

A HISTORY OF
THE ACADEMY OF SENIOR PROFESSIONALS

of

SOUTHERN NAZARENE UNIVERSITY

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SOUTHERN NAZARENE UNIVERSITY

ACADEMY OF SENIOR PROFESSIONALS

A HISTORY OF THE FIRST DECADE

The Academy Initiated, 1988-90

The first duty of the historian of the SNU Academy of Senior Professionals should be to recognize the person who for more than a decade has been, first the chief dreamer, and afterwards the primary encourager of this now live and significant organization. Long before Dr. Elbert Overholt retired after a quarter-century of full-time service on the faculty of SNU, he thought and talked about the need for such a distinct body, to provide both fellowship among the members and service to the University. He insists upon giving much credit, however, to "a number of local persons who were interested in the Academy concept." Among these, of course, is Mrs. Vada Lee Barkley, the Academy's efficient, faithful, and to date only president.

The thoughts and plans of these worthy people came to fruition during 1988-89, when the preliminary and first organizational meetings were held. In May of '88, Dr. Overholt drew up a prospectus for an ASP and presented it to the SNU President Dr. Ponder Gilliland and other SNU officials. It proposed that the organization should be "responsible to the President, who in turn reports to the Board of Trustees." Staff would "be appointed as needed." Twelve "activities of the members" were outlined, nearly all of which related to volunteer service which the members might render to the University, each at the level of his/her specialized competency. Financing of the body was suggested to be through an "application fee, initiation fee, and dues," all of which would be established by the membership of the Academy when the organization should be chartered.

It has been the *twelfth* "activity" on that list which in the long run may prove to be the most far-reaching effort credited to the Academy. That was "***Access to housing and services of a future retirement center being planned for downtown Bethany.***"

During the summer of '88, Dr. Overholt, with help from other interested volunteers, circulated an "INTEREST INQUIRY" to 200 persons selected randomly from the members of the SNU Alumni Association who had graduated between 1933 and 1955. Only 9 returns were received from this initial inquiry, but those respondees showed live interest. A second inquiry was then sent to 180, mostly local alumni, with more encouraging results.

With that encouragement, a tentative "pilot group" of charter members was organized, subject to the approval of the SNU Board of Trustees. The March 1989 meeting of the trustees approved the plan. So, meetings of a growing number of charter members were held in weeks following. Also, a constitution and by-laws for ASP were drawn in successive sessions over the succeeding months.

After the opening of academic year 1989-90, gradual progress was made in the initial functioning of the organization. At a meeting on January 23, '90 at the SNU Alumni Center, attended by 7 key persons (Richard and Winnie Howard, Marvin Peterson, Leon Jennings, Norman Bounds, John Bumpus, Vada Lee Barkley, Elbert Overholt, and President Loren Gresham), volunteer activities already being engaged in by members were reviewed. Also new projects were discussed according to the interests of the persons involved and the needs indicated by University faculty and staff. A month later, most of the same group assembled at the Center again, with an equal number of additional persons. Then, the main topic discussed was the proposed *senior housing project*.

Before the end of that initial year, at least 18 different persons were identified as serving in various volunteer activities in aid of regular University faculty or staff members or student services. They included: Art and Vada Lee Barkley, Jerry Bell, Norman Bounds, John Bumpus, Leo Carden, Thurman Coburn, Dwain Grant, Paul Gray, Martha Gresham, Dick and Winnie Howard, Leon Jennings, Marvin Peterson, Esther Overholt, Clifton Norell, and others with assignments not specified.

In the final meeting of that spring semester, May 15, 1990, refinement of the by-laws, rules and regulations, membership requirements etc. were made, and an air of excitement from involvement was especially evident. Elbert Overholt agreed to serve as Executive Secretary until "we decide on something else," and Esther Overholt as Recording Secretary "until her pay is lowered or until someone else is elected." President Gresham applauded the efforts and plans. Michael Crabtree took a portrait of the group to be used for publicity purposes.

Full-fledged Organization, 1990-91; Hooray for Luncheons!

The initial luncheon for the Academy of Senior Professionals was held in the Presidents's Dining Room of the Commons Building, Tuesday, October 16, 1990. After prayer by Rev. Leon Jennings, the meal was served by Marriott Foods, the campus food service. Historic business was then transacted.

The by-laws of the organization were presented to the membership by Elbert Overholt, as presidentially appointed Director, and by President Gresham. Then, a slate of officers nominated for 1990-91 was submitted to the members by President Gresham: Vada Lee Barkley, President; Dr. John Bumpus, Vice-President; Esther Overholt, Secretary; Jerry Bell, Treasurer; Milton Sonnevik, Member-at-Large of the Administrative Council. Both by-laws and officer nominees were routinely approved. Dues were set at \$10.00 per person per annum, or \$15.00 per couple. For charter members, it was decided that there should be no initiation fee, but for new members (beyond 30 days from the then current date) the fee was set at \$25.00. ASP was officially and formally launched.

With the administrative structure and personnel established, the remainder of the meeting consisted of reports from individuals of their current service activities. Dr. Leo Carden gave a synopsis of his work in assistance to Dr. Gene Heasley and the General Chemistry class. Mrs. Barkley summarized her researches in preparation of a profile of SNU

Business Alumnus Roger Smith. Revs. Jennings and Norell reported their activities in assistance to Dr. David Slamp.

Thereafter, meetings for 1990-91 were held regularly in the second or third week of each month. The *November* meeting was held in the recital room of Cantrell Hall, the SNU Fine Arts building, on Tuesday the 20th. . The main business was consideration of the housing facility for senior citizens, which had been envisioned for Bethany. President Barkley appointed a Senior Housing Committee, composed of James Falkner, Chairman, with John Bumpus, Dwain Grant and Shural Knippers. The assignment to the committee was: 1) To assess interest and need; 2) To promote the project; 3) To examine a variety of retirement homes; 4) To determine size and nature needed; 5) To locate a possible site; 6) To investigate financing options; 7) To initiate specific plans for the project. In other business, reports were made of service projects being pursued, and suggestions of ideas for other service to SNU were shared. Also, the charter membership deadline was extended to January 1, 1992. The membership list consisting of "approximately 25" was distributed. The next day following that November gathering, a press release was issued from the Office of the President of the University announcing the formal organization and recognizing it as an official entity of the institution. Dr. Overholt was described as "a long time faculty member who has had a strong interest ...in the development of such a group...and has been the prime mover of the organization."

The meeting for *December* '90 was held on Tuesday the 15th in the Royce Brown Business Building. After prayer by Rev. Loy Watson, new members Bronell and Paula Greer and Edith Payne were introduced and welcomed. The major item of business was the agreement to issue an official ASP identification card, which would provide entitlement to library, dining hall and bookstore services and other benefits such as admission to certain kinds of campus events, including public programs. A proposed budget was also announced by the President, based upon receipts for the year to date of \$ 255.00.

The assembly of the Academy for *January* 18, '91 was held in Cantrell Hall, where Chairman Art Barkley of the Division of Expanding Horizons led a forum on the Mid-East Crisis, with panelists Bronell Greer, Dick Howard and Paul Gray as presenters.

Cantrell Hall was again the site of the *February* 13, '91 assembly, when Mabel Sonnevik favored the group with two "soprano solos," according to the record. President Barkley presented a report on the "state of the Academy," and announced 46 as the number of charter members. Shural Knippers gave a progress report for the Senior Housing Committee.

The *March* '91 meeting was opened with socializing and with refreshments provided by Milton and Mabel Sonnevik. President Barkley reported on the status of committees and advised that reports from each of them would be received during the annual meeting at the end of the school year. Art Barkley, representing the Committee on Expanding Horizons, introduced Olan Moore who presented a program on plants and their propagation.

The remaining Spring 1991 meetings were both held in Cantrell Hall. In *April*, the main interest was again the senior housing project. Mrs. Barkley, presented her first annual report as President, which included also a vision for the future of the Academy, including

the publication of a quarterly newsletter devoted to “health issues and concerns of senior citizens, a pre-retirement seminar for interested parties... biblical studies.” etc. Elbert Overholt conducted the election of officers for 1991-92, which resulted in the retention of the current officers in their respective positions. The *Silvertones* provided music, and Margaret Tulp presented a review of cowboy humor, to conclude the program. The **May** meeting featured two ladies who brought suggestions of activities the Academy members might engage in helpfully as volunteers. First, Marilyn Olson represented Bethany General Hospital, bringing suggestions of such involvement. Then, SNU Alumni Director Doris Littrell suggested areas of participation in which assistance of members might be of benefit to the Association.

The Search for Uniformity and Identity, 1991-94

The first full Academy year had been opened with a luncheon, but thereafter only “refreshments,” courtesy of volunteers, had been provided. Nevertheless, a tradition of fellowship and information/entertainment had been set in an air of sharing and commitment to service to the membership and to the University. Establishing the full scope and range of activities of the organization was still being explored. However, a committee structure was already functioning actively, including committees for Membership, Plans and Programs, By-laws and Organization, and Housing. Also, several “groups” were operating in areas of special interest, including a Social Functions Group and a Travel Interest Group.

Three meetings were held in the Fall of '91. The location of the October and December assemblies was the Heritage Room in the University Commons. This gradually was established as the regular meeting place, with luncheon provided there by Marriott Food Service. Both practices were to become the norm in time. The **October '91** meeting of 35 members and 3 guests consisted of reports of progress in volunteering, presented by Elbert Overholt, and from the Senior Housing Committee by Jim Falkner. Vada Lee Barkley announced the goal of publishing a newsletter beginning in December. Marvin Peterson prepared machine-made I.D. cards for paid-up members. The **November** meeting was a seminar on retirement, held in Royce Brown Business Building and featuring Drs. L.N. Gilbert and Martha Banz and State Senator Howard Hendrick.

The Heritage Room in Commons was the site of the **December** session, in which Shural Knippers presented a lecture on his experiences in the Air Force and during the Pearl Harbor attack. Mabel Sonnevik provided musical selections in keeping with the theme of the day. New members received at the meeting were Mary Jane Eppler and Dr. David and Dorothy Ellis, the latter being identified in the record only as “the grandparents of Josh Poteet.” December also is memorable for the initial distribution of *The Academy Perspective* (Vol. 1, No. 1). Featured in it were Christmas reminiscences by Ethel Dickerman, Edith Payne, Fay Clary Beck, and Vada Lee Barkley and a devotional by Richard Howard. Mrs. Barkley was the editor, Don Beaver the “producer.”

Calendar year **1992** opened for ASP, **January 27**, in the Heritage Room where after the invocation by Mendell Taylor and introduction of new member Edna Moore and visitor Evelyn Etter, Shural Knippers provided a brief update on the senior housing project. The

main feature of the meeting was an informative lecture by Art Barkley on the status of cults in America. Before adjournment, Program Chairman Milton Sonnevik announced a tour of Scandinavia for summer of '92.

In *February's* meeting, Milton Sonnevik gave an update on a Driver Training project for senior citizens. Marilyn Olson presented a plaque honoring ASP for its summer '91 participation in Bethany Hospital projects. SNU President Loren Gresham spoke on the current state of the University and on the status of the housing project for Bethany seniors. Mrs. Barkley introduced visitors Don and Colleen Cornwell, Lawrence and Gladys Snell, and Lecil Brown. Speaker for the *March* meeting was Ted Goulden, who presented an excellent program of slides and commentaries on bird watching. Paul Gray announced a request he had received from the Bethany Chamber of Commerce that the Fred Floyd Archives be open on Wednesdays. He requested help from members to provide supervision during those hours.

The remaining Spring '92 sessions showed marked gains in attendance and memberships. In *April*, Sadie Bounds, Sam and B. K. Stearman, Forrest and Jean Ladd, Don and Colleen Cornwell, Lecil Brown and Marilyn Olson joined the ranks, while as many others visited the meeting, most of them on their way to membership. After Vada Lee Barkley presented her second annual report as President, Elbert Overholt conducted the election of officers for 1992-93. Those elected were Vada Lee Barkley, President; Olan Moore, Vice-President; Esther Overholt, Secretary; Marvin Peterson, Treasurer; and Council member-at-large, Milton Sonnevik. Director Overholt shared information on Eckerd College (Fla.) Academy of Senior Professionals, which had served as a model for the ASP at SNU. Some by-law changes were approved at the April meeting. Mr. Sonnevik announced the summer AAA Driving Seminar, for June 4 and 5, 1992.

The main feature of the *May '92* meeting was a presentation by Lecil Brown concerning the value and management of the living trust. Visitors, most of them in process of becoming members were: Bill Jellerson, Lawrence and Gladys Snell, Chuck and Syble Wilson, Eunice Cheshire, and Loyd and Joyce Ellis. This session completed the second full year of ASP operations.

The Academy opened its third year under the University calendar, *October 12, '92*, in a session now firmly set in the Heritage Room. New faces were then becoming increasingly prominent including George and Trudy Cargill, Lloyd and Bobby Neighbors, and Jack and Josie Harris. Mike Crabtree, SNU Executive Director of Development, reported progress in his area and announced the Office of Intercessory Prayer then being established under the leadership of Wallace Renegar. Elbert Overholt announced results of the Senior Housing Survey and distributed sign-up sheets for volunteers to assist in EXCEL auction, in the Library and in Fred Floyd Archives. Margaret Tulp presented a program of information on the Communicative Arts.

November's meeting was quite routine, dealing with the usual business topics, except that Art Barkley reported on a successful Book Fair he had directed during the SNU Homecoming. Mendell Taylor called attention to the recent passing of Mr. Dick Littrell, husband of Alumni Director Doris and suggested that a card be sent her in the name of

ASP. Bill Porter, who spoke interestingly on his missionary experiences in Venezuela, provided the main program.

The *December* assembly took the form of a Christmas banquet, set in the Heritage Room, where Josie Harris was the main planner and facilitator. The program consisted of a poem, "The Cremation of Sam McGee" recited by Art Barkley; a vocal solo, "O Holy Night" by Mabel Sonnevik; and the main feature presented by Milton Sonnevik. Milton shared memories of Christmas and customs in his native Norway. Dr. Overholt presented a gift to President Vada Lee Barkley on behalf of the Academy.

Calendar year 1993 opened for the ASP, *January 14*, with an impressive contingent of new members, including Dr. and Mrs. Lyle Tullis. In one of the briefer meetings of the Academy, Marilyn Olson spoke on the health needs of retirees and how they may be met. In the *February* meeting, Elbert Overholt reported progress on Senior Housing, and Mrs. Barkley announced a meeting of the Travel Interest Group following the next (March) session. The main program of the day was an inspiring lecture on hymnology by Ray Moore.

A fascinating feature of the *March* session was a presentation by Olan Moore on the SNU science research project in Costa Rica, then being developed under the leadership especially of Dr. Leo Finkenbinder of the Biology Department. Mrs. Barkley suggested a program of purchasing an insurance policy for an SNU student as an investment toward endowment for the University. Members remembered fondly and mourned the loss of member Milton Brasher. Director Elbert Overholt presented a view of "The Future of the Academy" (*The Perspective*, March, '93) in which he pointed out the two prime purposes of it from the start, i.e., "To create an environment of exploration, sharing and learning..." and "To provide a climate of continuing intellectual stimulation."

As was becoming the rule under by-laws, the *April* meeting was devoted to annual reports of the current officers and the election for those to serve during the following year. Incumbents Barkley, Mrs. Overholt, and Milton Sonnevik were re-elected, while George Cargill was chosen as Treasurer for 1993-94. A special feature was a report by Dr. Don Billings, SNU Vice-President for Financial Affairs, who reported on the current state of the plan for Senior Housing in Bethany.

Of special interest in the *May '93* final meeting of the academic year was a report by Dr. Ed Overholt on the '92 "Heart to Heart" trip to Russia in which he had participated. President Gresham reported the latest thoughts being pursued on the housing project. Mrs. Barkley reported that above \$500 had been received to apply on the ASP EndowFund for student insurance. The group was saddened in remembering the recent passing of ASP member Velma Danskin.

Academic year *1993-94* began for the Academy with an *October 11* luncheon meeting in the now familiar Heritage Room. New members received then were Dr. and Mrs. Robert Griffin, Dr. Anna Belle Laughbaum, and Mrs. Doris Littrell. President Barkley introduced Melissa Arbuckle, the first EndowFund student recipient. Mrs. Littrell interviewed Melissa and presented to her the certificate of recognition. Loren Gresham gave the latest information on senior housing. Elbert Overholt announced the needs for volunteer help in preparation for the annual EXCEL auction.

In the *November* assembly, the main feature was an address by SNU alumnus and Baptist Pastor Edgar C. Carlyle, author of the book *Exploring Evangelism*. He spoke on the Parliament of World Religions, sessions of which he had attended in August '93. Missionary Bill Porter announced the upcoming SNU Fine Arts programs. Guests on their way to Academy membership were Helen Silvey, Louis and Rachel McMahan, and Clyde and Anna Faye Dawson. Christmas was celebrated in the *December* meeting, with singing of carols led by Don Beaver. The main program was provided by Bronell Greer, who spoke with fervor and understanding of the people of India, specifically those of Muslim faith. Gifts were presented on behalf of the Academy to Director Elbert Overholt and President Vada Lee Barkley.

The *January '94* meeting was less occupied with business and guests than usual. Dr. John Floyd, son of eminent B-PC/BNC history professor and saint Dr. Fred Floyd, was the only visitor. After the invocation by Leon Jennings, Dr. Mendell Taylor, a favorite teacher in past years of most of those present, was introduced. His address dealt with the developmental stages of religious institutional growth. Early adjournment followed an announcement by Mrs. Barkley that the EndowFund had reached the amount required for purchase of the policy and had been applied to that purpose.

One week before the February meeting, the Administrative Council of the Academy (present: Vada Lee Barkley, George Cargill, Olan Moore, Elbert Overholt, and Milton Sonnevik) met and transacted several important items of business. The agenda for the next plenary session was decided upon, and Treasurer Bud Cargill presented his report to be shared at the general meeting. A committee was named for deciding upon nominees to offices for service in the following year, i.e., Elbert Overholt, Chairman, Colleen Cornwell and Bob Troutman.

The Academy assembled appropriately on the 14th day of *February '94*. Special recognition was given to the Danford Algers and the Loy Watsons as Valentine's Day honorees. Also recognized was long-time SNU food service employee Esther Staggs, who that day was celebrating the 75 anniversary of her birth. Olan Moore introduced Dr. Leo Finkenbinder, who spoke on the SNU Research project then in process of development in Costa Rica. This was a lively meeting, representing the settling into a pattern of programs of interest and quality, session after session.

Remaining sessions of that spring of '94 carried equal interest and inspiration with the earlier ones. In *March*, veteran missionary Rev. Bruce Blowers gave the invocation, preliminary to the introduction of three SNU International students, Claudia Gildo of Guadalajara, Mexico; Jorge Hernandez of Austin, Texas and Nick Goebel of Pavlodor, Kazakstan, Russia. The timidity and humor that characterized this program was enjoyed by all present. At the meeting a change was authorized, as recommended by the Administrative Council, in the annual dues for membership—*downward* to \$10 per person. The initiation fee was reduced to \$15. This action “voided any other dues for the coming year.”

Business was the preoccupation of the session in *April*, as had become standard practice. The main items dealt with were the Treasurer's Report submitted by Bud Cargill and the Report of the President by Mrs. Barkley. The treasurer gave account of receipts and

disbursements, showing a sound fiscal situation. He also alluded to the proposal of decrease in dues and then presented the budget for 1994-95, as recommended by the Administrative Council. All incumbent officers were re-elected, their names being submitted by the nomination committee established as before noted. It was apparent that their service had been commendable. The *Academy Perspective* for that month was a one-page edition, owing to the deactivation of printer Dr. Don Beaver as a result of a skiing accident.

The *May '94* meeting was attended by several choice visitors, including Paul and Pat Hendrix and Dwight and Norma Jean Meredith. New members received were Mrs. Betty Watson and Rev. Gene Chambers. Program chairman Milton Sonnevik introduced the speaker for the day, Rev. Theo "Doc" Benson, Director of Education and Employment Ministries, who spoke on the self-help philosophy of the Biblical faith.

Prior to the close of the '93-94 school year, provision was made for the appointment of a **historian** for the Academy. A *four-part job description* for this office was prepared and approved by the Administrative Council. **Item 1** called for a "written account of the year's activities to be placed in the permanent ASP History Record Book." **Item 2** specified a "brief oral and/or visual summation of the year's activities at the annual meeting." **Item 3** proposed that "some pictures of speakers, special presentations and events" be taken and preserved. **Item 4** required that "program flyers and issues of the "Academy Perspective" be included in the annual history book.

A Pattern of Permanence, 1994—

The Fall of 1994 represented a turning point in the fortunes of the ASP, in that it was clearly no longer in a state of experimentation and search for a place in the SNU "SUN." Instead, it had accepted itself and been accepted as a significant part of the University's system of subsidiaries. This became notably apparent when the founder and guiding spirit of the Academy from the start made his presentation at the *October* luncheon meeting in the Heritage Room of the Commons.

In this first meeting of the year, *Dr. Elbert Overholt* reported progress in the planning for senior housing in Bethany, pointing out that property at 37th and Beaver was under consideration as a site for the facility. It was apparent that serious thought and definite planning were being devoted to the project. He also presented a review of the procedures for membership in the Academy and elaborated on the mutual benefits to members and the University of *their* being involved in the organization.

By that time a category of *University Colleague* was being recognized, one example being the relationship of Rev. Leon Jennings to the SNU Religion Department. Rev. Dwight and Norma Jean Meredith appeared again as visitors at the meeting; also, Dr. Ponder Gilliland and Dr. and Mrs. Bo Dougherty who became members at that time. An air of solidarity and permanence was evidenced as the membership roll approached 100 (91 as per the *November Perspective*).

The *December '94* session was one of contrasts in sentiment. The Christmas season was celebrated as usual with joyous season's "Ramblings" and reminiscences, reflected in the month's issue of the *Perspective*. In contrast were remembrances both pleasant and grievous, including those of Lois Brasher who shared "1994--My Year That Was." She recalled (during a recent trip to Southeast Asia) memories of her brother Marvin Stockett, who had been lost with his B-29 superfortress in the Himalayas a half-century before. More current naturally were her thoughts of her late husband Milton, whose 72nd birthday she had just celebrated with his relatives in Louisiana. All members shared concern over the reports on ASP Secretary Esther Overholt, who had been diagnosed with tumor in the pancreas.

January '95's meeting carried over the same subjects of solicitude with some added. The Overholts had traveled to M. D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston and were awaiting reports on tests. The large and wonderful William Porter family were in everybody's thoughts and prayers. Bill Sr. and Juanita, veteran missionaries, had been in Spain for services and meetings, but were then enjoying holidays with Bill Jr., Tony and children while all prayed for a miracle on behalf of dear Amy (daughter of Bill Jr. and Tony) who had been stricken with cancer.

The Spring '95 ASP assemblies exhibited interest in a variety of current topics, arranged by the Plans and Programs Committee led by Chairman Dr. Bob Griffin. The *February* meeting was attended by 56 persons, including new members Ken and Geneva De Lozier and Gene Chambers who boosted the total membership role to 106. The Valentine motif was carried out beautifully by the Social Affairs interest group, represented by Trudy Cargill and Kathleen Sodowsky. Dr. Lyle Flinner, representing the Continuing Education interest group, introduced Dr. Don Dunnington, SNU Vice President for Academic Affairs. Dr. Dunnington reported on current activities at the University and told of plans for the future, including remodeling and construction of new buildings on campus.

March for the Academy exhibited some innovations in approach. The Program Committee provided a "Talent Program", with readings by Virjeane Bayles, Lecil Brown and Anna Belle Laughbaum, and vocal solos by Don Beaver, Gene Chambers and Mabel Sonnevik. Ray Richards was himself in portraying "The Funny Side." Remembrance of Dorothy Ellis who had slipped from the ranks on February 23 brought a note of sobriety to the otherwise gala occasion.

The *April '95* meeting was by custom the annual business session. After lunch and invocation by Loy Watson, officers and committee chairpersons, including Treasurer Bud Cargill, Programs Committeeman Bob Griffin and By-laws Committee Chair Dick Howard presented reports. Rev. Howard, as the representative of his committee, offered a recommendation that the ASP fiscal year be changed to end March 31, so as to correspond with the University year. President Vada Lee Barkley gave her fifth annual report as leader of the Academy. In the election of officers for 1995-96, the incumbents were retained, except that Don Beaver was chosen as Vice President and Evelyn Downs as Secretary, replacing Esther Overholt who was prevented from continuing because of severe illness.

A large attendance of 81 graced the *May* meeting, which was primarily devoted to book reviews, in a session chaired by Virjeane Bayles. Vada Lee Barkley discussed her own book *Survive and Thrive After 55*, as did Paul Gray his *Journey Into Faith*. Richard Howard reviewed *So Who's Perfect?* Mendell Taylor discussed *Fundamentals for Christian Workers*. President Barkley reported that donations from the Academy treasury had been distributed to both the SNU President's Scholarship Fund and the Special Assistance Fund. Academic year '94-95 had been a blessed and profitable year, though bearing some unsought stresses.

Full year number six of the Academy of Senior Professionals began with a roster of two dozen leaders, in various officer, committee and assistance roles. A complete list appears in *The Academy Perspective* for that month. {The name of the newssheet was revised to avoid confusion with the *Alumni Perspective* of SNU}, Vol. 5, No. 1, October, 1995 p. 1. The *October '95* meeting was saddened by the loss from the ranks since the previous assembly of Esther Overholt, former Secretary and beloved wife of the Director. The time was used to receive dues and take care of other "housekeeping" chores, including provision for I. D. cards, new and renewals. Otherwise there was "enough time to visit" and "for food and fun," as stated in the *Perspective*.

The month of *November* revealed an encouraging development in the long-awaited senior housing project. SNU President Gresham announced the appointment of Robert Parker as Counselor for this project. His experience and expertise were expected to produce definite results in the course of time. Dawn Tullis took on the assignment of providing holiday decorations for Thanksgiving, Christmas and Valentine's Days of gatherings of the ASP.

The *December '95* session was relaxed and refreshing, the main program being an SNU choral group directed by Professor Neal Woodruff, as arranged by Mabel Sonnevik of the Fine Arts Interest group. Since attendance had increased with mounting memberships and visitors added, the officers requested that chairs not be turned up before the meal service because of "limited space" in the Heritage Room. Here was testimony to ASP as a "growing" as well as a "going concern."

With the opening of calendar year 1996, new developments unfolded quickly in several areas, especially relative to the housing project. A Board of **Southern Senior Services (SSS)** was constituted, with Robert Parker as Chairman and Don Billings as Vice-Chairman. Other members were Carolyn Barlow, John Bumpus, Terry Liebman, Elbert Overholt, Philip Rustin, Tim Warkentin and Jerry White. The Board was then seeking an option on a tract of land, once part of the College's holdings, at NW 36th and College, and on adjacent properties for the proposed senior housing site. Board members were making tours of functioning housing centers, seeking ideas for the one planned for Bethany. This project was the prime interest at the *January '96* ASP meeting.

Another development of pertinence to Academy people coming into focus in the new year was that of *research*. The Research Interest Group (RIG) had been in the thoughts of ASP planners earlier, but now came to fill an important and a prominent function in the campus community. Spurring this interest was the involvement of SNU alumnus and specialist in the area, Dr. Jack Arnold. The Group adopted a statement of its MISSION, i.e., "to promote, perform, and disseminate the results of research that is germane to the interests

of the ASP membership, the alumni, faculty and students of SNU, and the citizens of the extended community.” Also featured in the January program were the Bob Troutman family.

Remaining sessions of the **Spring semester '96** demonstrated increasing interest in the prospects for senior housing, along with a variety of other projects and programs. **February's** meeting, in addition to the usual Valentine's Day emphasis, featured a book review of *LINCOLN'S MOTHERS*, introduced by Anna Belle Laughbaum and presented by Virjeane Bayles. Don Beaver sang “God of Our Fathers.” The ASP Volunteer Interest Corps (AVAC) circulated a Volunteer Talent Bank form as a means for continuing to promote that service to the campus community and for matching talent to need. February was a big month also in the number of new recruits to the ASP membership, with Shirley Pelley, Dale and Gerri McClafin, Margene Walker, Jay and Rita Foster, James and Lora Lee Dunkin, and Neta (Brummet) Jones being added. All looked forward eagerly to a presentation on housing by Robert Parker in the next monthly assembly.

That research interest became a focus of the **March** luncheon meeting. However, new interest was also generated in the proposed program for senior housing, as Mr. Robert Parker generated confidence that the planning was in good hands and that success would result from it.

Additionally in that meeting, Dr. Rex Tullis, new Chair of the SNU School of Education, presented an analysis of the current changes in society, from the perspectives of various generations. It provided a different outlook on the times for people most of whom had been leaders of previous periods at SNU. George Cargill presented a plan for the Esther Overholt Memorial Scholarship Fund, with ready response in contributions by those present. These supplemented the amount of \$1000 that was provided from the Academy treasury by ASP decision. Marvin Peterson announced and stressed the advantages of the AARP Defensive Driving Course available on campus at the end of the month.

The **April** business meeting consisted of reports from the main officers, followed by their routine reelection to serve for 1996-97. Membership Chairman Lloyd Neighbors reported for his Membership Committee that 20 new members had been received during the past year, making a total figure of **131** as of that date. Congratulations were offered to Dr. Anna Belle Laughbaum, who had been honored by the Oklahoma City branch of the American Association of University Women with the AAUW Scholarship Endowment (\$10,000), as “Woman of Achievement in International Relations.” This honor was in recognition of her two years' work at the Korean Nazarene Theological College.

The **May** luncheon session closed academic year '96 for the ASP on a contemporary note, identifying the group with the computer age. Dale McClafin offered to prepare a “Data Base” for the growing number of special Interest Groups. Jack and Josie Harris were designated to co-chair a Volunteers Interest Group. Howard Culbertson of the SNU faculty requested the expansion of the Campus Colleagues volunteer service to assist the academic departments, especially Religion. Bob Emmel agreed to chair a Writers Interest Group. Thus, the Academy functions multiplied as membership grew, and the spread of talents with it. The lively meeting ended with reviews of books presented by Academy author/members, including Anna Belle Laughbaum, Dawn Tullis and Art Barkley.

The 1996-97 year opened with an early *September* meeting. The main feature was a report by Milton Sonnevik on his trip to China, presented in his interesting delivery style including Scandinavian "twist." Of particular note was his scary account of smuggling Bibles past Red guards. The leadership for the new Academy year was announced, with Vada Lee Barkley chairing the Administrative Council, Shirley Pelley as Chair of the Plans and Programs Committee, Lloyd and Bobbie Neighbors Membership Committee Chair, and Anna Belle Laughbaum responsible for By-laws and Organization. Eight members were designated the Telephone Brigade, and Kathleen Sodowsky was charged with sending Get Well and Sympathy cards. The membership was particularly pleased with the solid progress being made in recent weeks by SSS (Southern Senior Services, Inc.) under the able leadership of Mr. Robert Parker.

The *October '96* ASP gathering was entertained by Mr. Richard Amend, Director of the Centenarian Club of Oklahoma who told unusual and amusing stories of happenings to and by citizens after age one hundred. Of special interest to several at the meeting was the announcement of the schedule of the SNU swimming pool (in Broadhurst) which would accommodate ASP members by displaying Academy I.D. cards. The records show unusual activity in the RIG (Research Interest Group), led by Dr. Jack Arnold and participated in by a dozen members with vital research interests.

The *November* session was enlivened by thrilling accounts by speaker Todd Sheehy who had piloted a US fighter plane on 40 missions over Iraq during the Gulf War. Todd, an SNU Summa Cum Laude alumnus, had earned 12 Air Force awards, including the Distinguished Flying Cross and four air medals, and was currently serving as SNU Director of Aviation. In this especially notable gathering, the 93rd birthday of Dr. Cantrell was remembered with testimonies of high appreciation for his character and service. This was also a memorial day honoring members lost during past months including Dorothy Ellis, Milton Brasher, Esther Staggs, Paul Sodowsky, Esther Overholt, Velma Danskin and Martha Gresham.

Christmas past and present was on the minds and program of the Academy meeting of *December '96*. Dawn Tullis provided the luncheon decorations with her accustomed taste and skill. Bud Cargill advertised and invited purchase of the decorative pieces at \$4.00 each. Rebekah Dorris arranged and facilitated a heartwarming program by SNU non-music majors.

The Spring semester '97 ASP activities began in *January*, when Roy Dorris initiated the new year's Academy research programming with a fascinating report on his fields of pharmacy and pharmacology. Don Beaver also reported his RIG interest. The Volunteer Interest Group also announced a new start in projects on the campus and in the community, with an enlarged list of openings for help.

The *February* meeting featured SNU alumnus Jack McElrath, a Viet Nam veteran (Marine Corps) and recently retired FBI agent, as speaker. He reported on several individual investigations in which he had engaged, in Washington, D.C., Texas, and New York City. While in New York, he and his family had attended the Lamb's Club Church of the Nazarene, which experience in itself carried prime interest. The recent decease of Membership Committee Chairman Lloyd Neighbors was recognized with sadness and

thankfulness for his friendship and faithful service. Dale McClafin accepted appointment to replace him as committee chair. It was agreed that the amount of \$1,000 would be dispersed from the ASP treasury in favor of the SNU library to be used for purchase of materials for senior citizens.

Speaker for the *March* meeting was Dr. Rex Tullis. He again demonstrated both identity with the historic educational ideals of the holiness college and contemporaneity with the current times of change in American culture. Paul Gray was recognized for his very thought-provoking paper, "Can American Democracy Survive?", which had been presented to the Research Interest Group prior to the session. (It continued to elicit comment and discussion in the RIG session of April 24 as well as in this general ASP meeting of that day.)

In accord with by-law provisions (Article II, section 3a), the *April* session was devoted mainly to the annual business arrangements, including election of officers for 1997-98. All current leaders submitted annual reports of their functions, and all were retained in their same positions: Barkley (President), Beaver (Vice-President), Cargill (Treasurer), Downs (Secretary) and Sonnevik (Member of the Council at-Large).

Mrs. Barkley's report was an admirable five-page summation of the activities of the Academy through the year, thus constituting a history of the ASP for that time and highlighting those who had contributed to significant accomplishments. Otherwise, the program of the day consisted of an excellent presentation by Jack Arnold on the very pertinent topic, "Closing the Window on Ageism in the Media."

The *May '97* meeting featured musical and other talent arranged by Shirley Pelley. Also, Loren Gresham reported on the current status of the senior housing project and highlighted major developments in University affairs.

The tenth year since earliest recorded planning for and the eighth of official operations of the Academy, began in the Fall of 1997 with the *September 15* luncheon meeting in the Heritage Room of Commons. The emphasis in the session was on *volunteering*, which had been a major focus of the ASP since its inception. *President Barkley* introduced three member/volunteers who reported on their current activities. *Betty Knudson* spoke of her work in prison ministry in Oklahoma County, identifying personal qualities necessary to successful work in that field. Lawrence Snell told of his service with Travelers' Aid at Will Rogers World Airport, accenting the kinds of problems, both grave and humorous, faced in his work. *Helen Silvey* described her work with *Birthtrol*, an organization devoted to helping women in crisis pregnancy situations.

Other matters set the stage for the new year, with special attention to *Research Interest Group* projects. Bea Flinger distributed forms on which members could suggest topics to be researched by themselves or members of RIG. Susan Baker, SNU Assistant Professor and Director of SNU Networking, provided impetus to the research group through an on-hands seminar.

Other Fall '97 meetings also were devoted to practical purposes. The *October* session featured John Gillespie, President of Access Financial Group, Inc. of Bethany and a

specialist on tax laws. He presented information on investments and shelter strategies pertinent to senior citizens.

The *November* luncheon attracted an attendance of 86, including new members Wanda Smith and Claude and Ellen Pittenger. Dawn Tullis again prepared table decorations portraying the Thanksgiving theme beautifully. Donna Mohling, Director of Patient Services of Hospice of Oklahoma, presented the program. She gave a brief history of the hospice movement from its beginnings in London in 1960 and followed by a sensitive characterization of the service of physical, emotional and spiritual support for dying persons. So, studies and research on ways and means of helping others, as well as assisting senior members and SNU, were prime involvements as the first decade of the Academy drew toward its close.

The final ASP meeting of calenday year 1997 was held in the customary place on **December 8**. Of prime interest was the report of Elbert Overholt on progress toward senior housing (Senior Citizens Services) . The most prospective site at the time appeared to be at the corner of College and NW 36th Streets, across from the City Hall-- the historic location of the early Nazarene Home for unwed mothers. Mrs. J. P. (Johnny) Jernigan had been its superintendent until it closed in 1916. Tax-exempt status for the SSS was being sought from the IRS by Dr. Don Billings through an attorney.

The Bethany High School Choir under the direction of Stephen Bielick provided special entertainment for this December meeting, arranged by Lawana Isaacs

The ASP assembled for its first meeting of 1998 on **February 2**, when a special guest and speaker was Rev. Musa Kunene, a graduate student in the SNU Department of Religion. Rev. Kunene recounted the story of his early years and of his conversion to Christ and call to preach the gospel. He shared his vision of a strong evangelistic crusade he trusted would sweep Africa in the next century. He had come to the University with the assistance of the new Department of Religion graduate scholarship program.

The Professionals met in Commons on March 9, '98, when a program arranged by Shirley Pelley featured Dr. Dick Moesel, a local nurseryman, who offered tips about gardening in Oklahoma. A helpful question and answer period followed.

Announcements of interesting projects came from members, including research proposals, volunteering ideas, a new website provided the Academy through Susan Baker, and the dream of a Nazarene campground in Spain (shared by retired missionary Bill Porter).

