The Inauguration of Dr. Dale A. Lunsford
Sixth President of Letourneau University
Our students have returned to campus from Thanksgiving holiday and are now focused on finishing their courses with an ever-watchful eye toward the Christmas holidays.

The arrival of this holiday season signals that my first semester as LeTourneau’s sixth president has flown by, but not without moments that I will long cherish.

This issue of the NOW magazine features some of those moments in photos as it recounts the historic inauguration of a new president. It was my hope throughout the inauguration week that God would be exalted, and I believe from the feedback I have received, He was.

For those of you who were able to attend the inauguration, looking through the photos may remind you of your experience and this NOW magazine may serve as a souvenir of the occasion. For those of you who were unable to attend, this issue provides a pictorial glimpse into the historic and celebratory moments of a university coming together to celebrate its past, its present and its future. My inaugural address, which is reprinted in this issue of NOW magazine, reconnects the university to its great history while recognizing the special place of leadership we hold for the future. During this first semester as president, I have enjoyed several visits I have made to meet alumni around the country, and I look forward to more visits in the new year.

I saw firsthand how LeTourneau graduates are engineering the next generation of corporate jets and commercial airliners, as well as making significant contributions in classrooms and corporate offices around the globe. The presence of God is distinguishing LeTourneau graduates in the way they serve in their marriages, their homes and their communities.

I have met dads and moms who make their children a priority; husbands and wives who stand together in sickness and in health; and faithful men and women of God who lead in their local churches. The young men and women who surround us on campus today are the difference-makers in our world tomorrow. I firmly believe they are worthy of our investment in them.

During our Homecoming 2007 celebration at the end of October here in Longview, I was honored to meet with two of our outstanding alumni: U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Todd DeGroot and Wycliffe Associates President Bruce Smith. They are excellent examples of the kind of graduates who make LeTourneau University so very proud to call our own. They reflect their love for God and service in their work, church and community on a daily basis.

As my first semester draws to a close, I have learned much about LeTourneau University. My goal has been to see where God is already at work and ask how the university can best join in that work.

God has blessed us with talented people and a rich history of ingenuity, especially in the technological fields. With God’s help, we will build on that.
"BEHOLD, NOW IS THE ACCEPTABLE TIME; BEHOLD NOW IS THE DAY OF OUR SALVATION.” II Cor. 6:2

LeTourneau University is an interdenominational Christian university located in Longview, Texas, offering academic majors in the aeronautical sciences, education, engineering, the humanities and sciences. LeTourneau University also offers business degrees and teacher certification programs online and at five educational centers around Texas in Austin, Bedford, Dallas, Houston and Tyler.

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On the cover: Pictured in a reverent moment of prayer over LeTourneau University’s sixth president, Dr. Dale A. Lunsford, are, from left, Teaching Faculty Organization President Dr. Bobby Johnson, Lunsford’s former colleague Mary Irwin, U.S. Representative Louis Gohmert, LETU Student Body President Michael Gaines and LETU Board Chair Dr. Kenneth L. Hall. Photo by Tom Barnard.

Pictured at left: Marsha Lunsford holds the Lunsford family Bible as her husband is led in the oath of office by LETU Board of Trustees Chair Dr. Kenneth L. Hall. Photo by Luke Edmonson.
Inauguration morning started early with an intimate 7 a.m. prayer service in LeTourneau University’s historic Speer Chapel. Faculty, staff and students laid hands on the new president and his wife, praying for God’s wisdom and protection over the Lunsford family.
Clockwise from upper left: A banquet for delegates and guests in the Solheim Arena precedes the ceremony.  • Marsha Lunsford’s mother, Francis Kraft, looks at a display featuring family photos, certificates and congratulatory letters from university presidents around the country.  • LETU Chancellor Dr. Alvin O. Austin congratulates Dr. Lunsford during a moment of levity before the ceremony.  • Dr. Austin and his wife, Sammie, review the greetings table.  • The greetings table also attracts the president’s daughters, Rachel and Hannah.  • Dr. Lunsford points out a detail in a photo to his best friend since high school, Kirk Weinkauf, while Kirk’s wife Donna and Marsha Lunsford peek over his shoulder.  • Marsha fixes the new president’s hood in preparation for the procession.  • Dr. Lunsford hugs his uncle, Donald Lunsford, before the ceremony.

Nearly every graduating class since the school’s founding was represented by alumni delegates. At bottom left are Gene Rundquist, class of 1954; Dr. Lee Hoffer, class of 1955; and Adm. Richard Maughlin (retired) class of 1957. Center picture shows Dave Cottrill, class of 1980; Sheree Cosa, class of 1979; and Nate Saint, class of 1978. LETU Educational Centers were represented by delegates Mark Strait, Longview; Dan Bolin, Tyler; Byron Carter, Houston; and Chris Cardenas, Dallas.
Above, clockwise from lower left: Representing the first graduating class of LeTourneau Tech is Johnnie Whiteley, class of 1948. Faculty members are led in the processional by delegates carrying colorful gonfalons made to represent each of the university’s six schools, including the one pictured here for the School of Graduate and Professional Studies. Mace bearer and Teaching Faculty Organization President Dr. Bobby Johnson prepares to lead the processional. Bagpipes accompany the processional. The Wiley College A Cappella Choir and the Longview String Quartet provide a prelude to the bagpipe processional as student delegates from foreign countries proudly carry their country’s flags onto the stage. Dr. Lunsford pauses momentarily to greet his wife during the processional. Below: Dr. Lunsford’s November 1 inauguration attracted delegates, alumni and friends from all over the country.
Above: Guest speakers at the inauguration include, from left, Chancellor Dr. Alvin O. Austin, former Lunsford colleague Mary Irwin, Student Body President Michael Gaines, GAPS student Reta Spradlin, alumni representative Marta Montenegro, County Judge Bill Stoudt, Teaching Faculty Organization President Dr. Bobby Johnson, and at right, from left, UT Tyler President Dr. Rodney H. Mabry; University of Mary Hardin-Baylor President Dr. Jerry Bawcom and U.S. Representative Louie Gohmert.

The inauguration of a new president is an appropriate time to reaffirm our commitment to the core values of LeTourneau University. Here assembled is the board of trustees, faculty, staff and students. Here assembled are representatives of each graduating class in LeTourneau history, as well as educational and political leaders. It is a rare occasion, the first time in two decades, to demonstrate our unified dedication to the sacred mission of this fine university.

There is power in recalling and restating what we believe as a community – why we are distinctive and the impact we make. I hope you’ll join me in the next few minutes to recommit ourselves to this calling.

At the heart of this university is our belief that Jesus is the Christ and is Lord of all.

In the eleventh chapter of his letter to the Romans, Paul addressed the mystery of God’s plan of salvation and ended with an unqualified conclusion. About God’s dominion, he wrote: “From Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things. To God be the glory forever.”

It is a life-changing truth to grasp that “all things” means ALL things. All originates from God and all is sustained by Him so as to give glory to Him. There is no distinction between what is sacred and what is secular. This world and all that is in it belongs to God.

And in Colossians 1, Paul elaborates on the centrality of Jesus Christ: “He (Jesus) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.”

This is a bold statement but a conclusion at the heart of our Christian faith. All things of heaven and earth were created by Jesus. And today, in Him, all things hold together. In all things, He has supremacy.

We seek to fully know a Jesus who is not only our savior and redeemer, He is also Lord of all; creator of all, sustainer of all.

If Jesus is Lord, then we believe that a Christ-centered university is necessary.

If Jesus Christ holds all things together, then what does this mean for a place of higher learning? Do we draw a line between faith and reason and claim the university as territory where the dominion of God doesn’t apply?

At LeTourneau University, we draw no such artificial line. Instead, we hold that Jesus is Lord of all; we believe that our faith in that conclusion is based on reason. Colossians 1 then becomes the intellectual foundation of the Christ-centered university: no truth can be understood absent of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Wheaton President Duane Litfin says it this way: “There is no quarter of human learning in which Christ is not the central figure—without Him, humans will never make full sense of either their world or themselves. In the end, He is the key to
all that we know and nothing can be fully grasped without reference to Him."

Biology, chemistry, physics, economics, psychology and all intellectual disciplines of the university cannot be fully known without seeking to know how they relate to Jesus. In contrast to much of the wisdom of this world, we understand at LeTourneau University that truth cannot be known without first knowing the Author of all truth—and that author is Jesus Christ.

Former United Nations president Charles Malik has argued that the university is the most influential institution of modern societies. Do you want to see tomorrow’s scientific, business, government and religious institutions? Then look to the college campuses today. The modern university is a gateway through which future leaders pass. It is at the university where the foundations of professional philosophies are learned. Here, tomorrow’s leaders adopt a worldview that will filter personal and professional decision-making for a lifetime.

Like the intellectual leaders of His time, Jesus would find the modern intellectuals of the secular university unable to accept His Lordship. Modern universities are places where a Christian worldview is at best marginalized and more often ridiculed. Public universities view their mission as focusing exclusively on the intellect while avoiding the spiritual. Private higher education institutions, many once founded on Christ, now find Him to be too controversial, not politically correct for a diverse society.

Secular universities have not just abandoned Jesus as the author of truth, they have abandoned the idea that truth exists. Absolute truth has been replaced with a postmodern notion that “truth” is something we each construct on our own.

A friend of this university and noted defender of the faith, Charles Colson, has observed that modern universities have walked away from their obligation to teach with moral authority.

Colson writes, “Jesus Himself said, ‘I am the truth.’ There is ultimate reality. There is a known physical order, and there is a known moral order, because God has created it. Even in a society that says that there is no such thing, it’s true. And if there is truth to be known, each of us has the capacity to know what is right and what is wrong.”

And so in this environment of intellectual bankruptcy, we believe a Christ-centered university is necessary. It is necessary to claim the Lordship of Jesus over all creation. It is necessary to prepare a future generation of leaders who will bring a biblical worldview to every institution of our society. It is necessary to reclaim the importance of teaching what is right and what is wrong.

**We believe LeTourneau University occupies a special place of leadership in Christian higher education.** We are a campus that values technology and ingenuity as solutions to the challenges of mankind. And we are a university that values the gospel of Christ as the only solution to the empty hearts of mankind.

Not affiliated with any one denomination, we are an interdenominational campus bringing together students and faculty from many faith traditions—all unapologetically focused on the person of Jesus Christ. All subject to the authority of the Bible as God’s inspired Word.

We aspire to nothing less than to be the leading school of engineering and engineering technology in the world of Christian higher education.

LeTourneau aeronautical science is the first choice of Christian students everywhere who are called to all aspects of the profession from design, operations and flight.

Our program of professional studies for working adults is among the largest, most innovative, and most academically rigorous of nontraditional business and education programs offered by any Christ-centered university.

Some of our students are called to full-time ministry and we send them as competent professionals ready to serve. Most of our students are called to make a difference in the workplace as business executives, teachers, pilots, physicians and technical experts. They stand out because of their skills, ingenuity and servant leadership. They are people of character and integrity in a world desperate for both.

Former LeTourneau trustee and leading Christian apologist Ravi Zacharias has observed our shortcoming in taking the good news of Jesus unto all the world: “The single greatest obstacle to the impact of the Gospel has not been its inability to provide answers but the failure on our part to live it out.”

LeTourneau University graduates are prepared to live out their faith. Whether in the classroom, the aircraft flight deck or the corporate board room, the professional competence of our students gains the respect of their peers. More importantly, others
can see Christ at work in their lives.

And, we believe we can best educate with a philosophy inspired by our founder, R.G. LeTourneau.

A world-class inventor blessed with an engineering genius, R.G. LeTourneau was often introduced as “God’s businessman.” At a revival in 1919, he felt God’s hand on his life when he heard a minister say that “God needs businessmen as well as preachers and missionaries.” About that important event in his life, Mr. LeTourneau later wrote:

“I have discovered that many men have the same mistaken idea I had of what it means to serve the Lord. My idea was that if a man was going all out for God, he would have to be a preacher, or an evangelist, or a missionary, or what we call a full-time Christian worker. I didn’t realize that a layman could serve the Lord as well as a preacher.”

“Mr. R.G.” combined professional competence with a strong sense of God’s calling on his life. Today, whether you are an 18-year-old eager to prepare for your first step into the marketplace, or a 40-year-old already well into a career, LeTourneau University stands ready to prepare you to be competent but also called.

Mr. LeTourneau’s approach to education was that “one learned best by doing.” That approach continues to this day. Our students don’t just study engineering, aeronautics, business or education, they design and race cars, build and test aircraft engines, and last year invested 70,000 hours of service in our local community and across the world. It is active, engaged learning that makes the LeTourneau University experience an education of the whole person: head, heart and hands; academic, spiritual and practical.

God has assembled here a very special faculty and staff. They share a unity of faith that can only be from the Holy Spirit. It is a faculty from God, working through His grace and bringing glory back to Him. They have heard a divine call to not just teach their courses but to make disciples. They understand a true education goes beyond the training of the mind to the changing of the heart. It is a faculty who are in awe of the tradition of LeTourneau Tech, College and now University. But it is a faculty motivated to do even more to break down the barriers of faith and science; to integrate the Lordship of Jesus Christ into all they teach and study and practice.

Finally, R.G. LeTourneau left us a legacy of reaching out to all the world. The LeTourneau family built significant mission efforts to Africa and South America where they sought to meet physical needs while bringing the good news of Jesus Christ. Today, LeTourneau graduates are designing aviation systems in China and translating the Bible in Mexico. LeTourneau University students are called to all corners of our world, to employ what they have learned to improve lives and change hearts.

In conclusion, we believe that Jesus is the Christ and is Lord of all. We believe that a Christ-centered university is necessary so that believers can be obedient to the author of all truth and so that our society’s institutions can be led by future leaders equipped with a Christian worldview.

We believe LeTourneau University occupies a special place of leadership in Christian higher education—technical, interdenominational and unapologetically focused on the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

And, we believe we can best educate by a hands-on, world-wide, Christ-seeking approach inspired by our founder, R.G. LeTourneau; and delivered by a faculty and staff appointed by God for this very time and place.

Your new president can only imagine what God has planned for this fine university in the years to come. I am excited to be a part of it. I do know He wants us to go forward in the Name that is above all names, the name of Jesus Christ. I know God wants us to join Him in the work He has already begun, on this campus and around the world. And I know that we will face trials and challenges along the way because in our weakness, He is made strong.

The LeTourneau legacy instructs us on how to proceed into this new generation of service. “Mr. R.G.” has already told us how to go forward. He points us to Matthew 6:33. He might say if here today, “University, seek first the Kingdom of God and all else will be added.” And that is exactly what we intend to do.
Counter-clockwise from upper right: Dr. Lunsford with his sister, Marilyn Lawrence, Uncle Donald and Aunt Betty Lunsford. Celebrating with Dr. and Mrs. Lunsford are members of Mrs. Lunsford’s family, including her parents, Robert and Francis Kraft; her brother and his wife, Kevin and Laurie Kraft; Marsha’s brother Kurt and wife Amy Kraft and their children, Erin and Elise; Marsha’s sister Vickie Morgan and her husband Terry. Entering the Solheim Arena following the ceremony, Dr. and Mrs. Lunsford are greeted with applause. Dr. Lunsford and UT Tyler President Dr. Rodney H. Mabry compare presidential medallions. Hannah and Rachel Lunsford show their pride in their father’s accomplishment. Following the inauguration, a public reception features appetizers including fruit, assorted cheeses and crackers, punch and cookies bearing the university logo, flowing chocolate fountains and specially carved watermelons.
What an amazing time to be at LeTourneau! Each year the admissions team talks with thousands of students from around the world about choosing a college. One frequent topic of discussion is scholarships and what LETU offers.

A new scholarship available to new freshmen for fall 2008 is a $1,500 Alumni Scholarship. This scholarship is worth $6,000 (awarded $1,500 annually). Alumni should use the form inside this NOW magazine to recommend a student to receive their award. Alumni who want to award a scholarship to a student in their area but do not know any names may contact the LETU Office of Admissions (Admissions@letu.edu) for the name of a deserving student in their city or region. Alumni must sign the award for the scholarship to be given. Students are only eligible to receive one Alumni Scholarship. A service requirement is required from every recipient. (The Alumni Scholarship is not available to students on tuition waivers or national merit scholarship recipients.) If you need an additional copy of the Alumni Scholarship form, visit www.letu.edu/scholarships.

Other scholarships awarded by LETU are merit-based scholarships—those based on SAT/ACT scores and high school grade point average. Beginning with the fall 2008 freshmen (LETU class of 2012), all three merit awards will be larger and I believe it will make a significant impact on our incoming class. The Presidential Scholarship is now worth $36,000 (awarded $9,000 per year), the Dean’s Scholarship is worth $32,000 (awarded $8,000 per year), and the Honors Scholarship is now worth $24,000 (awarded $6,000 per year). Students can use the Freshmen Scholarship Calculator located at www.letu.edu/scholarships and enter their best test scores and high school GPA to see if they qualify for one of these awards and what the requirements are to keep their scholarships from year to year.
To better serve incoming high school students, the admissions office at LeTourneau University has undergone some changes.

LETU admissions counselors now focus their recruiting efforts in specific programs of study instead of simply dividing the country by geographic regions.

Prospective students interested in a specific program can now contact the counselor who shares their passion for that area of study.

While any of our counselors can still provide information about any of the programs, this major-specific emphasis will better serve incoming students.

To find out more about our admissions counselors, visit our Web site at: www.letu.edu/admissions.
LETU STUDENTS COLLECT OVER 400 PAIR OF SHOES FOR ORPHANED SOULS
Following a community-wide drive for new shoes for underprivileged children in third world countries, LETU student volunteers Tyler Fontaine and David Moore packed over 400 boxes of shoes for transport to Buckner International in Dallas. The program, known worldwide as “Shoes for Orphaned Souls,” was spearheaded at LETU by senior psychology major Courtney Lemmond, far right.

FALL 2007 SEMESTER OPENS WITH RECORD ENROLLMENT
LeTourneau University’s enrollment of traditional students from age 18-22 reached an all-time record in fall 2007, totaling 1,327 students. The school, which annually reports its official fall enrollments on the 12th class day, also recorded a record number of returning traditional students and a record number of high school students enrolled in dual credit classes. The university’s total fall 2007 enrollment, including students in all working adult programs across the state, is 3,925.

LUNSFORD HONORED BY TEXAS HOUSE
LeTourneau University President Dr. Dale A. Lunsford was surprised Oct. 31 to receive a Texas House Resolution congratulating him on being named to the university presidency.

State representative Bryan Hughes made the presentation during remarks at the university’s annual community banquet.

LETU RANKS TOP FOR TEACHER PREPARATION
A report from the State Board for Educator Certification and the Texas Education Agency showed that LeTourneau prepared more classroom teachers for Texas schools in 2006 than any other private university in the state. In a listing of 135 of the state’s educator-preparation programs in Texas, LeTourneau recommended 415 candidates to receive standard certification. LETU prepared more than double the number of educators compared to the next private schools on the list.

NEW ANNUAL FUND DIRECTOR NAMED
Former LETU writer/editor Kris Erickson, a 2006 alumna, has been named director of the annual fund, which provides funds for scholarships, enhanced faculty development and student achievement initiatives. Erickson will also coordinate the university’s annual community banquet and local LETU fundraising events.

WEB SITE RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION
LeTourneau University’s Web site at www.letu.edu was recognized among the top 10 college admissions Web sites in the nation by the National Research Center for College and University Admissions. The LETU Web site placed third and received a perfect score for prominence of its admissions link.

PROFESSOR SPEAKS AT ABET CONFERENCE
Engineering professor Dr. Roger V. Gonzalez spoke at the prestigious international annual meeting of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) Nov. 1-2 in Incline Village, Nev. Gonzalez talked about the LEGS program he directs that provides low-cost prosthetic legs to amputees in third world countries. Gonzalez’ presentation showed others how to prepare students for global workforce through programs, like LEGS, that reach beyond semester-long course work and engage students in study-abroad opportunities.

ABET REACREDITS LETU
LETU’s engineering technology program was recently reviewed and recommended for continued accreditation by the Technology Accreditation Commission of ABET, Inc., which routinely schedules periodic evaluations for reaccreditation. ABET is the internationally recognized accrediting organization for college and university programs in applied science, computing, engineering and technology.

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STUDENTS PRESENT AT TAX COALITION CONFERENCE

LETU students Jordan Callaway and Tara Toyama presented a paper titled “Motivating, Managing and Mentoring Student Tax Preparers” at the 6th Biennial National Community Tax Coalition Conference in Denver, Colo., in October. This national conference is attended by tax professionals and business and community leaders who work with the Earned Income Tax Credit initiatives and the VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) programs. The students had worked with the VITA program last spring and were instrumental in organizing and leading the program at the Longview LETU campus.

SPENCERS PERFORM ‘MAGIC’ TO SPEED REHABILITATION

Professional illusionists Kevin and Cindy Spencer taught simple magic tricks to health care professionals during a two-hour seminar Oct. 12 that showed how to improve motor skills in occupational therapy patients. The seminar, called the Healing of Magic, is a carefully designed approach using simple magic tricks to rehabilitate patients who have had head or spinal injuries. The tricks in the program are designed to improve physical, psychological, perceptual or social functions.

LETU ATHLETICS TEAMS HONORED

The YellowJacket volleyball and men’s soccer teams were honored with the American South-west Conference Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) Team Sportsmanship Award. The award honors the institution
STOMP ATTRACTS CROWDS IN TWO PERFORMANCES
An internationally renowned touring stage production of STOMP attracted crowds to the S. E. Belcher Jr. Chapel and Performance Center for two shows Nov. 13 and 14. The percussion sensation has garnered an armful of awards, and has appeared on numerous national television shows. The eight-member troupe used matchboxes, wooden poles, brooms, garbage cans, Zippo lighters, hubcaps and even kitchen sinks to fill the stage with magnificent rhythms and ingenuity. The event was the first show of such magnitude in Longview.

JOSH MCDOWELL TO SPEAK AT SEMINAR IN JANUARY
Author, speaker and youth specialist Josh McDowell will speak to students during chapel Jan. 18 and will present a three-session evening seminar titled “Face-2-Face,” specially designed for parents and church members. The “Face-2-Face” seminar is in response to research showing only slight differences in cases of cheating, lying and violence by young people who consider themselves religious and those who declare themselves non-religious.

INTERNATIONAL CHEF FROM PERU COOKS FOR LETU
Executive Chef Juan Carlos Barzola of Lima, Peru prepared lunch for students, faculty and staff as part of the dining service’s 2007 “Global Chef” program on Oct. 17. Barzola prepared classic dishes from Peru and other South American countries. He has directed kitchens for several prestigious restaurants, hotels and cruise ships over the past 10 years.

in each ASC championship sport that best displays the positive qualities of sportsmanship and fair play from its student-athletes, coaches and fans.

News and Notes
Dr. Bonita McClain Vinson, 44, is the new director for LeTourneau University’s Dallas Educational Center. In her new role, she is the chief administrator in charge of recruiting, hiring, retaining faculty and is responsible for both the Dallas and Bedford locations.

“I love problem solving, analyzing programs and process development,” she said. “That’s what I’ve done almost my whole career. I’ve worked for colleges and universities most of my life.”

Vinson earned her doctorate in college administration from Texas A&M University in 2006, her master’s degree in college counseling from Louisiana State University in 1994 and a bachelor’s degree in educational psychology from Mississippi State University in 1992.

She worked part-time for MSU when she was a student, but began her career full time in the academic advising department at LSU in 1993 while finishing her master’s degree. She left for a job as a training coordinator for AmeriCorps in Baton Rouge.

She moved to New Orleans to work in Tulane University’s multicultural office, but began looking for other opportunities when, as a divorced, single mother of two, she felt her children were not thriving in the schools there.

While at Tulane, she made contacts at Texas State University in San Marcos and, in 1997, became the assistant director in the multicultural office.

The next year, when her son Nicolas and daughter Andria were 13 and 10, respectively, she married Bradley Vinson.

After four years at Texas State, she accepted the role of director of the career center at Texas Lutheran University, where she has worked for the past six and a half years before coming to LeTourneau.

While in the San Antonio area, she taught courses to traditional and nontraditional students as an adjunct professor for three universities. She taught a freshman seminar course at Texas State, a career development course at Texas Lutheran and graduate courses in college administration at University of Texas at San Antonio.

Vinson was raised with five siblings in inner-city Milwaukee by her mom, who was a divorced, single mother. Vinson describes her childhood years as mostly “un-churched.”

She attended a performing arts high school, but was not one to sit still for study hall classes, so she took advanced classes and graduated at the age of 16. Bored and without a lot of direction, she went to cosmetology school, but later became an Air Force bride and moved overseas to live in Germany, where she found Christ.

“I didn’t have a sense of Christ before I went to Germany,” she said. “It took going overseas, getting away from my family and going through some hard struggles for me to truly find Christ. He wasn’t lost, I was.”

Vinson says her special life verse is Proverbs 3:5-6: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.”
Homecoming 2007 was a great time to reconnect with LeTourneau University alumni from throughout the years. Special recognition went out to the Class of 1957: Marvin and Joy Vogel from Orange City, Iowa and Robert and Lily Frey from Harker Heights, Texas. Alumni from Dorm 4, Quad 4 and Gilbert 2A were also recognized.

LeTourneau University awards its Distinguished Service and Alumnus of the Year Awards to deserving alumni who exemplify excellence in career, community, church and a deep love for the university. Recipients have obtained a high level of accomplishment and possess the highest standards of faith, integrity and character. Recipients also demonstrate a commitment to service in a wide variety of areas. Above all, recipients must have a strong and active personal faith in God. This year’s awards were given to Lt. Col. Todd DeGroot and Bruce Smith.

**DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD WINNER**
**LT. COL. TODD DEGROOT**

Lt. Col. Todd DeGroot, class of 1986, received the 2007 Distinguished Service Award. He is a special air mission pilot with the U.S. Air Force, responsible for all aspects of worldwide executive travel for the vice president, secretary of state, secretary of defense, first lady, congressional leaders, former presidents and foreign heads of state who are guests of our country.

He earned a bachelor’s degree in Aviation Technology from LeTourneau, a master’s degree in Aeronautical Science from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and has completed education at Air Command and Staff College and Squadron Officers School at the Air University at Maxwell Air Force Base. He has served in numerous military operations as a KC-10 instructor/evaluator pilot including Desert Shield, Desert Storm, Southern Watch, Provide Comfort and Restore Hope. Todd has served as an instructor in every plane he has guided for the U.S. Air Force. He is presently a C-32 instructor/evaluator pilot.

He freely gives his time away from the cockpit through involvement in various ministries at his church. He has served as a mentor to cadets from ROTC detachments, the Air Force Academy and the Civil Air Patrol, encouraging them in their career pursuits. He has also been a liaison to several regional FAA offices providing written material for safety publications and serving as a guest lecturer and speaker at numerous safety seminars.

Last spring, Todd was a guest speaker in LeTourneau University’s Aeronautical Science Academic Chapel service and thrilled students, faculty and staff with a presentation of the work he does for our country.

Todd is married to his college sweetheart Tiffany (Meyer) DeGroot ’88. They have six children whom they homeschool together.

When asked how his LETU education helped him
become successful and productive in his community and profession, Todd said:

“LeTourneau’s world-class technical training provided me the solid foundation on which to build a successful military aviation career. The fundamental flight skills I learned at LeTourneau gave me a significant edge in undergraduate pilot training and continue to serve me well even today as I transport our nation’s leaders around the globe. LeTourneau also taught me a work ethic which I’ve successfully used to meet, and often exceed, all Air Force expectations. Finally, LeTourneau taught me about service to God and others. As an active church member, a home-educating father and a member of numerous communities, that training has been used on a daily basis for over 21 years.”

2007 LETU ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR
BRUCE SMITH

Bruce Smith, class of 1979, received the 2007 LETU Alumnus of the Year Award. He is presently serving as President and CEO of Wycliffe Associates in Orange, Calif., a non-profit religious and humanitarian organization committed to involving Christian professionals in service opportunities worldwide to advance Bible translation.

He said his plan in the mid-1970s was to learn to fly a small airplane into remote jungle locations and share the good news of Jesus Christ. However, shortly after joining Mission Aviation Fellowship in 1986, he became the Haiti program manager and worked with the Haitian government to secure long-term aviation operations permits. He also established mail and freight delivery services from the United States to Haiti, serving over 800 nonprofit-affiliated clients with service three times a week—all with a perfect safety record.

In 1990, he began managing worldwide operations with MAF’s Executive Management team which developed a contemporary rearticulation of the MAF purpose statement and refocused MAF strategy. He was concurrently the President of Redlands Aviation Corporation, a $3.5 million for-profit subsidiary of MAF that managed a 17-acre leasehold of facilities on municipal airport grounds. Under his leadership, a $500,000 debt was eliminated and the cash flow grew 15% from a loss to profit situation. He also assisted in the successful sale of the corporation which netted the MAF organization over half a million dollars.

Other roles within MAF included President of Partners in Aviation and Communications Technology, a non-profit subsidiary of MAF focused on Central Asia and North Africa, and Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, responsible for strategic leadership and management of a $24 million operations budget encompassing 24 countries.

Under his current leadership, Wycliffe Associates has seen a 150% increase in financial contributions and a 320% increase in volunteer service contributions. Through his leadership, volunteers have completed four schools, several translation centers and have conducted vacation Bible school for hundreds of missionary children. He can be credited with raising $45.7 million in cash and volunteer services for specific Bible translation projects around the world, affecting hundreds of language groups who still need the Bible translated into their primary language.

He holds a bachelor’s degree in Missions and has completed a master’s degree in Intercultural Studies with concentrations in Organizational Leadership and Islamic Studies from Fuller Theological Seminary, and a doctorate of Ministry with a specialization in Leadership and Renewal from Regent University. He and his wife, Janet, have two grown daughters.

From left to right: Alumnus Bruce Smith, LETU President Dr. Dale A. Lunsford, Director of Alumni and Parent Relations Allison Gardner, and Alumnus Lt. Col. Todd DeGroot

Allison Gardner resigned as LeTourneau University Alumni Director when she moved to Fort Worth, Texas, with her husband, Jason, and son, Cooper, in early November. She will be greatly missed, but will be involved with the university on a part-time basis working with the LETU Alumni Ambassadors program. The university hopes to have a replacement named by January.
MEMORIALS

Wayne H. Knabe ('59 MeS) died on Sept. 10. He is survived by his wife, Helen, four children, seven grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Ramon B. Hill ('63 IE) died June 14. Most of his engineering career was spent in the Aerospace industry. He and his family also spent 11.5 years in mission work in Europe. He leaves behind his wife of 51 years, Pat, three children and their spouses, 16 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Rudy Harris ('73 ME) died Oct. 6 from cancer. Rudy was a resident of Longview, Texas and worked for LeTourneau Technologies Inc.

Nancy Pedersen ('98 PSYS) died on Oct. 22 of cancer. She lived and worked in Longview, Texas and is survived by her son and two grandchildren.

BIRTHS

Scott ('90 ETAT) and Valina Hansen welcomed their seventh child, Andrew, born Feb. 21. Scott works for the Chilkoot Indian Association tribal government in Haines, Alaska, working with GIS and project planning.

Paul ('94 ATFL) and Susan Grenon announce the birth of son Paul on May 11. The Grenons live in Rhode Island where Paul works for Lincoln Flight Center Inc.

Jim ('97 ATFL) and Nicole Henry welcomed Evalina Mary into the world on July 11. The Henry family lives in New Hampshire.

Joseph ('99 ATBU) and Faith Hampton now have three children. Wyatt was welcomed home by Bethanie, 4, and Jesse, 2. The Hamptons live in Thatcher, Ariz.

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Benjamin ('00 DT) and Melissa Cyr welcome their son, Gabe, born July 7. He joins big brothers Noah, 3, and Owen, 2. Ben lives in Maine and works as an Engineer at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.

Dave ('01 CST) and Tamara Dunkin announce the birth of David Charles born July 15. The Dunkins live in Lynden, Wash. Dave works as a Software Engineer for Dealer Information Systems.

Ryan ('02 ASMG) and Kelly (Smith) ('02 ISEL) Scott are proud to announce the birth of Elizabeth (Ellie) Julia born on Feb. 16. Ryan is working on his 5th year with Dynamic Aviation as an Avionics Specialist. Kelly teaches 6th grade science for Staunton City Schools. They enjoy living in Bridgewater, Va. in the middle of the Shenandoah Valley.

John ('03 FIN) and Kari (Norton) ('03 BI) Mellon announce the birth of Brayden on April 20. The Mellon family lives in Waco, Texas.

James Sullens ('04 ME/WE), his wife, Elizabeth and older siblings, Devin and Matthew, welcomed Keegan James into their family. Keegan was born Jan. 28. James works for North American Lighting in Flora, Ill.

Ken ('98 ACCT) and Lin Hough announce the birth of Katie Ann on July 4. The Hough family lives in China.

John ('03 ME) and Bethany Smith ('04 EN) Bassett have added to their family. Sophie Ruth was born Oct. 31 and joins big sister Natalie. The Bassett family lives in Perugia, Italy.

Charles ('05 EN/CSMA) and Alexis Wesley announce the birth of their daughter, Laelia Sky on Oct. 3.

Jered Sandner ('98 EE) and Felice Sandner were married on June 3. They live in Colorado where Jered works for National Semiconductor.

MARRIAGES

LETOURNEAU UNIVERSITY WINTER 2007/08
70’s

Mike Fratcke ('72 HI/PE) was named 2006-07 NAIA-ADA Athletics Director of the Year. The award is selected annually from 14 Region Athletic Directors and recognizes Dr. Fratcke’s dedication to the ideals of intercollegiate athletics and commitment to scholarship, sportsmanship and leadership. Mike has worked for Indiana Wesleyan since 1984 where he is the Athletics Director and Chair of the Division of Health, Kinesiology, Recreation and Sports Studies. He and wife Betty Jane live in Jonesboro, Ind.

80’s

Martin Koschnitzke’s ('83 CHBS) wife, Meri, died from ovarian cancer in March. Martin and his two children live in Estes Park, Colo. where Martin has had a medical practice for eleven years.

Thomas Ehresman ('84 ATBS), an inventor from Loveland, Colo., received the 2007 Lindbergh-Lycoming grant for his project working on eliminating leaded aviation fuel with a new direct injection igniter fuel nozzle. His plans would allow numerous types of fuels to be used in current high-performance aircraft piston engines, including jet fuel, diesel, kerosene and other liquid fuels.

90’s

Jon Robertson ('91 ET), his wife Deanne and their four children will be moving from Maine to Hong Kong. Jon is the Asia Pacific General Manager for Lanco Assembly Systems and will be starting up a new division for the Asian market.

00’s

Darryl Wright ('92 ATBS) and his family live in San Antonio, Texas. Darryl works as an Account Executive for The Five Star Group.

Aurora Geis ('94 BBM) joined San Antonio Federal Credit Union (SACU) as first vice president of lending and senior credit officer. Geis has nearly 20 years of experience in mortgage lending, housing finance and neighborhood and economic development. She previously served as director of the Fannie Mae San Antonio and Austin Community Business Center.

Ernie Leaf ('96 EE) now lives in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates where he works for Stanley Consultants.

Jack Burnett ('97 BBM) accepted a position with Saudi Aramco in Saudi Arabia and began living there in April.

Paul Johnson ('97 BBM) is now the Training Department Manager at Alcoa CSI in Kilgore, Texas.

Kurt ('99 ME) and Johanna Metzger along with their daughter Kassia live in Ukarumpam, Papua New Guinea. Kurt works in the communication and technical services department for Wycliffe. Johanna works as a tutor for students.

100’s

Major General John T. Furlow ('00 MBA) took command of the Texas Army National Guard on September 16 at Camp Mabry in Austin, Texas. Maj. Gen. Furlow’s military awards include the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Korean Defense Service Medal, Lone Star Distinguished Service Medal, Ranger Tab, Parachutist Badge, Australian Parachutist Wings, Order of Saint Maurice and Order of Mercury along with other federal and state awards. John and his wife, Tracey, live in Whitehouse, Texas with their three children, Joseph, Jill and William.
Class Notes

John Miedwig (’00 ASEL) works for Landmark Aviation as a Project Manager. He and his wife Lori have two children, Alexis and Ben. They live in Springfield, Ill.

Sharon Ansley Lopez (’02 BBM) finished her Master’s Degree in Organizational Management. She lives in Shreveport, La. where she is employed as the Director of Education at Remington College.

Trinia James (’00 BBA, ’03 MBA) has published a book entitled “THE Mpire: In Search of the Lost.” For more information visit the-mpire.blogspot.com.

Andrew Valiente (’03 ME/EE) graduated with a master’s from MIT and moved to Chicago where he works as a trader in the stock exchange. In his spare time he enjoys racing school buses demolition derby style.

Luke Brown (’04 ASMS), a lieutenant junior grade in the U.S. Navy, received his aviator wings on August 31. He will be flying carrier based jets.

David (’06 MK) and Katie (’06 MK) (Huber) Mitchell now live in Corsicana, Texas. Katie works for Designer Technologies as Director of Sales and Marketing.

Sabrina N. Parsons (’07 ME) joined Barton Associates of York, Pa. as a plumbing designer in the Healthcare Department. Sabrina has also served as an intern for Barton Associates in 2005 and 2006.

Sports Update

Written by Shane Meling, Sports Information Director

The athletic fields and courts on campus have been bustling with activity all semester long. The basketball teams have been practicing for their seasons that started in mid-November, and it is time once again to recap the YellowJacket soccer and volleyball seasons.

The men’s soccer team finished the season with a 6-11-2 record and provided several high points to the season.

Junior Daniel Iya scored four game-winning goals for the YellowJackets this season, and senior forward Daniel Armas led the team in scoring and points with 10 goals and 21 points for the year. Another senior, Justin Rector, took a step of faith and proposed to his girlfriend during Senior Night festivities. She said yes.

After the departure of former head coach Troy Edwards, student Ryan Potter was tabbed as interim head coach for the women’s soccer team and did a good job coaching in his first season. The Jackets had a thin roster due to injuries throughout the season, but finished with a record of 7-12-1. After starting as a forward for three years, senior Denee McKay moved to the goalkeeper position where she was recognized as an American Southwest Conference Defensive Player of the Week.

Junior forward Amanda Norton became the second player in the program’s history to score at least 20 points in three different seasons. She is currently third on the all-time goals and points list, with 31 and 67, respectively.

The YellowJacket Volleyball team won its first and last matches of the season, but only won four in between. While the season was tough overall, the team managed to go 4-4 at home. The highlight of the season was a win over UT Tyler on “Senior Night.” The Jackets defeated the Patriots for first time after losing the first nine matches between the two squads. Kristen Chapman and Bethany Suderman were each named ASC East Division Player of the Week during the season.

Other individual milestones were also achieved during the year. Abigail Hews became the career leader in assists with 2,788. Suderman set the career digs record at 1,457 and became the first player in school history to record at least 400 digs in two different seasons.
Bryan Benson burns through frequent flyer miles as LeTourneau University’s director of Planned Giving. He visits friends like Albertha Teusink of Holland, Mich., pictured above, and alumni of the university all across the country.

“Having been a faculty member for more than 17 years, I realize the importance of providing Christian education,” Benson said. “I’ve had the pleasure of working in a number of positions at the university over the years and have seen the Lord at work in a mighty way.”

Benson came to LeTourneau University in the mid 1970s as a business and aviation maintenance major. He graduated in 1978 and returned to work in 1979 in the flight degree program as an instructor. He became director of flight training from the mid 1980s to the mid 1990s when he moved into the role of alumni director in university advancement, which he held until taking his current role in 2001. Benson also serves as the university’s pilot.

On his many travels, Benson has seen firsthand the shared love and appreciation for LeTourneau University.

“While many want to leave a portion of their legacy to the university they love upon their passing, they don’t always know how to go about including LeTourneau in their will,” Benson said. “My office provides complimentary ‘will kits’ that contain basic estate planning information, as well as bequest language for those who decide to include LeTourneau in those estate plans.

“Those who have an up-to-date will have peace of mind that their loved ones will not be left to second guess their wishes,” he said. “It gives our donors peace of mind to know their legacy and charity will live on, that their estate gift will impact generations of students for lifetime and eternity.”

Benson pointed out that those who give realize how vitally important Christian higher education is in these rapidly changing times.

“They respect the excellent Christian education and close family environment here at LeTourneau. I love to visit with people who are interested in including LeTourneau in their estate and I encourage them to call me.”

Benson said gifts given to LeTourneau serve a variety of purposes and make an impact in many different ways across the university.

“The gifts we receive through wills are generally used in areas where the university has pressing needs, or the wording of the will can direct the legacy to a specific area or program,” he said. “We also have a growing number of friends and alumni who establish endowed scholarships through their estates.”

Over the years there have been hundreds of students who have had the benefit of a LeTourneau education because of the generosity of someone who unselfishly established an endowed scholarship through their estate plan.

“I experience great satisfaction when I see students enrolled here who might otherwise not have had the opportunity to attend LeTourneau because they are the recipient of one of the endowed scholarships that have been funded by our generous donors,” he said. “It is one gift that truly does keep on giving.”

To receive the LETU free Will Information Kit please use the handy response form below. You can also request your kit by contacting Bryan Benson at (800) 259-5388, (903) 233-3809 or by visiting the planned giving section of our Web site at: www.letugift.org.
Holy Land Journey of a Lifetime
June 5 to June 17, 2008

Register now to join LeTourneau University President Dr. Dale A. Lunsford and LETU alumni and friends as they tour the Holy Land of Israel on a guided tour by experienced tour director Dr. Scott Hummel, LETU professor of Biblical Studies and Christian Ministries.

Gain new insights into the life and ministry of Jesus Christ as you walk where He walked. See with your own eyes the places of biblical significance. The tour will visit Nazareth, Cana, Capernaum, Jerusalem and Bethlehem. See the Mount of Beatitudes, the Mount of Olives, the Temple Mount and Mount Nebo. Travel the road to Damascus. View the Dead Sea Scrolls. Walk down the Via Dolorosa. Take a boat ride across the Sea of Galilee. Visit the Jordan River. Travel along the Dead Sea. See the Pool of Bethesda. Walk into the Garden of Gethsemane. Participate in a communion service at the Garden Tomb.

Deadline for registration is March 4, 2008. For more information, contact LETU Director of Special Programs David Shankle at 903-233-3093.

Photography by LETU Student Jordan Callaway