

THE MAGAZINE OF SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

# seasons

SPRING 2021



*Commemorating the*  
**Westmoreland**  
PRESIDENCY



# Contents



## Samford Celebrates

In this commemorative issue of *Seasons* magazine, we honor and celebrate Andrew and Jeanna Westmoreland.

Andrew Westmoreland will retire as the 18th president of Samford University at the end of the 2020-2021 academic year. In the pages that follow, we take a look back over the past 15 years and hear from students, alumni, colleagues and friends about the impact the Westmorelands have made in their lives and at Samford University.

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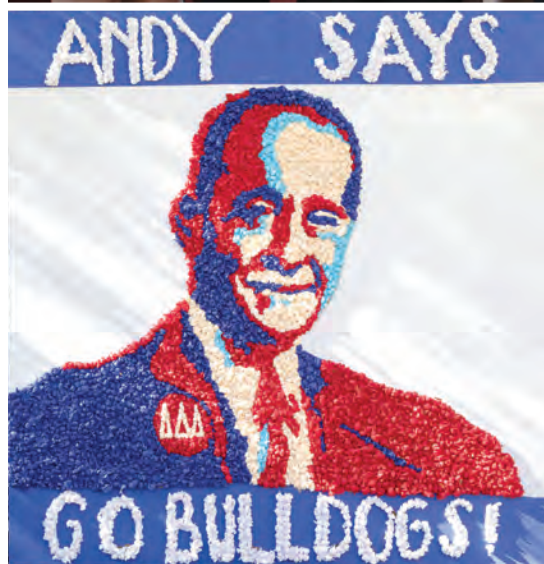
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# *A Life of* Witness *as Wide as the* Love of God

*By Timothy George*

**F**or 31 years, I was privileged to serve as the dean of Samford University's Beeson Divinity School, and worked closely with two extraordinary leaders, Presidents Thomas E. Corts and Andrew Westmoreland. Each brought to the university a remarkable set of gifts, exactly what was needed at the time. When Andy Westmoreland was inaugurated in 2006 as Samford's 18th president, he pledged to deepen "a commitment to that excellence that honors God." He spoke boldly about his vision for a Christ-centered university. Rejecting the dichotomy between sacred and secular, he believed that this goal could be accomplished without sacrificing the highest standards of academic rigor.



Growing up as the son of a small-town Baptist pastor in Arkansas made a deep impression on Andy Westmoreland. Dealing with cantankerous deacons and humiliating “annual calls” (or possibly re-calls) required great pastoral skill and sensitivity. About his father, Andy Westmoreland said, “He exercised extraordinary grace in dealing with people.” That kind of grace is evident in Andy Westmoreland’s own leadership style. His aim is to work with all kinds of people “where they are and how they are,” which requires the skill of taking people seriously and listening well.

As a lad of seven in his father’s church, Andy Westmoreland accepted Jesus Christ and resolved to follow him for the rest of his life. The trajectory of that decision eventually led to a career in Christian higher education and a life of witness as wide as the love of God. The gospel is not restricted to any one ethnicity or nationality, and Andy Westmoreland has led Samford to pursue global Christian commitments around the world through his involvement in the Baptist World Alliance and by building relationships with Christian institutions in Hong Kong and Indonesia, among others.

Andy Westmoreland once said that it was his desire for Samford to be a place of such spiritual warmth that people who just visited the campus would actually feel that reality. At the heart of such a community is the life of prayer. A season of intentional, earnest prayer was an important part of Andy Westmoreland’s discernment in considering his decision to move from Arkansas to Alabama. Prayer helps us to see one another—and the world—through the eyes of the



Westmoreland and George with Doug Sweeney, the current dean of Samford’s Beeson Divinity School.

Savior’s love. This is why, in one of his first acts as Samford’s president, Andy Westmoreland introduced what has now become a tradition: a time of corporate-collegial prayer for the entire community at the start of each new academic year.

As a student, Andy Westmoreland majored in political science, and he is quick to disclaim credentials as a theologian. Still, his vision for a Christian university is deeply rooted in the historic, trinitarian faith of the church: God-called, Christ-centered, Spirit-directed. When he thinks about how to cope with the pressures that perplex every leader, he is drawn back to the Bible and to three verses in particular. Proverbs 3:5, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.” This is a biblical call to humility. Then, Romans 8:26 speaks of the Holy Spirit helping us in our weakness, including offering to God

the prayers of our heart when all we can do is sigh and groan. Finally, Colossians 1:17 speaks of the Lordship of Jesus Christ, “in him all things hold together.”

The preeminence of Christ gives meaning and coherence to every discipline taught in a university, to the moral texture of its commitments and to that love which marks a way of life for faculty, staff and students alike. Among the last words uttered by Jesus during his earthly ministry are these: “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35).

Andy Westmoreland embodies this principle in his personal and family life and in the contribution he has made to Christian higher education over a lifetime of discipleship and service.

***Samford University—and the world—are better because of Andy Westmoreland. ▀***





# Westmoreland Era Fosters Significant Growth in Academic Programs

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*By Ashley Smith*

**Since 2006, Samford University has seen substantial growth of its academic programs, especially at the graduate level. Many of the new additions are a response to the evolving needs and interests of students and professionals.**

At the undergraduate level, 24 new programs have been added including more contemporary majors such as the B.S. in health information management and the B.S. in game design and 3D animation. While adding new degrees that serve the students better, Samford has also refashioned existing programs that no longer meet the demands of the 21st-century student.

"I believe some of our most forward-reaching program additions include our data analytics concentrations that serve both our undergraduate and graduate students. I'm particularly grateful for Dr. Westmoreland's support of our healthcare administration and informatics programs, as well

as his support for the creation of Samford's Center for Sports Analytics in Brock School of Business," said Mike Hardin, Samford's provost. "Dr. Westmoreland's recognition of these and other evolving trends has helped us better prepare our students to fulfill Samford's mission, vision and core values."

With the establishment of the College of Health Sciences in 2013, the number of graduate programs grew exponentially, and this growth continued through strategic planning to cultivate more professional programs across the university. Samford's Cumberland School of Law expanded its master's programs, offering multiple concentrations; and





**Samford University offers  
106 bachelor's degrees and  
77 master's and doctoral  
programs through its 10  
academic schools:**

**School of the Arts**

**Howard College of Arts  
and Sciences**

**Brock School of Business**

**Beeson Divinity School**

**Orlean Beeson School of Education**

**School of Health Professions**

**Cumberland School of Law**

**Moffett & Sanders  
School of Nursing**

**McWhorter School of Pharmacy**

**School of Public Health**

across the university, eight new joint degrees were created. Since 2006, graduate programs have grown 188%, joint graduate programs have seen 92% growth and graduate certificate programs have risen 133%. These new programs have helped contribute to the 35% increase in overall graduate enrollment during Westmoreland's tenure.

Additionally, Samford has developed 23 online programs over the last 15 years, which have caused online enrollment to grow from 64 students in 2007 to 429 students in fall 2020. Many of these new programs are based in the College of Health Sciences, with eight additions just in the past five years.

The success of these new programs can be seen in the increase in overall Samford enrollment as well as the 29% increase in full-time faculty positions during this time. ▶



# Putting People First

*By Leighton Doores*

**In Andrew Westmoreland's 15 years as president of Samford University, the last 12 have been marked by consecutive record enrollment.**

According to Jason Black, who has served as assistant vice president for enrollment management and dean of admission for all 12 years, it's the university administration's flexibility and commitment to the mission that have allowed enrollment to continue to grow.

The university saw its total undergraduate and graduate student population increase from 4,658 in 2009 to 5,729 in 2020, a near 23% increase in 12

years. In this current academic year, enrollment consists of 3,576 undergraduate and 2,153 graduate/professional students, representing 47 states, the District of Columbia and 30 countries.

When asked which campus partners contribute to the success of Samford's recruitment, Black says he could provide a name from every department on campus. While the recruitment effort is led by the Office of Admission, with support in the 10 schools, each department uniquely contributes to recruitment. This may be a faculty member who lets a potential student observe a class, a food service employee who serves visiting families in the cafeteria or a groundskeeper who provides visitors a beautiful first impression of campus.

Westmoreland has been an integral part of this collaboration. He has held high expectations for the Office of Admission and fully supports its efforts. He has traveled anywhere that was requested, hosted groups in his home, spent time learning the admission process and spoke at any event he could.

"His greatest support has come in his unconditional commitment to keeping this institution moving forward and bringing it to the forefront of a lot of peer sets that people probably never thought we would compete with—all for the sake of recruiting students to a place that could help them understand the hope that they have in Jesus Christ," said Black.

One example of how Westmoreland has added his own personal touch to recruitment is through sending handwritten notes to all incoming freshman. He started this in a year when there were 850 incoming freshmen. He would write the notes as







deposits were received, many times recalling personal encounters he had with the student. The next year, he decided to write an additional 300 notes to students who had been admitted to Samford, but had not yet committed. Westmoreland's goal is simple—to serve students and their families as they pursue God's purpose in their lives.

"I had the good fortune of seeing Dr. Westmoreland be the same individual whether he was speaking at convocation or teaching a class or just walking across the quad," Black said. "He deeply cares about people and the impact you have on them. I think that will be his greatest legacy as it relates to enrollment, that no matter what success you have, it has to always remain about the people." ▮

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**Samford  
University's**  
enrollment grew  
by nearly 23% in  
the last 12 years.

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# Respect Everyone

*Alumnus and former SGA president (2019-2020) reflects on advice Westmoreland once gave him, and how he embodies these words himself.*

*By Heath W. Padgett '20*

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From the thousands of T-shirts, buttons, posters, socks and, yes, even a pair of shoes with Dr. Westmoreland's face on them, it is hard not to recognize Samford's president on campus. But why is his face everywhere? I can assure you, Dr. Westmoreland didn't do this himself. Students did.

Students absolutely adore Dr. Westmoreland. When asked what the most refreshing part of his job is, Dr. Westmoreland inevitably replies that it is the interactions he has with students. Whether it be a simple walk across campus or a meeting with student leaders, Dr. Westmoreland truly seeks to engage with students on a personal level. He even hosts regular Bible study with students where they gather and pray for each other and for the university.

Among other things, Dr. Westmoreland is a true servant leader who views himself as a steward of the opportunities the Lord has blessed him with. When visiting Freshman Forum my freshman year, Dr. Westmoreland gave this leadership advice:

## **1. Respect everyone.**

I cannot think of a better description of Dr. Westmoreland than the personal advice he shares with others. Dr. Westmoreland truly does respect everyone. It is easy to respect people you look up to or whose ideas you agree with, but Dr. Westmoreland taught me the importance of respecting everyone, especially those

with whom you disagree. He has shown me how respecting everyone can open doors, build relationships and be a driver for positive change.

## **2. Practice an economy of words.**

Dr. Westmoreland also practices an economy of words. He thinks before he speaks and means what he says.

## **3. Read widely.**

Additionally, as you might expect with a university president, Dr. Westmoreland is an avid reader. He is not only well-read in some of his favorite authors, including C. S. Lewis, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Marcus Aurelius and more, but also sees the importance of staying well-informed in day-to-day life. For him, reading widely means reading opposing viewpoints, staying up-to-date and keeping an open mind.

## **4. Be disciplined with your time.**

For someone as busy as Dr. Westmoreland, it would be hard for him not to be disciplined with his time. However, this is more than just organizing and accomplishing major

responsibilities. Dr. Westmoreland says that the most important part of his day is quiet time spent in prayer.

## **5. Be accountable.**

Accountability is also important to Dr. Westmoreland. He encourages people to surround themselves with those to whom they can openly express and who will be honest back to them.

## **6. Be positive.**

Being positive is a key to success. Dr. Westmoreland told me that he sees Samford as becoming the premier Christian university in the country, and wants Samford to be the name that comes first to mind when anyone thinks of a high quality, Christ-centered education. It is through positivity and genuine hope that these goals are set, pursued and achieved.

## **7. Maintain humility.**

Finally, Dr. Westmoreland maintains humility, emphasizing that "a key to ethical leadership is having the appropriate humility and confidence, and finding the equilibrium between those two."





Dr. Westmoreland has meant so much to me as a leader, a mentor and a friend. It was a privilege to serve as a student leader under him and to glean from his wisdom. As he so often says, “We sit in the shade of trees we did not plant,” and I am so grateful for the forest of trees that Dr. Westmoreland has planted on Samford’s campus these past 15 years as president. I look forward to the continued impact his work will have for years to come. ►

## ***When His Words Went Viral***

***In December 2017***, Westmoreland was asked to be Samford’s commencement speaker for ceremonies honoring its fall graduates, yet, with a performance of *The Nutcracker* scheduled for that afternoon, Westmoreland would only have seven minutes to give his speech. Challenge accepted. Titled “Respect Everyone,” his words went viral overnight.

Watch it again at [samford.edu/go/respecteveryone](https://samford.edu/go/respecteveryone).



# THE **Trees** *He Has Planted*

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THE LEGACY OF WESTMORELAND'S PRESIDENCY

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For the Samford University community, the phrase, "We sit in the shade of trees we did not plant," has long been connected to Andrew Westmoreland, the university's 18th president. He has shared these words at orientations and commencements, in small gatherings and at large ones. And now, as he transitions into retirement, his words become further entwined with his own legacy.

Over the past 15 years, Westmoreland has not only nurtured the trees planted by his predecessors, but he has also planted new ones—creating shade under which future generations will sit and enjoy. His legacy not only tells the story of Samford's success, but it also reflects his heart for people and for God.





“We sit in the  
*shade of trees*  
we did not *plant.*”

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## 2006

Westmoreland assumes the Samford University presidency on June 1 and begins the practice of sending informational and encouraging email messages to students and employees on the first of each month, a tradition that continues to the present time.

## 2006

The \$9-million Jane Hollock Brock Recital Hall is dedicated. It features a 300-seat recital hall, a rehearsal suite for Samford orchestral and band programs, and an instrumental teaching center.



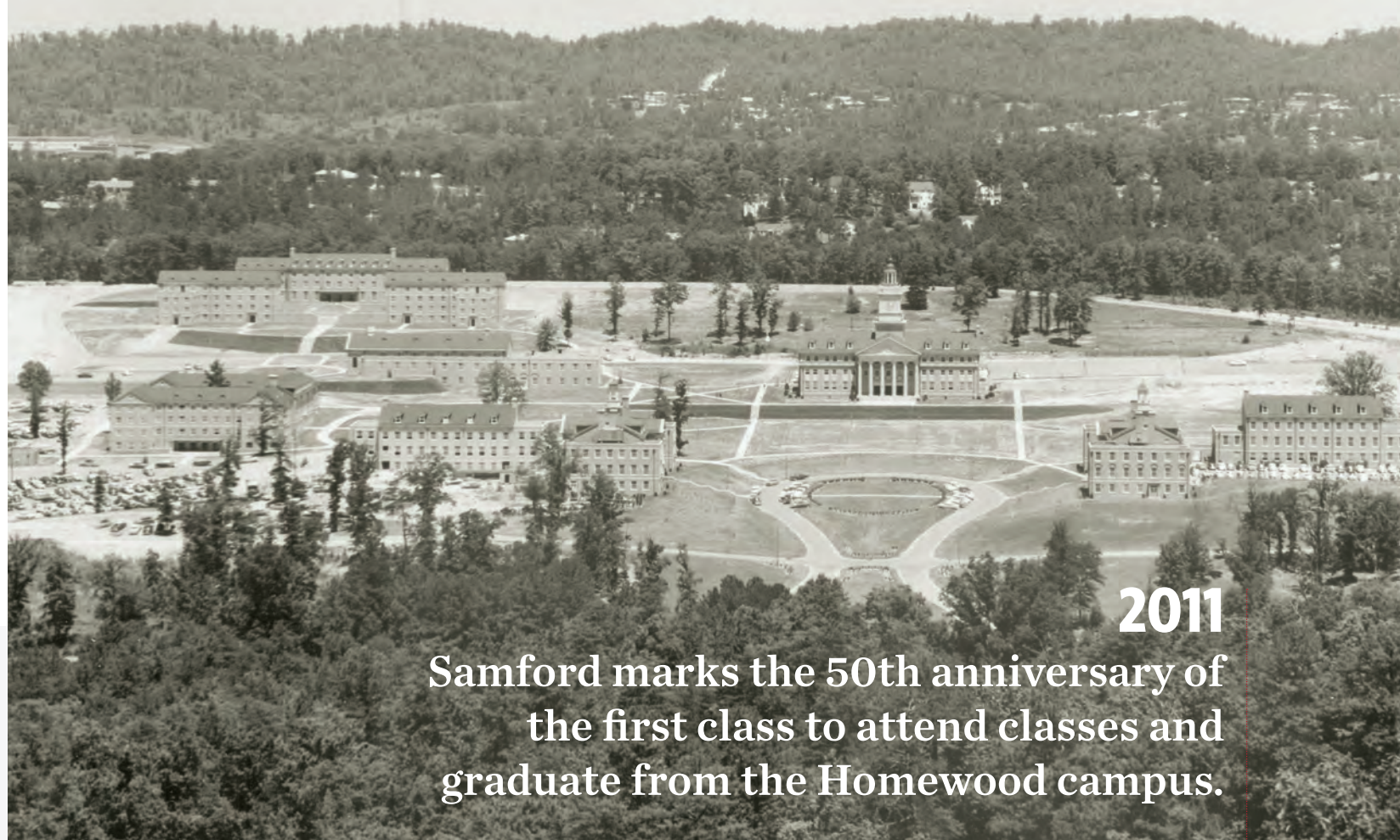
**2007** The \$32-million Pete Hanna Center is dedicated in a series of Homecoming events. The 132,000-square-foot, multipurpose facility is the largest single building constructed in the 50-year history of Samford's Homewood campus.



## 2007

Samford joins the historic Southern Conference, the fifth-oldest Division I athletic conference in the country.





**2011**

**Samford marks the 50th anniversary of the first class to attend classes and graduate from the Homewood campus.**

**2008**

*Samford enrolls its inaugural class of University Fellows, offering a honors college experience through an interdisciplinary core curriculum, international study and funding for academic enrichment. Admission to the program remains highly competitive.*

**2007** The business school is named for longtime Samford trustee and Alabama banking legend Harry B. Brock Jr.

**2008**

Samford announces the creation of the Frances Marlin Mann Center for Ethics and Leadership, including an endowed professorship.

**2009**

The \$27-million science building is dedicated as William Self Propst Hall, honoring the 1961 Samford graduate who became one of the nation's most successful pharmacy entrepreneurs.



## 2014

The university completes the largest single expansion of its campus in more than 60 years with the purchase of adjacent property that had served as the headquarters for Southern Progress Corporation since the 1980s. The \$58-million sale was finalized Dec. 31, 2014. The 28-acre tract includes nearly 400,000 square feet of space in three buildings and more than 1,000 parking spaces.



## 2013

The Board of Trustees approves the creation of the College of Health Sciences to combine the strengths of Moffett & Sanders School of Nursing and McWhorter School of Pharmacy with two new schools: the School of Health Professions and the School of Public Health.

## 2013

Construction on the West Village residence halls is completed, providing housing for 300 students. The J. T. Haywood Field House for baseball and softball is dedicated.

## 2014

Five months ahead of schedule, the university completes A Campaign for Samford, announcing a total of \$202,542,090 in gifts and pledges from 18,276 different donors, exceeding the original goal of \$200 million.





## 2015

Samford opens several new or remodeled facilities. Along with Cooney Hall, the new 80,000-square-foot home for Brock School of Business, the university transformed the massive facilities services building on the north side of the campus into the Art Lofts to provide studio space for faculty and students in painting, sculpture, pottery and other visual arts. To enhance the dining choices for students, the University Center's cafeteria received extensive remodeling throughout the summer.



## 2016

*Samford marks its 175th anniversary with a yearlong series of celebrations culminating with a convocation on Homecoming weekend. At this time, Samford announces the multiyear, \$300-million Forever Samford campaign.*



## 2016

**Samford completes the renovation of property acquired in 2014 and dedicates the new College of Health Sciences facility as an innovative teaching and learning environment designed to foster collaboration among students and faculty in more than 30 health sciences programs.**

**2016** A refreshed brand identity is launched, including a new bulldog logo, new spirit marks and new brand marks for the university's 10 academic schools. The yearlong branding project engaged over 1,000 employees, students and alumni in focus groups and survey research.





## 2017

An economic impact study finds Samford's annual fiscal and economic impact on Alabama is \$424.8 million. Per student, Samford has an impact of \$77,646 on the Birmingham economy.

## 2019

*Due to an expanding range of academic programs, Samford advances in classification by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education from a regional Master's University to a national Doctoral/Professional University.*

## 2018

*The Forever Samford* campaign surpasses \$150 million in gifts and pledges, halfway to the multiyear goal.

## 2019

Samford's athletic teams earn a 97% Graduation Success Rate (GSR) by the NCAA. Samford is ranked 1st in Alabama and 18th in the nation for GSR among all colleges and universities in the NCAA Division I level.







## 2019

A \$20-million renewal of the Ralph W. Beeson University Center is completed, including a new food court, expanded Samford Shop, student commons, post office, and student life and student affairs spaces.

## 2020

Samford is ranked 2nd in the nation for student engagement by *The Wall Street Journal* and *Times Higher Education*. In addition, the latest GSR scores were released. Samford was one of nine schools to score 99 for all Division I student-athletes who began their college careers in 2013, ranking first in the nation.

***See the full timeline*** at  
**[samford.edu/QR/milestones](https://samford.edu/QR/milestones)**.







# *The Growth of the* Campus Footprint *By William Nunnelley*

Gracing a wooded hillside in suburban Birmingham, Samford University is known for its strikingly beautiful campus. Among its most imposing structures are facilities completed and named during the presidential tenure of Andrew Westmoreland.

The largest of these is the multipurpose Pete Hanna Center, which seats 6,000 for events such as commencement and concerts, and 5,000 for basketball games and volleyball matches. Dedicated in 2007, the structure is named for the Birmingham industrialist and Samford alumnus who has supported the university over the years. In addition to housing intercollegiate athletic facilities and offices, the

center is home to the Samford Athletics Hall of Fame, established in 2017.

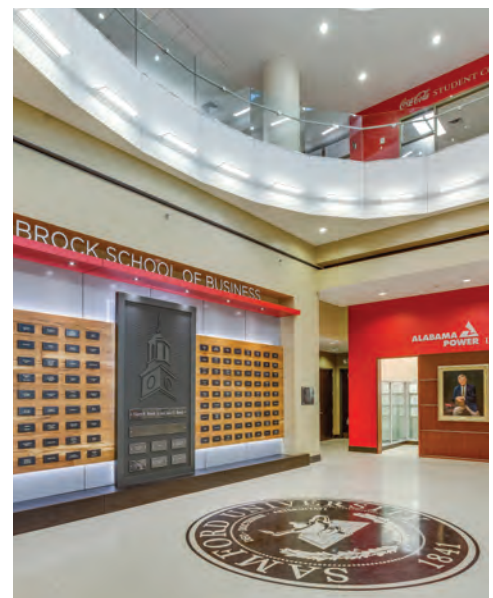
Another major structure added to the Samford landscape during the Westmoreland era includes Cooney Hall, a state-of-the-art building that was completed in 2015 and is home to Samford's Brock School of Business. The building is named for Samford alumnus and business leader Gary Cooney, and the business

school is named for the late Harry Brock, who served as a Samford trustee for more than 50 years.

In what proved to be one of the most creative uses of university surroundings, in 2015, Samford completed the purchase of Southern Progress Corporation property adjacent to the campus and remodeled its existing buildings to serve as the home of its College of Health Sciences. Helping to mark the



Samford Athletics Hall of Fame



Cooney Hall



## CAMPUS FOOTPRINT



University Center



Art Lofts



Daniel House

occasion, the iconic *Healing Angel* statue symbolizing Samford's Moffett & Sanders School of Nursing was moved to a new location in the atrium of the College of Health Sciences facility.

In 2019, Samford completed an extensive remodeling of Ralph W. Beeson University Center, modernizing and expanding the

facility for student and employee use. The \$20-million renovation included a new food court, expanded Samford Shop, student commons, post office, Dale-Washington Courtyard, and student life and student affairs spaces. The building retained the longstanding name of beloved university benefactor Ralph W. Beeson.

Other notable additions to the campus during the Westmoreland era included the Jane Hollock Brock Recital Hall (2006), the Sullivan-Cooney Family Field House (2009) and the Samford Track and Soccer Stadium (2017).

Facilities housing art and theatre programs were renamed Bonnie Bolding Swearingen Hall in 2006. In 2015, an existing building was extensively revised as the Art Lofts.

In 2009, Samford's existing science building was dedicated as William Self Propst Hall, honoring the 1961 graduate.

New residence halls were constructed in 2013, including Barbara Drummond Thorne Hall, two adjacent residence halls and West Village. In 2017, the Tri Delta House was opened on the site of the former faculty apartments.

In 2018, the university undertook an extensive renovation of its Daniel House residence hall property in London, including new furnishings and fixtures throughout the building.

In the current and final year of the Westmoreland presidency, the central administrative building, Frank Park Samford Hall, is undergoing needed renovations as well as electrical, plumbing, mechanical and security updates.

The sounds of construction have been an ongoing theme of the Westmoreland era as Samford sought to provide facilities that complement and maintain its programs of quality higher education. ■





Brock Recital Hall



Sullivan-Cooney Family Field House



Boren Courtyard

***In 2016,*** Samford's Board of Trustees approved a 20-year campus master plan. The four-phase plan addresses infrastructure needs for the entire campus, increases energy efficiency, practices campus-wide conservation, and refreshes and renews every facility. **Learn more at [samford.edu/go/masterplan](https://samford.edu/go/masterplan).**





# A Cornerstone OF COLLABORATION

*The establishment of Samford's College of Health Sciences transforms and expands the university's approach to health care education.*

*By Sara Roman*

**In 2013, Samford University announced the establishment of the College of Health Sciences, a bold initiative that combined the strengths of the long-established Moffett & Sanders School of Nursing and McWhorter School of Pharmacy, with two new schools: the School of Health Professions and the School of Public Health.**

Having one college serve as an umbrella for the four schools was the vision of Nena Sanders, former Moffett & Sanders School of Nursing dean and founding College of Health Sciences vice provost.

Sanders' multifaceted career provided her with a unique viewpoint, understanding that interprofessional education would be transformative for Samford students interested in a career in today's ever-evolving health care industry and its team-based approach to care.

In 2006, Andrew Westmoreland was settling into his new role as university president when Sanders first approached him with the idea. "I recall him being supportive and excited about the idea's potential, but he also felt the timing wasn't right," she said.





Sanders waited six years and brought the idea to Westmoreland again. This time, the timing was right, and Sanders worked to formulate a plan and present the idea to the Board of Trustees.

"The establishment of a College of Health Sciences was a bold step because it wasn't necessarily the direction stakeholders expected us to go," said Sanders. "Our liberal arts programs have always been very strong, but the establishment of the College of Health Sciences provided an opportunity for us to grow our portfolio and impact the community in a unique way."

At the time of board approval, there was not a clear plan for where the college—with its four schools—would be located. Sanders and Westmoreland discussed a variety of options and actually began the process of hiring faculty before a permanent location was determined.

Within that same year, Buck Brock, executive vice president and vice president for business and financial affairs, received a call from Southern Progress Corporation explaining the property they owned adjacent to campus was available for purchase.

The acquisition was finalized in 2014, and, over the next year, the corporate offices were transformed

into state-of-the-art facilities designed to foster collaboration between health care disciplines. Today, the 223,000-square-foot facility features offices, classrooms, student study spaces, clinical and research labs, and a 22,000-square-foot Experiential Learning and Simulation Center.

"Throughout the entire process, Westmoreland showed strength, dedication and was a true advocate of the college," Sanders said. "He was unwavering in his vision and extremely supportive every step of the way."

Since the inception of the College of Health Sciences, 17 new graduate programs have been added to the academic offerings of Samford University and the college makes up more than 40% of the institution's student body.

"Through the college, Samford has been enhanced. We have seen tremendous growth in science-based programs, online education, research and professional scholarship, but Samford's Christian mission has also been carried to a wider world," said Sanders. "Our graduates are distinct and highly sought after, not only because their interprofessional education has prepared them for the nature of today's health care industry, but, furthermore, they are providers who are prepared in the likeness of Christ." ▮



# Expanding our **Global Reach**

*The Westmorelands encourage and lead new international exploration that expands opportunities for students to study abroad.*

*By Sean Flynt*

**Andrew and Jeanna Westmoreland came to Samford with an understanding of the transformative power of intercultural engagement and the personal experience to help guide it. Upon their arrival, they found thriving programs focused on Europe, the Americas and the United Kingdom, but they were keen to lead Samford into the Asian Century.**



The Westmorelands were especially interested in developing partnerships in Indonesia, where they already supported Christian K-12 and higher education institutions. In 2013, Jeanna Westmoreland led a group of Samford education students to the Indonesian capital of Jakarta for cross-cultural classroom experiences. Andrew Westmoreland and a small group of Samford academic leaders embarked on a simultaneous tour of China, South Korea, Singapore and Indonesia in hopes of recruiting Asian students to Samford and developing further exchange





partnerships. It was reported the trip opened many doors for Samford's future presence in the region.

Jeanna Westmoreland explored further exchange possibilities in Myanmar and continued to lead Samford students to Indonesia, most recently in 2018 and 2019. Through all of these efforts the Westmorelands built or refreshed relationships with Hong Kong Baptist University, Pelita Harapan University in Jakarta and Seinan Gakuin University in Japan.

Since 2015, the Asia and other international initiatives have been coordinated by Samford's Global Engagement Office. The office now guides almost 400 students per year to more than 50 programs, including opportunities for study and professional internships in Italy, England, Australia, Israel, West Indies, Hong Kong, Japan, Germany, France, Spain, Tanzania, Netherlands and Belgium. The office also supports students from 29 countries enrolled at Samford for their own intercultural experiences.

Jeanna Westmoreland has continued to play an active role in this work. "She has been an important advocate of international education in every way," said Lauren Doss, director of global engagement. In addition to leading the Legacy League's annual welcome dinner for international students, Jeanna Westmoreland served on the committee that created new academic programs to match the physical

refurbishment of Samford's beloved Daniel House in London. And although the Westmorelands have encouraged the Samford community to explore beyond its traditional international focus, the president's approval of that new investment in Samford's London program recognized its continued value. "There's no way that project would have happened if he wasn't supportive and wanted that program to thrive," Doss said.

COVID-19 halted travel to London and everywhere else, but Samford's international programs are poised to continue and grow, especially as the university exchanges Jan term for a new May term in 2022. International cooperation will end the pandemic and demonstrate, again, how important it is that Samford students and faculty travel, study and work in other cultures. ▀

"There's no way that project would have happened if he wasn't supportive and wanted that program to thrive."





# Embracing Our Differences



*In pursuit of racial reconciliation, two men first turn to friendship.*

*By Morgan Black*

*Images provided by o2 ideas*



Westmoreland and Stewart

In 2006, Shelley Stewart, a Birmingham businessman and the founder of o2 ideas, received an invitation to attend President Andrew Westmoreland's inaugural address. "I was sitting in the audience, having never been invited to Samford University in my life, and, yet, I was born in Rosedale," Stewart said. "As I'm listening to his speech, I began to reflect on my life and who I had become."

In 1940, he recalled he and his brother were walking from the Rosedale community, near the Howard College campus, when a group of white boys began mocking them and throwing rocks at them. He and his brother fought back. Almost 70 years later, he was an honored guest at a place that once excluded Black students. "Listening to Andy speak that day, something about him appeared different to me," he said.

Not long after the inauguration, Stewart was invited to a meeting on campus, which just so happened to be in the president's office. "Before long, Andy said, 'I've heard of you, I know about your background.' Then, for whatever reason, he came and sat next to me and we began talking openly and



*“Listening to Andy speak that day, something about him appeared different to me.”*

candidly,” Stewart said. “I told Andy, ‘Samford could do well for this community. We have to take that fence down from around it.’ He said, ‘I’ve heard that, and I feel that; can we work together?’”

From there, Stewart said, it was like they had known each other all their lives. Their friendship inspired the 2008 creation of Birmingham Kitchen Table, a program that brings together diverse individuals throughout Birmingham to discuss community-focused issues. “We didn’t sit down in a meeting and a bunch of committees and put a plan together,” he said. “We just did it.”

A few years later, Stewart became very ill. “I had been in the hospital about two weeks, and I woke up one day and there was a man on his knees beside my bed praying,” he said. “I turned over to see who it was and there was Andy Westmoreland. That’s the president of Samford University.”

After Stewart recovered—and as their friendship continued to grow—the two were reunited at one of their Birmingham Kitchen Table meetings. “We were on opposite sides of the room,” Stewart said, “And he looked across the room and said, ‘I love you Shelley,’ and I said, ‘I love you too Andy.’”

That same year, Westmoreland honored Stewart as an honorary member of the class of 2013 and, along with Jeanna Westmoreland, established the Shelley Stewart Scholarship Fund in an effort to achieve greater racial diversity on campus.

As Samford continues its work toward racial reconciliation and to increase diversity, equity and inclusion across campus, the university has been strongly influenced by this model of personal, spiritual and historical connection embodied in the friendship between Westmoreland and Stewart. “We brought people together,” Stewart said. “And, although he is retiring, we will continue to try to bring people together.”



Westmoreland and Stewart hosting Birmingham Kitchen Table events.



# The Growth of Diversity

## PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

During Westmoreland's presidency, a number of a new programs and initiatives emerged to increase diversity, equity and inclusion among the Samford community. A few highlights include:

- The Office of Diversity and Intercultural Initiatives (ODII) was started in 2013 with a goal of advancing efforts to engage the Samford community in multicultural curricular and cocurricular development while promoting a variety of campus events that enhance cross-cultural initiatives, celebrate diversity and inclusion, and promote respect for others.

- Since 2006, more women have been hired into leadership roles, including the appointment of the second and third female vice presidents in university history.

- Minority (non-white by definition) students increased 106% (436 to 900). As a percent of the overall population, the number of minority students grew from 9.7% to 15.7%.

- Numerous student organizations were created to support diverse groups on campus, including:

*The African Students Association*

*The Black Law Students Association*

*The Black Student Union*

*The Chinese Students and Scholars Association*

*The Delta Xi Phi Multicultural Sorority Inc.*

*DREAM (Disability Rights, Education, Activism and Mentoring)*

*Finance and Economics Women*

*Gospel Choir*

*Hispanic Law Student Association*

*The International Club*

*The Latino Student Organization*

*Four National Pan-Hellenic Council fraternities and sororities*

*The Student National Pharmaceutical Association*

- In 2011, Stephanie VanBrakle became the first Black head coach at Samford

when she served as the head coach of the women's softball team.

- In December 2015, Tim Vines, president and chief executive officer for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama, was announced as the first person of color to be appointed as chair of the Board of Trustees. He served in this role for the maximum four-year term. He continues serving the university as a trustee, member of the executive committee and co-chair of the presidential search committee.





- The Samford Black Alumni Association (SBAA) formed in 2014 to strengthen the legacy of educational attainment and excellence of Black students at Samford. As of February 2021, there are 2,441 alumni members.

- In 2016, Keith Elder became the first person of color to serve as an academic dean when he was appointed dean of Samford's School of Public Health.

- In 2018, Alyssa Whitehead was the first Black female athlete inducted into the Samford Athletics Hall of Fame. Whitehead starred on the women's soccer team 2008-2012.

- Inspiring Minorities to Pursue Academics and Community Together (IMPACT) was established to promote a successful social and academic experience for underrepresented groups at Samford. Its goal is to increase the academic, career and social success of first-year minority students by developing a sense of community.

- During the 2017-2018 academic year, Samford commemorated the 50th anniversary of integration on campus. In a special kickoff event for the yearlong commemoration, President Westmoreland said, "Fifty years ago, the Samford University family grew more diverse, larger and stronger...and the world was better for it."

- The Shelley Stewart Endowed Scholarship, established in 2018, supports minority students in the School of Health Professions. It is one of more than 20 scholarships that support minority students on campus.



- In 2019, the Student Government Association launched Common Ground, a program pairing students with opposing political views to discuss topics in order to build appreciation for differing viewpoints.

- The Minority Youth Science Academy, which started in 2014, is a three-day residential program offering college preparation and mentoring for outstanding minority high school students who aspire to careers in the sciences.

- The Task Force on Racial Justice was formed in 2020 and charged with fostering positive, enduring changes in

campus culture and existing systems so that racial justice may become a known attribute of the institution.

- The Reconciliation Memorial, installed in 2020, honors the many contributions of the Black men and women who built and sustain the institution's mission.

- Launched in 2021, the Ragland Scholars program is a four-year cohort experience for multicultural students named in honor of Elizabeth Sloan Ragland, the first Black residential student at Samford. ▀



# How God Used One Scholarship Recipient to Change the Lives of Many

*Celebrating the leadership and impact of Jeanna Westmoreland*

*By Sharon Smith*

Jeanna Westmoreland knows firsthand the impact of scholarships. Not too many years ago, she was an aspiring college student in need of financial assistance to pursue her educational dreams. Deeply grateful for the help she received, Jeanna has had a lifelong calling to pay forward the blessing. She's done just that as the executive director of the Legacy League, an organization that has helped over 180 students fulfill their own college dreams at Samford University.

Jeanna had her first introduction to the Legacy League, then called the Samford Auxiliary, by Elouise Williams, the organization's coordinator at the time. Elouise recalls being

asked by Samford's presidential search committee to entertain Jeanna for an afternoon while her husband, Andy, was involved in interviews. "We all hoped to convince the Westmorelands that Samford would be a great destination." The convincing was clearly effective, as the Westmorelands responded to God's call and committed to come. "After meeting with Jeanna, I had every expectation that she would excel in the first lady's traditional role as executive director (of the Auxiliary)," Elouise said. "She is a tremendous leader, organizer and visionary."

Jeanna has, indeed, excelled. Committed to helping students with significant financial need, she led the organization to "totally refocus its mission toward those individuals who are in dire circumstances in every aspect of their life," said Alta Faye Fenton, the first Auxiliary president with whom Jeanna served. "Her passion for education and understanding of student need and financial resources have been invaluable in focusing our efforts to provide life-changing scholarships and increased holistic support to our students," said Kathy Clay, current president of the organization.

***Since 2006***, when Jeanna arrived, the Legacy League has added 27 endowed scholarships, increasing the organization's total endowment by over \$3 million.







Since 2006, when Jeanna arrived, the Legacy League has added 27 endowed scholarships, increasing the organization's total endowment by over \$3 million. These scholarships are truly life-changing—helping students who have faced challenges including the death or disability of a parent or sibling, abandonment, inner-city violence, parental job loss, homelessness, or the sacrifices of full-time ministry in a remote place. The Legacy League bridges the gap for students who cannot afford a university education, even with generous academic scholarships, other forms of financial aid and part-time jobs.

During Jeanna's tenure, the Legacy League has also expanded its ministry to the students it helps financially. "Not only has your financial generosity provided scholarships for me to attend Samford, but moreover, your prayers, cards, fellowship dinners and much more have provided comfort and encouragement for me during the last four years," said a recent graduate and Legacy League scholarship recipient. "It has made all the difference. No matter the circumstance, I always knew that I had an amazing support system during my time at Samford in the Legacy League. You all have been the biggest blessing to me, and I am so very thankful."

The increases in endowed scholarships and care for students are direct results of Jeanna's efforts to engage new people in the organization, which now includes nearly 800 members ranging in age from 21 to 101 years old. Members combine to serve over 5,700 hours in typical years, volunteering in a myriad of ways. In addition to caring for students, they plan and implement multiple



programs and complex fundraisers, including an annual Christmas Home Tour, the organization's signature event. Much of the planning happens around the Westmorelands' kitchen table.

Jeanna's tenure as the Legacy League's executive director will end in June, but the work of the Legacy League is far from finished. The organization welcomes guests at its events and encourages new members to join the mission. The new Jeanna King Westmoreland Legacy League Scholarship was created to honor Jeanna's service and continue the important work to which she has dedicated her life. ▀

**To learn more about the Legacy League and support this new scholarship fund, go to [samford.edu/legacyleague](http://samford.edu/legacyleague).**



# Developing Champions, On and Off the Field

*By Joey Mullins*

Over the past 15 years, Samford student-athletes have won 56 regular-season, tournament or divisional conference titles while maintaining high standards of academic performance. At Samford, our coaches, faculty and staff work together to equip student-athletes for success—both on and off the field.

This collaborative effort requires numerous people, starting with leadership in the university's administration.

"It is vitally important to the success of an athletics department to have the support of the university administration, especially the president," said Martin Newton, Samford's director of athletics, who was hired in April 2011. "Dr. Westmoreland genuinely cares for each student at Samford, and our student-athletes have benefited greatly from his devotion."

When Westmoreland came to Samford, the

university's athletic teams played within the Ohio Valley Conference (OVC), yet, within his first two years, Westmoreland oversaw the move from the OVC to its current home in the Southern Conference (SoCon). This change proved to be a strong move as Samford's teams have consistently performed at a high level, including winning 51 regular-season, tournament or divisional titles during that span.

Samford is now in its 13th year in the Southern Conference, and, in the most recently completed season, Samford teams earned a school-record



The Samford baseball team won the 2018 SoCon Tournament and went on to defeat No. 7 Florida State in the NCAA Tallahassee Regional.



The soccer team celebrates after winning the 2019 SoCon Tournament and earning an NCAA Tournament bid.





eight titles, despite the abbreviated length of the spring season and the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to the achievements in competition, Samford student-athletes have consistently performed well in the classroom. In the latest NCAA Graduation Success Rate (GSR) report, Samford tied for the national lead with a score of 99 out of 100. Samford has scored at



least a 97 each year the report has been issued. Since joining the SoCon in 2008, Samford student-athletes have earned 1,942 spots on the SoCon's Academic Honor Roll.

Samford's athletics facilities have received major upgrades over the past 15 years as well. New facilities that have opened during this time include the Sullivan-Cooney Family Field House, Pete Hanna Center, Track and Soccer Stadium, J.T. Haywood Field House, and the Samford Softball Stadium. These facilities have had a significant impact on Samford's recruiting and on the gameday experience for both student-athletes and fans.

For Samford Athletics, the past 15 years have built upon its foundation of excellence, setting the stage for even greater success in the years to come. ▀



# An Enduring Impact on Philanthropy

*By Randy Pittman, Vice President for University Advancement*

Andrew Westmoreland began his higher education career working in advancement at his alma mater, Ouachita Baptist University. During his subsequent tenure as president of Ouachita and, later, Samford, he never got away from those roots. Recently, he described the work this way: "An advancement officer is just a title for a person who seeks to enable others to set aside the weight of worldly possessions for the good of a charitable cause... Samford University."

In the 15 years he has served as Samford's president, Westmoreland



has successfully "enabled" thousands of alumni, staff, faculty, parents, friends, corporations, churches and charitable foundations to join him in generously supporting Samford and its mission.

Samford has had two comprehensive capital campaigns

during the Westmoreland years. From 2006 to 2014, a period that included the most severe recession in our country since the 1930s, *A Campaign for Samford* raised \$202.5 million in cash and pledges for the university. Prior to that time, the most successful campaign Samford had ever undertaken raised \$89 million, so this effort was more than twice as beneficial. The record set in that campaign has now been exceeded in the current *Forever Samford* campaign, which, at the time of this writing, has raised \$207.5 million and is still going.

Westmoreland, a first-generation college graduate who benefited from financial support to attend college himself, is most passionate about raising funds for scholarships. He and his wife Jeanna have personally funded 10 endowed scholarships at Samford, one in each of the academic schools; and more money has been raised and pledged



The Westmorelands with the Cooney family



Dedicated supporter, Marvin Mann



**Total Given and Pledged:**  
**\$410,115,000**  
 (2006-2021)

**TOTAL**  
**Cash Given**  
**\$291,718,000**  
 (2006-2021)

*Forever Samford*  
 campaign  
 TOTAL DONORS  
**16,240**

**12,945** ALUMNI  
**9,455** FRIENDS  
**4,141** PARENTS  
**1,125** FACULTY AND STAFF  
**2,845** CORPORATIONS,  
 CHARITABLE TRUSTS AND CHURCHES

for scholarships (\$166.8 million) than for all other purposes during the years of his leadership.

Challenging Samford supporters to pledge a portion of their estates to the university is another area Westmoreland has emphasized. The decision about what to do with the proceeds of one's estate is the most important stewardship decision a Christian will make, and Westmoreland has encouraged many Samford friends to "plant trees for future generations" in this manner.

Approximately 35% of all the funds coming in to the two capital campaigns have come in the form of

estate pledges and gifts.

While the day-to-day work of raising funds is done by staff in the Division of University Advancement, other employees and scores of volunteers, Westmoreland has provided strong leadership every step of the way.

Winston Churchill once said, "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." Andrew Westmoreland has spent most of his life giving and leading others to give, and everyone associated with Samford University is better for it. ▀

To further their commitment of expanding scholarship opportunities for Samford students, Andrew and Jeanna Westmoreland have endowed scholarships in each of the university's 10 schools, naming them in honor of loved ones and friends.

To learn more about these scholarships and contribute to these funds, go to [samford.edu/giving](http://samford.edu/giving).

**School of the Arts**  
*R.B. and Sue King Scholarship*

**Howard College Arts and Sciences**  
*Riley E. Westmoreland Endowed Scholarship*

**Brock School of Business**  
*Ben M. Elrod Endowed Scholarship*

**Beeson Divinity School**  
*T. Andrew Westmoreland Scholarship*

**Orlean Beeson School of Education**  
*Jeanna King Westmoreland Endowed Scholarship*

**School of Health Professions**  
*Shelley Stewart Endowed Scholarship*

**Cumberland School of Law**  
*Brewer/Grooms Scholarship*

**Moffett & Sanders School of Nursing**  
*Terri and Taylor King Endowed Scholarship*

**McWhorter School of Pharmacy**  
*Fred and Elda Westmoreland Scholarship*

**School of Public Health**  
*Buck and Nancy Brock Scholarship*



# OUR BEST

# Wishes

*Many of Samford's alumni, students, employees and friends share their best wishes for Andrew and Jeanna as they transition into retirement, reflecting on how they have impacted their lives.*

*"Before* I ever formally met Dr. Westmoreland, I was attracted to the Spirit of Christ in him. As our professional and personal relationship has grown, I've discovered that he is deeply spiritual, humble, approachable, kind and compassionate. He is an authentic person, devoted friend and tremendous leader driven by convictions which are grounded in the Word of God. Dr. Westmoreland has the gift of putting you at ease by listening deeply to your perspective, making you feel heard in a way that is unusual—able to hear your spoken words and your heart."



**Cecelia A. Walker, M.Div. '98,**  
member, Samford University's Board of Trustees, and executive director of chaplaincy and clinical pastoral education, Brookwood Baptist Health

*"As a member* of the search committee that facilitated the selection of Dr. Andrew Westmoreland as president of Samford, I was confident that he would be an outstanding president. However, now that I have known Andy for over a decade, he has become a valued friend. As a friend, I am convinced that Andy has been a dynamic spiritual leader, who, first and foremost, has a calling from God. Hence, his work was not his profession but his ministry."

**Robert Holmes,** *vice chair, Samford University's Board of Trustees, retired senior vice president, Alabama Power Company*

*"A true southern gentleman,* Dr. Andy Westmoreland has a unique way of combining humor with facts, suggestions with directions, and leadership with humility. His gentle hand at leading the Board of Trustees of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) is a trait that only a few have mastered."

**Belle Wheelan,** *president, SACSCOC*





**“We are grateful** for Jeanna and Andy Westmoreland’s 15 years of committed service to Samford University. It has been inspiring to see their dedication to and love for Christian higher education. They have consistently demonstrated their love for students, faculty, staff, alumni and

friends of the university. They have served with grace and humility in all kinds of circumstances. They have modeled servant leadership. They have modeled Christian marriage. Samford is a better place for their having been here. We hold them in the highest esteem.”

**William Stevens '70 and Kimeran Stevens '70**, co-chairs, Forever Samford campaign (William Stevens also serves as chair of Samford University’s Board of Trustees.)

**“I have never** been with President Westmoreland when he did not add measurably to the gathering. His wit, wisdom, intelligence and gentility always made the best meeting even better. What a fine man and sterling career of service while loving God with all his heart.”

**Andrew K. Benton**, president emeritus, Pepperdine University

**“You can count on** Dr. Westmoreland. Even though the scope of his position is vast and complicated, he always makes time for the personal conversations and to care for individuals. His legacy as a president will be that he knew how to both get into the necessary details and to empower those around him. Andy is the quintessential college president—humble, smart, innovative and dedicated to his institution.” **Shirley Hoogstra**, president, Council for Christian Colleges & Universities

**“Anyone who** has interacted with Dr. Westmoreland readily observes that he has a larger-than-life presence that is bathed in humility. Dr. Westmoreland’s legacy at Samford University is unmatched and will live FOREVER. There has been no single individual who has had a bigger impact on my life other than Jesus Christ himself.”

**Jeremy Towns '13**, UAB medical resident





*"When someone* loves something, you can tell. With Dr. Westmoreland, you can always tell that he loves Samford and that he loves Samford students. Dr. Westmoreland is, in my opinion, the definition of a Christ-centered leader. He has led Samford with conviction and grace. He understands that college is one of the most influential times in someone's life, so he has taken the time to pour into and invest in students."

**Hope Dawson,**  
*current SGA president*



**"Dr. Westmoreland** leads with a passion to see God impact lives through the education process and relationships at Samford University. He is a strategic, visionary leader. To me, Dr. Westmoreland is a friend, encourager, and partner in Great Commission ministries."

**Timothy M. Cox,** *senior pastor, Liberty Baptist Church*

**"Dr. Westmoreland**

has been an exceptional leader for Samford University and for higher education in general. His Christ-centered, humble and generous spirit has been an inspiration to me personally and for so many others who have had the pleasure of knowing him, serving with him or working under his leadership. Samford University is a better place today for having selected Andy Westmoreland as its president 15 years ago. The entire Samford family and I are eternally grateful for the example of Christian leadership and integrity that Andy has demonstrated during his tenure of service. Andy, all the best for what God has in store for this next chapter of life."



**Tim Vines,** *former chair, Samford University's Board of Trustees; president, CEO, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama*

**"Andy is** a Christian community builder extraordinaire. His leadership has taken us from the best kept secret in the state of Alabama to the #1 ranked university in Alabama, #1 in the nation for Graduation Success Rate NCAA Division I, and #2 in the nation for student engagement. He has extended our reach nationally and internationally while always maintaining 'true north' on our Christian compass. He has set up Samford for continued success and I believe the best is yet to come."

**Gary M. Cooney '74,** *vice chairman, McGriff, Seibels & Williams Inc.*

**"Dr. Jeanna Westmoreland** has been an incredible member of our board at Cornerstone. She has a passion for our mission, education and students. Her heart for the children of Birmingham is exceptional! She walks with grace and love in everything she does. I am honored to work with her."

**Nita Carr, Ed.S. '05, Ed.D. '08,** *president, Cornerstone Schools of Alabama*



# best wishes

*"His heart for developing deep relationships with all the people in his life has always impressed me. He truly cares about and focuses on the person in front of him at the moment even when he's being pulled in a thousand different directions with countless demands pressing down hard. I've appreciated the times he took through the years to share life lessons with me—lessons many of us have used to grow and develop in our own journeys."*



**Jennifer Rash, M.A.T.S. '07**, *president, editor-in-chief, The Alabama Baptist*

*"I fell in love with the Westmorelands the night I met them in 2006. Jeanna is a remarkable and endearing lady who achieved extraordinary things as she helped Birmingham and Samford always put their best foot forward. Through the years we worked on many events together as back-to-back presidents of the Women's Committee of 100 for Birmingham, and even hosting HRH The Prince Edward of Great Britain and Miss America at a perfect southern breakfast at the Samford President's Home. Jeanna is gracious and professional, a true leader. I love being in her company and I am honored to call her my friend."*

**Nan Teninbaum**, *president, Women's Committee of 100*

*"Julie and I have known and been close friends with the Westmorelands for more than 15 years. We look forward to the many more years of friendship and partnership as we now seek together the welfare of Samford University. I look forward to*



*amplifying their important legacy and the life of this place to which they have given so much. Andy and Jeanna, know how deeply our family loves you."*

**Beck A. Taylor**, *president-elect, Samford University*

*"It has been my honor and privilege to serve under Dr. Westmoreland as a dean and now a professor of law. I am also pleased to call him my friend. To me, he is the embodiment of the important qualities an exceptional leader must have—selflessness, moral courage and integrity."*

**Hon. John L. Carroll, J.D. '74**, *professor of law and director, Cumberland Veterans Legal Assistance Clinic, Samford University's Cumberland School of Law*

You can share a message or a personal memory with the Westmorelands at

**[samford.edu/QR/bestwishes.](https://samford.edu/QR/bestwishes)**





## Samford friends,

I suppose it is permissible for me to admit, now that I am so near the finish line, that I didn't necessarily arrive at Samford in 2006 with the intention of falling in love with the institution. I was called here to do a job, a significant job, and I pledged to serve as faithfully as I could for as long as I was needed, and until an appropriate time for retirement. But I was an Arkansan, loyal to a sense of place, and my own alma mater and cherished friends were hundreds of miles away.

My wife, Jeanna, my daughter, Riley, and I had no idea how completely and utterly we would fall in love with Samford University, now the great passion of our lives.

On an afternoon in the latter part of our first summer at Samford, we welcomed the assembly of new freshmen and their families in the Wright Center.

Jeanna and I sat together at the conclusion of the program, watching as scenes flashed on the screen depicting Samford people and places from the founding to the present. And suddenly, there we were on the screen. My family. And in that moment, I knew that we were linked with thousands of people, past

and present, who cherished Samford as a unique, wonderful, life-changing institution. I shook my head in wonder and gratitude, thankful to be within that association. I fell in love with Samford that afternoon, with all of its challenges and opportunities, flaws and potential. Fifteen years and thousands of decisions later, that love has only grown.

Serving as Samford's president has been the greatest honor of my professional life. It is the greatest honor because of the people I have encountered here and my abundant gratitude for all that they have done.

Across almost 180 years, 18 individuals have assumed the responsibilities of this office, and in March, Samford announced that Dr. Beck A. Taylor will become the nineteenth. The members of the search committee have made a wise and inspired decision, and Dr. Taylor will have my quiet loyalty and steadfast, enduring support. A new link will be forged and added to a very long chain. I am filled with hope for the opportunities that lie ahead for our new administration.

A two-volume history of Samford, written by James F. Sulzby Jr. and published in 1986, is a required piece of literature for those of us who are often seeking to trace some significant element of Samford's past as we are writing reports or establishing facts. Dozens of times my co-workers have heard me mutter, "where did I last put the Sulzby books?"

Weeks ago, once again in search of historical facts, my eyes fell upon this line from the second Sulzby volume, page 1159, a sentence written by that Samford stalwart, Bill Nunnelley: "Corts is fond of saying that the finest tribute we can pay the past is to make the future even better. He quotes Robert Browning to say, 'The best is yet to be.'"

The poem, of course, is "Rabbi ben Ezra," with lines that lend themselves so easily to borrowing when writing speeches or love letters. That Dr. Corts spoke of the Browning poem years ago did not surprise me; what surprised me was that my own mind has turned to the poem so many times as I contemplate retirement from the Samford presidency—and how many times I have quoted it in recent months. Within the space of a few words, the poem offers both inspiring hope and blessed assurance. "The best is yet to be," yes. Then, two lines down, "Our times are in his hand."

Those two thoughts combine as we approach a transition from one administration to another. Samford's best days lie ahead. All of it, all of it, is in God's hands.

Thank you, Samford friends, on behalf of my family, for blessings beyond anything we could have imagined.

*As always, please keep Samford in your prayers.*



**Andrew Westmoreland**





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Birmingham, AL 35229

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