ON THE COVER
Committed to educating skilled, bold and articulate leaders for the 21st Century, Garrett-Evangelical’s Leadership Team includes:

Front Row (L to R): Cynthia A. Wilson; Lallene J. Rector; and Luis R. Rivera.
Back Row (L to R): James A. Noseworthy and David L. Heetland

Aware is published quarterly by the development office for alums and friends of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, a graduate school of theology related to The United Methodist Church.

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Dear Friends:

As I write, the new semester has just begun, and we are off to a great start: a good faculty retreat, the leadership team in full swing, the staff and administrators working faithfully, a fabulous orientation week for 93 new students, and the actual beginning of classes! Rev. Stephen Lewis, president of the Forum for Theological Exploration, was our keynote speaker for our fall 2014 Academic Convocation. Rev. Lewis challenged us to “start boldly, and to lead differently.” He noted that we simply cannot keep on doing the same things in the same way if we want to remain responsive to the changing needs of the church and the world and responsive to the rapidly changing cultural and ethnic/racial demographics in the United States.

It has been good to experience the rituals of a new academic year and to be reminded, in the midst of all the busy-ness, that our primary purpose is the preparation of theologically and culturally competent, spiritually grounded leaders—graduates who are equipped to lead change, to bear witness to the Good News of the Gospel, and to make significant impact in their varied contexts of ministry. From beginning to end, it is all about the students.

Orientation was one of the best ever. Rev. Becky Eberhart and her team planned for significant attention to issues of cultural/racial/ethnic diversity and the implications for our life at the seminary. The students read *Whistling Vivaldi* by Claude Steele (as did the faculty in preparation for their own retreat). Steele, a social psychologist, writes in a user-friendly way about stereotype threats and their impact on learning. The title refers to the experience of a black graduate student who realized that if he whistled a tune from Vivaldi as he walked down the street white persons would be less likely to regard him as dangerous. A faculty panel presented an engaging and critical discussion noting that not all stereotype threats are equal. As Dr. Reginald Blount poignantly offered, “Whistling Vivaldi would not have saved Michael Brown.” Two days later, the students spent three hours in consideration of their own experiences of racial/cultural differences and of being stereotyped. It was the beginning of an extremely important conversation that we will be continuing throughout the year. It is a conversation at the heart of our curriculum revision.

I give thanks for our returning students and for our 93 new students. As I left the building at the end of the first day of classes, I was delighted to hear the animated “blurble” as they gathered outside the library—clearly full of life, passion, hope, and vision for fulfilling a call. They are already hard at work!

In the pages ahead, you will hear from our Leadership Team. I thought it important for you to get to know more about this team of people who are so committed to the larger vision and purpose of the school. They have special responsibility for helping to implement the vision, and it is God’s gift to us that each one brings significant talents and grace to his or her responsibilities. They work tirelessly not only because they believe in what we are doing, but because they also love this place! I am incredibly privileged to work with each of them, and you will see soon see why.

So, we commit our way to the Lord, discerning a new and exciting future, hoping to “start boldly and to lead differently.” We pray our efforts will be within God’s purpose for Garrett-Evangelical. We give thanks for the call that God has placed upon the hearts of this new generation of leaders. Finally, we are deeply grateful to you, our alums, trustees, and friends, for the generosity that makes it possible for us to continue this sacred work.

Lallene J. Rector

Lallene J. Rector
Greetings,

As I reflect on the 2013-14 fiscal year, I am filled with gratitude:

- for the many alums, friends, trustees, churches, foundations, and corporations who supported Garrett-Evangelical throughout the year with their prayers, wise counsel, and generous financial gifts;
- for the 27 new endowed scholarships that were established which will make it possible for more students to graduate with less debt;
- for the smooth transition in leadership from President Philip Amerson to President Lallene J. Rector;
- for the strong network of volunteers, including 61 Council of Laity members, 47 trustees, 30 class stewards, and 16 Alum Ambassadors, who helped tell the Garrett-Evangelical story and invite others to become our friends;
- for the 90 new students who answered God’s call to ministry and began their studies last fall, and for the 88 students who graduated from Garrett-Evangelical this spring to begin their ministries in a variety of settings around the world;
- for the progress made on the seminary’s $100 million capital campaign, with a total of $78.3 million received in gifts and commitments by June 30, 2014;
- for the 12 new families who informed us that they have included the seminary in their estate plans, bringing the total number of planned gift commitments to 904;
- for an investment portfolio which finally reached $100 million, after 160 years;
- for the 448 individuals and organizations who made leadership gifts ($1,000 and above). While every gift of every size is very important and gratefully received, leadership gifts are the pace-setting gifts which help ensure that Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary is not simply a good seminary, but a great one, offering a superior theological education to all who enroll.

So thank you to the 3,368 individuals and organizations who were our partners in preparing bold Christian leaders this past fiscal year!
We hope and pray that you will continue to support us in this new academic year with your prayers, your counsel, and your gifts.

With deepest gratitude,

David L. Heetland
# Development Office Summary

## Fiscal Year 2013-2014 Gift Sources and Totals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alum support</th>
<th>(1,465 donors)</th>
<th>Corporate support</th>
<th>(22 donors)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current operations</td>
<td>$ 207,761</td>
<td>Current operations</td>
<td>$ 14,725</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital gifts</td>
<td>$ 376,329</td>
<td>Capital gifts</td>
<td>$ 32,665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$ 584,090</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$ 47,390</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trustee support</th>
<th>(57 donors)</th>
<th>Church support</th>
<th>(89 donors)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current operations</td>
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<td>Current operations</td>
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<td>Capital gifts</td>
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<td>Capital gifts</td>
<td>$ 79,395</td>
</tr>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>$ 945,049</td>
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<td>$1,820,595</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Friend support</th>
<th>(1,698 donors)</th>
<th>Planned gift support</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current operations</td>
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<td>Current operations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital gifts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foundation support</th>
<th>(16 donors)</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
<th>(3,368 donors)</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Capital gifts</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>$ 490,697</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$4,836,612</td>
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## Forging our Future Endowment Campaign

### The $100 Million Endowed Campaign for Garrett-Evangelical

**Update as of June 30, 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campaign Component</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Commitments to Date</th>
<th>Percent of Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted (including facility renovation)</td>
<td>$ 45,000,000</td>
<td>$ 35,668,085</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarship support</td>
<td>$ 40,000,000</td>
<td>$ 32,982,880</td>
<td>82.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty support</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program support</td>
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<td>$ 1,963,866</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$100,000,000</td>
<td>$ 78,393,371</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear Friends,

The 2013-14 fiscal year was a year of transition for the business office. We have re-built the finance staff with a strong team and have instituted a disciplined process for managing the seminary’s business affairs.

The business office plays an integral role in fulfilling the mission of the seminary. We strive to ensure that every resource entrusted to us is utilized in the most efficient manner to provide our students an affordable level of tuition and housing. We have introduced a way of thinking called “Generational Stewardship.” While the concept is not new, it highlights our responsibility to establish a sustainable business model, strengthening our financial position not only for today but for future generations.

Our financial position is exceptionally strong due to your generous support and a significant rebound in the equity markets. I am very pleased to share with you that our investment portfolio, as of June 30, 2014, now exceeds $100 million dollars for the first time in the history of the seminary. Our one-, five-, and 10-year investment returns of 17.3%, 13.5%, and 7.8%, respectively, have all exceeded our investment benchmarks.

Our financial strength comes from the breadth and depth of support from the entire Garrett-Evangelical community. This strong financial position serves as a solid foundation as we continue to execute our plan to grow our “fair share” of enrollment, strengthen our emphasis on focused fundraising, and achieve a sustainable financial business model.

Sincerely,

Dale R. McClain

INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>$86.4M</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>$91.2M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>$101.2M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Greetings,

The Apostle Paul invited the churches of his time, and of all times, to joyfully claim the identity, mission, and title of being God’s coworkers (1 Cor. 3:9a). Garrett-Evangelical is able to conduct its educational mission with excellence and a greater outreach because many of God’s fellow workers around the world support us with their prayers, financial contributions, and student referrals. This generosity allows the school to educate bold, faithful, and skilled religious leaders for ministry. Some of the accomplishments during the 2013-2014 academic year include:

- a total of 399 students registered in all degree and non-degree programs;
- a diverse student body: 45% students of color, 55% white, 51% female, and 49% male;
- an ecumenical student body with 75% Methodist students (70% United Methodist) and more than 35 total denominations represented;
- eighty-five degrees, as well as three certificates awarded to students who completed the deacon studies program;
- promotions for Gennifer Brooks, Ernest and Bernice Styberg Professor of Preaching, from associate to full professor, and Mark Teasdale, E. Stanley Jones Professor of Evangelism, from assistant to associate professor;
- installations of Frederick W. Schmidt as the Rueben P. Job Associate Professor of Spiritual Formation and Luis R. Rivera as academic dean;
- joint appointment of Timothy Eberhart as assistant professor of theology and ecology at Garrett-Evangelical and the Methodist Theological School in Ohio;
- ten books published by the resident faculty;
- leadership appointments of Garrett-Evangelical faculty outside the seminary: Pamela Holliman was elected as president of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors; Gennifer Brooks was elected as dean of the Association of Chicago Theological Schools Doctor of Ministry Preaching Program;
- a Memorandum of Understanding signed with St. Augustine College (Chicago) to provide educational baccalaureate education to Latina/o students who anticipate attending seminary.

Your generosity allows us to proclaim, as Paul did to the Philippians, “I thank my God every time I remember you…. because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.” (Philippians 1:3, 5)

Sincerely,

Luis R. Rivera
Greetings,

Your interest in and commitment to Garrett-Evangelical makes a difference! Some differences are readily observable; others are “behind the scenes.” All strengthen our programs and services to students, faculty, administrators, alums, and communities of faith.

Thanks to you, we have improved institutional technology, increased support systems, and expanded co-curricular and life-long learning resources. We have refreshed all faculty computers, providing state-of-the-art equipment for their teaching and research, and upgraded technology systems supporting the educational and administrative work of the seminary.

We added new equipment and new staff for videography work, increasing the quality of video on-campus and in online learning. Better editing equipment, new graphics, and improved sound equipment are yielding higher quality for the video work of the seminary.

In April, we celebrated the graduation of 23 individuals from the Plus program. Fifty-one individuals have completed this prestigious executive education program designed for religious leaders, offered in partnership with Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University.

In May, Garrett-Evangelical received a Young Clergy Initiative grant ($100,000) from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) to encourage and support Hispanic young persons to hear God’s Call to ordained ministry.

Newly created partnerships with Morningside College and Nebraska Wesleyan University—with others in development—give college seniors the opportunity to take seminary online courses, giving them an early start on their theological education.

To strengthen our commitment to the lifelong learning of clergy and laity, we expanded the offerings of Intersection, an innovative continuing education program allowing individuals to earn continuing education units online by engaging with distinguished Garrett-Evangelical faculty and guest lecturers in thought-provoking lectures and reflection.

All these efforts were possible because of the prayers, support, and encouragement of people like you!

Peace,

James A. Noseworthy
Dear Friends,

This fall we welcomed 93 new students. They came to study at Garrett-Evangelical in order to be formed into bold leaders who will make a difference in the church, the academy, and the world. They have come from over 24 states as well as the country of South Korea. Forty-nine percent of the new students are in their twenties. Many denominations are present, with the majority of the new students coming from The United Methodist Church.

This year’s entering master’s degree class is also the first to participate in a board-approved Guaranteed Tuition Rate, which you can read more about at www.garrett.edu/guaranteedtuition. We are hopeful that this is another avenue by which we can keep seminary costs down.

We continue to seek ways to make seminary affordable for all by providing over $2.2 million in scholarship aid each year. Our scholarships range from 25%-100% tuition with stipends. There are alumni scholarships (for students recommended by an alum), AME, AMEZ, CME, Hispanic, and international student scholarships, as well as scholarships for students who have attended or are attending a historically Black college or university or a United Methodist college or university. In addition, we have scholarships for people who are candidates for ministry in a United Methodist Annual Conference, who are active in their Wesley Foundation, as well as for students who have served or are serving as a Volunteer in Mission or Service.

We are thankful for the many letters of recommendation written, visits to campus encouraged, and scholarship money provided by you, our faithful and inspirational alums and friends, which have made a profound difference in the lives of our students. As we move forward, we are in the process of creating new ways for you to continue to be a part of the recruitment of new students. If you are interested in getting involved, please feel free to contact me at becky.eberhart@garrett.edu. I look forward to our continued work together to provide spaces where students can discover who they are, so that, in the words of Howard Thurman, they can “come alive.”

Don’t ask yourself what the world needs; ask yourself what makes you come alive, and then go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.

-Howard Thurman

May it be so,

Becky J. Eberhart
Dear Friends,

Our students are a vital part of an expansive movement of visionary Christian leaders building an interfaith, interdenominational, intercultural network that is conspicuously transforming the globe for Christ. Garrett-Evangelical students are breaking down spaces of silence and speaking truth to power for the common good. As skilled, bold, and articulate public theologians, our students continue to embody the vision of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary: to proclaim the Gospel, and to teach in diverse congregational and educational settings where respect and reconciliation are pursued in all encounters.

The office of student life seeks to support our students in their preparation for ministry. In the past year, our office sought to do this in a number of ways:

- helping to host the Northwestern University/Garrett-Evangelical Interfaith Dialogue;
- creating a virtual student group for online and distance learners in order to stay connected with the student body and to provide face-to-face encounters with fellow classmates and professors;
- sponsoring Financial Peace University to help students, faculty, and staff learn to better manage their finances;
- seeking creative ways to increase the participation and visibility of our commuter students as well as our international community members and their families;
- collecting hundreds of diapers for needy families as part of the Eliza Garrett Service Team efforts.

Thank you for the many ways you support our students: through your prayers, gifts, and words of encouragement. Please know that you are a blessing and inspiration to our students!

God’s peace,

Cynthia A. Wilson
Dear Friends,

In January, Dr. Lallene J. Rector began her role as president. One of the first projects we tackled was the President’s Assessment Task Force (PATF). This was a team of highly-respected leaders from the local church, community, alums, faculty, staff, and students. The members of this task force conducted interviews to collect data to help Garrett-Evangelical determine how to strengthen the school’s outreach to constituent communities; to enhance its partnership with the local church; and to create a theological education environment that will prepare bold spiritual leaders, ordained and lay, for the 21st century. We will continue to see the work of PATF unfold in the 2014-2015 academic year as we use their findings to support the revision of the strategic plan.

President Rector and I worked to introduce two types of recurring meetings to the community. One is an all employee meeting that takes place once a month. It is a time for faculty and staff to receive the latest seminary news, hear a brief presentation on the work of a department, and celebrate that month’s birthdays. The second meeting, “Conversations with President Rector,” is an all student meeting, which is scheduled twice a semester and is co-sponsored by the president’s office and student council. During these “conversations” President Rector discusses a topic of interest with the students. In the spring, the discussion was focused on religious life.

As an executive assistant, organizing is near and dear to my heart. I enjoy moving old files to make room for the new and reviewing the work ahead of me to determine my plan of action. All of my tasks are made better through my partnership with President Rector. I continue to be in awe of her energy, compassion, knowledge, and leadership. I know the seeds we have sown in the beginning of our time together will continue to bear fruit for the 2014-2015 academic year and beyond.

Your servant,

Erin B. Moore
When Dr. Lallene J. Rector began her presidency on January 1, 2014, she knew she was assuming many responsibilities—none more important than completing the seminary’s $100 million capital campaign. When the campaign began in 2003, it had a goal of $35 million. That goal was later raised to $60 million (in 2006) and then to $100 million (in 2010). When she took office the campaign total was $76 million. She gladly accepted the challenge of running “The Final Lap” of the $100 million marathon—and she has been running ever since! Speaking at Small Informational Gatherings, preaching at churches, hosting the seminary’s first-ever Virtual Town Hall meeting, visiting alums and friends at numerous Annual Conference gatherings, she is constantly on the go—telling the seminary’s story whenever and wherever she can.

And it’s an exciting story! So much has already been accomplished in this campaign because of the generosity of many people. Eighty new leadership scholarships have been endowed, four faculty chairs (in theology, worship, preaching, and spiritual formation) have been endowed, and $35 million has been added to the unrestricted endowment, which will allow Garrett-Evangelical to address emerging needs in a rapidly changing world and to say “yes” to innovative ideas that grow out of its strategic planning process.

While much has been accomplished, much still remains to be done. The Sherman Avenue apartments for seminary students and families are in dire need of renovation. In order to ensure that all students called to ministry have access to a quality seminary education, Garrett-Evangelical must expand the number of new leadership scholarships from 80 to at least 100. Seminary leaders hope to endow several more faculty positions (in such areas as Global Christianity and World Religions, Methodist Studies, and Pastoral Care and Counseling). They also seek to endow its distinctive strengths (The Church and the Black Experience and The United Library, for example). Finally, they seek to add at least another $10 million to the unrestricted endowment, as earnings from an unrestricted endowment will allow the seminary to address emerging needs and goals and stay on the cutting edge of theological education.

We hope you will help President Rector run the final lap of this historic campaign. You can do so by:

- Hosting a Small Informational Gathering in your community so you and your friends can learn more about the seminary’s history and its promising future;
- Praying that others will join this marathon and help her reach the $100 million goal;
- Joining the marathon yourself by making an outright gift, a five-year pledge, and/or a planned gift commitment.

Gifts for any of the above goals are welcome. Many naming opportunities are available for those who would like to leave a legacy or honor a loved one. For more information, contact David Heetland, vice president for development, at 847.866.3970.
Garrett-Evangelical alums and friends have created many new endowment funds during the seminary’s Forging Our Future campaign. Gifts to endowed funds are some of the most helpful gifts to Garrett-Evangelical for they are gifts that keep on giving, providing a living legacy for generations to come. These charitable gifts are invested in perpetuity, with the earnings providing much-needed scholarships and other support to the seminary.

Endowments at Garrett-Evangelical provide for scholarships, faculty support, and academic programs. Named scholarship endowments can be established with a minimum commitment of $25,000. All endowments can be funded with cash or other gifts of value, such as stocks, bonds, or property that can be sold to realize a cash value. An endowed fund can also be created through a charitable bequest or other type of planned gift.

A number of people have decided to endow their annual gift to the seminary through a planned gift commitment so that the endowment fund will continue to generate income equivalent to their annual gift each year after they pass away. Here is how it works: Let’s say that Rev. and Mrs. Jones make an annual leadership gift of $1,000 to Garrett-Evangelical. They can permanently endow that gift by including Garrett-Evangelical in their will for $20,000. Five percent of that endowed fund would then generate an annual gift of $1,000. Any earnings above five percent would be placed back into the endowment fund so that it would continue to grow to keep pace with inflation even if no other gifts are added to the endowment.

To find out how much it would take to permanently endow your annual gift to the seminary, simply multiply your annual gift by 20. A $500 annual gift would require a planned gift commitment of $10,000. A $10,000 annual gift would require a planned gift commitment of $200,000.

In actuality, the typical planned gift is not 20 times the annual gift. According to research, a typical planned gift is 200 to 300 times the size of a donor’s largest annual gift. Whether your planned gift commitment is 20 times or 200 times the size of your annual gift, it is a wonderful way to perpetuate your gift to Garrett-Evangelical, a wonderful way to help the seminary reach its $100 million campaign goal, and a wonderful way to ensure the long-term strength of an institution that has been preparing strong Christian leaders for more than 160 years! Interested? Contact David Heetland, vice president for development, at 847.866.3970.

**LEAVING A LEGACY**

We give thanks for the following endowed funds which were established this past fiscal year, recognizing that they are legacies to future generations of students preparing for ministry.

- The William D. Adams Scholarship
- The David M. Alberts Scholarship
- The E. Doyle Blanton Scholarship
- The Class of 1964 Scholarship
- The Henry F. Curtis, IV Scholarship
- The Alan W. and Judith L. DeGraw Scholarship
- The Ida Easley Scholarship
- The Jean Hembrough Scholarship
- The Sara L. Isbell Scholarship
- The Deborah M. Johnson Scholarship
- The Elizabeth Johnson Scholarship
- The L. Michael Kelley Scholarship
- The Cynthia L. Kristopeit Scholarship
- The David and Christy Newhouse Scholarship
- The Ray and Susan Owens Scholarship
- The E. Stephen Perry Scholarship
- The Lynn and Donna Pries Scholarship
- The Edwin A. Rowe Scholarship
- The Janet Roy Scholarship
- The Addison Shields, Jr. Scholarship
- The Larry W. Sonner Scholarship
- The Donald E. Struchen Scholarship
- The James F. and Joyce A. Thomas Scholarship
- The Ronni Sue Verboom Scholarship
- The Kathleen Voigt Scholarship
- The Karen Slager Wheat Scholarship
- The J. Keith and Bobbie J. Zimmerman Scholarship
Garrett-Evangelical established the Leadership Circle of Congregations in 2007 to recognize and thank those churches that are playing a critically important role in helping to train their future church leaders by supporting the seminary at the leadership level ($1,000 and above). The Leadership Circle of Congregations has grown to 39 churches and church organizations (such as United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men, and Sunday School classes).

Recognizing how important leadership gifts are for the seminary, Garrett-Evangelical is expanding the Leadership Circle to include not only congregations, but also alums, trustees, friends, foundations, and corporations. A number in these groups already give at this level, and we hope many more will consider doing so. In the 2013-14 fiscal year, a total of 448 individuals and organizations gave at the leadership level. The goal for this fiscal year (July 1, 2014-June 30, 2015) is to have at least 500 donors at this level. This far-reaching network of individuals and organizations will play a critically important role in shaping the future of the seminary—and the future of churches and communities around the world!

We hope you will want to join us in this exciting mission and become a member of our Leadership Circle of Donors. We believe the goal of 500 leadership donors is achievable, and here is how it can be reached:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Alums</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corporations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Churches</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>500</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

Becoming a leadership donor is easy. You can make a gift of $1,000 or more by check, credit card, or online at www.garrett.edu/giving. Or you can make a monthly gift of $84 or more, again by check, credit card, or electronic transfer. Your gift can be an unrestricted gift to the annual fund or the capital campaign, where it will be used where it is needed most, or it can be restricted toward any of the seminary’s campaign components: scholarship support, faculty support, or program support.

Will you accept our invitation to join our Leadership Circle? It takes all of us working together if we are going to fulfill our mission of preparing bold Christian leaders for the church, the academy, and the world. Together we can ensure that our churches and communities have the Christian leaders they need and deserve.

**Goal: 500 Leadership Donors in 2014–2015**
Robert Merrilees is the current chairman and former C.E.O. of Spot Trading L.L.C. in Chicago, Illinois, after founding the firm in 1999. Spot is one of the country’s leading trading firms and was named one of the Chicago Tribune’s Top 100 Workplaces last year. Merrilees has also been an active member and lay leader in the church for over two decades, including being a former ordained deacon and elder of the Presbyterian Church USA.

Merrilees’ leadership and accomplishments have been diverse. He was managing director and head of U.S. equities trading for Stafford Trading, Inc. (1996-1998); and managing partner and director of trading at G-Bar Limited Partnership (1987-1995). He also spent time with Arthur Anderson & Co. (1986-1987) as a consultant working on artificial intelligence. In addition, Merrilees is a trustee for the United States Olympic and Paralympic Foundation (the foundation arm of the United States Olympic Committee) and a member of the board of trustees of the Ravinia Festival Association.

Merrilees resides in Wilmette, Illinois, with his wife, Joan, and their five children, where they are all active members of Trinity United Methodist Church and where Rob currently serves as the chair of the church council. Merrilees graduated magna cum laude from Princeton University in 1985, and received his M.B.A. with Highest Honors from Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management in 1997. Merrilees is the co-author of Radio Baseball, an original computer simulation game published by Electronic Arts in 1986, which offered the first-ever sophisticated computer manager. In his off time, he enjoys hobbies of photography, baseball, and writing.

Billie Wilbur is a dedicated church leader with a deep interest in the spiritual formation of future church leaders. Wilbur has been an active and devoted member of the church for her entire life. At Mt. Zion United Methodist Church in Iola, Texas, she served as Sunday school teacher, youth director, lay leader, and worship team chair. She has also served as lay delegate to the Texas Annual Conference and on the lay advisory board for Perkins School of Theology.

As a lay leader, Wilbur has constantly sought opportunities to expand her knowledge and skills, support her family, and serve her community. An avid learner, she has taken numerous online courses in religious education and received a Spiritual Direction Certification from Perkins in 2010, which helped her to think about God’s call in her own life. As time progressed, it was clear that God was calling her to bring theological education to those like herself who wanted more for their spiritual lives. In 2012, Wilbur and her family made the prayerful decision to complete the funding for the Rueben P. Job Chair at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, filled in 2013 by Frederick W. Schmidt. As she stated in an October 2013 Aware article, “People in pews need what seminaries offer, not just through the education of our pastors, but through access to those wonderful teaching resources ourselves!”

Despite all her accomplishments, including her family’s philanthropy and her leadership in the church, Wilbur has always felt her most important role to be a caretaker to her family, including both sets of aging parents. She and her husband, Jay, and their three children, Joshua, Nicholas, and Leah, have recently moved from their home in Panola, Texas, to Rhode Island.
At Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary our mission is to prepare students to become skilled, bold, and articulate religious leaders for the Church, academy, and our world. Your support makes it possible for us to offer the outstanding theological education needed to achieve this goal.

Current students will soon be phoning alums to say hello, reconnect, and ask for financial support. Chatting with students is a great way to make connections and bond over common experiences, as well as to make a gift. Please answer the phone and help our students answer God’s call.

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