healing. Two times this past year the entire student body took a day off of school to impact our community in a variety of ways. From laying sod for Habitat for Humanity, washing windows at the Hendersonville Boys and Girls Club, to helping build a shed for an elderly gentleman in our community, the students gladly gave of their time and energy to those in need. Fletcher Academy students have also collected over 7,000 pounds of food for our local food pantries this year.

It is our prayer that these outreach and mission opportunities are helping to develop the character and heart of God in each of our students. They in turn will be prepared to be caring citizens and to have a transforming influence in the world around them to lead others to God and His love for them.



## Missions on a Personal Note

**Annette Echevarria, FA Senior**

This issue of the Fletcher Spirit has been all about Missions. The staff asked me to share how the mission of Fletcher Academy (Educating for Eternity) has blessed my life on a personal way. Growing up, I was taught that being a missionary is a lifestyle, not a location. While I still firmly believe in that, I can attest that this location, called the school of the mountains, is indeed a place where you can develop your missionary lifestyle. This is my third high school. I have school-hopped through a charter school, a boarding school, a public school, and now Fletcher Academy. When I made the decision to attend Fletcher last May, I just knew my senior year would be just like all of my previous "new kid" experiences. School was fun, but somewhat distant because of the short time I spent there. However, as August arrived I soon realized that the big Senior Survival weekend was just a few days away. My self-confidence plummeted. I prayed and asked God to show me why He wanted me here, if He even wanted me here at all. Perhaps He wanted me to continue "missions" at my public school. From the commencement of the trip, I was overwhelmed with not only the kindness of the students, but by the genuine personal interest of the staff. I had never seen a group of young people so comfortable being them-selves, so loving toward each other. They acted like siblings! I was struck by their open displays of spirituality. The second or third night as we were having worship, I looked around at their faces and was awed by their

expressions. I just closed my eyes and listened to their heartfelt songs as I realized that this is what I had been praying for. This is what I wanted to be a part of. With their extensions of friendship, acceptance, and beautiful expressions of praise, they ministered to me in a way that I had never imagined. I finally felt at home. The cynical part of me expected this wonderful feeling to wear off as soon I got to really know the rest of the staff and students. But here it is, only a few short weeks until graduation, and my initial impression has not changed. In fact, it has been strengthened as I have grown close to these unique individuals. Fletcher Academy is a great location, but the mission spirit is not found in the buildings, the dormitories, or even in the church building next door. The missionary spirit is found in the students and staff. This missionary spirit is now in me. What I have captured here at Fletcher Academy I will take with me to whatever location God has planned next for me.







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# Paul Brenton Yingling



*Dedication* 1944 to 2016



*Honor*  
**DEDICATION**  
**goodwill**  
**LOYALTY**  
*kindness* **humor**  
*Acceptance*

**W**hen you meet a man with an unusual name, it gets your attention; however, when someone kind and loyal walks into your life, you may not be immediately impressed. Unlike a strange name, dedication is subtle and reveals itself over time.

In 1968, Brent Yingling walked onto Fletcher Academy's campus. It is doubtful that anyone expected him to spend the next 43 years, his entire professional career, working for the institution. His name, Yingling, matched him. It means "young one," but during his service to Fletcher, his name became associated with loyalty, honor, kindness, acceptance, humor, goodwill, and dedication to God, family, and young people.

Paul Brenton "Brent" Yingling was born into a musical family on May 19, 1944. His interest in music wasn't surprising--but the age at which he expressed his interest was. "He began begging for a violin at the age of three," said his sister, Patricia, "but our parents made him wait until he was four, feeling he needed to be big enough to actually hold the instrument." In fourth grade, Brent added trumpet lessons, and by the time he arrived at Fletcher, according to his wife, Sue, "he could melt you with the rich, pure tones from his trumpet;" however, it wasn't long before Brent decided to focus solely on violin in order to achieve excellence.

His commitment paid off and blessed many in his performances

with Fletcher Academy, the Community Orchestra of Hendersonville, Blue Ridge Orchestra, Asheville Chamber Players, and the Asheville Symphony. His experience with the Asheville Symphony, from its infancy, is a testament to his skill.

Based on the recommendation of a community violin teacher, Brent was hired by the Symphony without an audition and permitted to perform without participating in the compulsory Friday evening or Saturday rehearsals for 30 years, allowing him to play his beloved instrument and share the good news of the Sabbath with his orchestra friends.

Brent's ability to focus his efforts, hone his skill, and excel was also evident in his scholastic pursuits. A graduate of Thunderbird Academy, Brent began pre-dental studies, following his family's wishes, at La Sierra University. He decided, however, that it was not the right career path for him and opted to spend a school year in Collonges, France to regroup. That decision changed everything. Brent fell in love with French, changed his major and, with new focus, excelled in his true passion.

Upon completing his Master's, Brent found his faith immediately tested; he couldn't find a job as a French teacher in the Adventist school system. After a few months of searching, Divine intervention led Brent to bump into a friend in the Loma Linda pharmacy, who mentioned a job somewhere in North Carolina.



(Continued from previous page)

Making a few phone calls, Brent discovered Fletcher Academy and contacted its principal, Professor Nestell. Brent soon became the only Fletcher Academy employee whom Prof Nestell ever hired, sight-unseen, over the phone. He arrived on campus two weeks after school had started, but Brent was right on time by God's schedule.

Though he started as a French and English teacher, Brent added many other roles during his service: he taught Spanish, played in the band and small orchestra groups, led educational trips to Quebec and Montreal for decades, took students to Europe, served as a class sponsor, and filled a variety of other roles. In the 1980s he served as the principal and corporate president concurrently. But the aspect of education Brent loved the most was guiding his students to develop a God-centered worldview. He dedicated himself to this endeavor until his retirement after 43 years at Fletcher Academy. Only Prof Nestell served Fletcher Academy longer.

Work and music weren't Brent's only loves. He was a renaissance man who truly enjoyed life and appreciated the gifts given to him. One of the gifts he most cherished was his family. God's timing introduced Brent and Sue at Fletcher Academy. They both loved the Lord and music. Sue was an accompanist and joined Brent in performing for church and concerts. After she graduated, she joined him in life. Last August marked their 44th anniversary.

Brent's daughters were his next joys. A 1978 letter, written by his mother-in-law, Joyce Marquis, recalls Brent's phone call when his first child was born: "Our Timmy is a Christy!" he said. He seems quite smitten with her." Smitten he was with both Christy and Sara. He also loved his sons-in-law, Steven Gusse and Bryan Halverson. He adored Paul, age 2, and Sarah, age 3, Steven and Christy's children, who always begged to talk to "Papa" on the phone. And his third grandchild, Bryan and Sara's son, will be told of the man who loved

them all with unswerving faithfulness, patience, and commitment.

Brent also infused his life with play. Brent was a prime example of being physically fit and active. He began to see health as a priority after his father died at age 59 from a heart attack. Brent loved to hike, especially with his family. He liked to water ski and was a certified lifeguard for several years. Tennis was another favorite. For many years, he played tennis every Sunday with a group from the Fletcher area, first at the courts at Fletcher Academy and then later at Park Ridge Hospital. However, it was biking that finally won Brent's love and focus. In 1993, he started biking seriously and keeping a written record of the number of miles he had ridden. In 23 years, he rode over 77,400 miles. He biked in the community with Ron Holt, Mike Cobb (his brother-in-law), other friends, and his brother Bruce. Brent and Bruce took several European biking tours, always including France in the itinerary. At the end of the 1994 trip, he arrived home jet-lagged and frustrated that the airlines couldn't seem to figure out how to get his bike home. His feelings of relief and joy are recorded in the last line of his trip journal: "Met Sue and Sara as I headed to the baggage claim area. Great to see them and be home!"

Brent's path wasn't lined with ease or wealth; instead, he accepted King Solomon's challenge from Proverbs 22:1: "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold." Brent lived his life in a way that earned a good name and loving favor. He dedicated himself to the important things in life: a relationship with God, his family, Fletcher Academy students, French, music, fitness...all parts of the path God chose for him. He stayed the course, ran (peddled) the race, and won. We look forward to the day when he will be reunited with his family and friends and say, "Great to see you and be Home at last!"

## A Memory from Christy

"I remember a family musical vespers at the Fletcher SDA Church when my dad fell off the platform. His chair was too close to the stairwell of a stage crowded by Christmas poinsettias so when he sat down and scooted back a little, the back leg of the chair fell into the stairwell. He did a backward somersault down the stairs and landed hard on the floor below. All we could see was his feet flying and his precious viola and bow held high in the air to protect them. Amazingly, his instrument and bow were undamaged and, despite a solid blow to the head causing double vision, he climbed right back up the stairs and played as if nothing had happened."



*Christy Yingling Gusse*

*"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold." Proverbs 22:1*

