

2003 Alumni Awards



Abilene Christian University's 98-year history is distinguished by the accomplishments of graduates who take the university's mission to heart, using their God-given talents as servant-leaders around the world.



OUTSTANDING ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR

Provides timely recognition of the lifetime achievement of an individual who has brought honor to the university through personal and professional excellence and service to the university, the church and the community.

YOUNG ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR

Recognizes professional achievement and/or distinguished service to the university. To be eligible, a recipient must not have reached 40 years of age at the time of nomination.

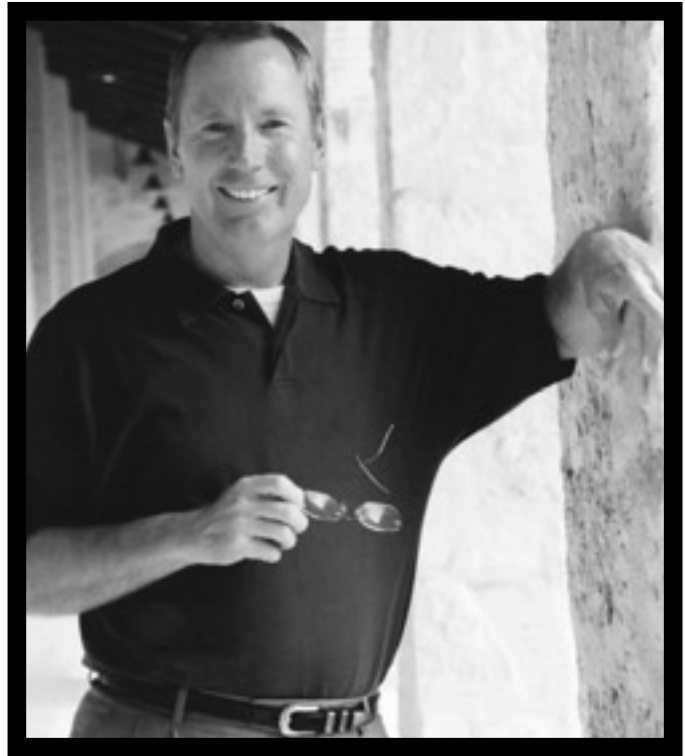
DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI CITATION

Recognizes distinctive personal or professional achievement that has merited the honor and praise of peers and colleagues. One honoree each is chosen from the College of Biblical Studies, College of Business Administration and College of Arts and Sciences, and one is selected at-large.


Alumni
ASSOCIATION

2003 Outstanding Alumnus of the Year

“He makes it easy,” says Liz Heaney, who’s talking about how her favorite author works with her, his senior editor for 18 years. But she could just as well be speaking for millions of **Max Lucado’s** fans who buy books written by the San Antonio minister and author.



Max Lucado

To many of them, ACU’s 2003 Outstanding Alumnus of the Year makes *knowing Jesus* easy.

They eagerly await his next book, often helping turn each from an idea incubated in Lucado’s Sunday sermons to best sellers that amaze the publishing industry and fortify his growing reputation as one of the nation’s most recognized – and popular – ministers.

As pulpit minister for the 4,000-member Oak Hills Church, many of Lucado’s thoughts each day center around his congregation’s needs and next Sunday’s sermon. Not far away, however, are his ear and eye for concepts and storylines to make another book idea come to life in a store near you next summer.

The titles reveal Lucado’s intent to help people experience a personal relationship with the divine: “No Wonder They Call Him Savior.” “He Still Moves Stones.” “When God Whispers Your Name.” “He Chose the Nails.” “In the Grip of Grace.” “A Love Worth Giving.” “Next Door Savior.”

With more than 70 titles for children, adults and families (including 50 books and 28 million copies in print) to his credit, you might think Lucado is simply recycling old ideas, reheating spiritual leftovers. But he seems to have two fingers on the pulse of each readers’ wrist.

“He’s probably one of the best authors out there today,” says Heaney, the Oregon-based senior editor who has helped refine most of Lucado’s “trade” books.

“Max is very creative. He can write in a manner that appeals to a person’s emotions. Max has the ability to open your eyes to old truths in new ways.”

“I keep three people in mind when I write,” Lucado says. “I ask myself, ‘How will that connect with a housewife? When a truck driver picks that book up, what will he think? How would a principal respond?’ It forces me to keep chapters short because most of those people don’t have a lot of time to read books.”

“He self-edits very well,” Heaney says. “He has learned to write concisely and trim out unnecessary words and concepts.”

From “When God Whispers Your Name:”

We learn brevity from Jesus. His greatest sermon can be read in eight minutes

(Matthew 7). His best-known story can be read in 90 seconds (Luke 15:11-32). He summarized prayer in five phrases (Matt. 6:9-13). He silenced accusers with one challenge (John 8:7). He rescued a soul with one sentence (Luke 23:43). He summarized the law in three verses (Mark 12:29-31), and he reduced all his teachings to one command (John 15:12).

He made his point and went home.

We preachers would do well to imitate. (What’s that old line? “Our speaker today needs no introduction, but he could use a conclusion.”)

I believe in brevity. I believe that you, the reader, entrust me, the writer, with your most valued commodity – your time. I shouldn’t take more than my share. For that reason,

Max Lucado (CONTINUED)

I love the short sentence. Big-time game it is. Hiding in the jungle of circular construction and six-syllable canyons. As I write, I hunt. And when I find, I shoot. Then I drag the treasure out of the trees and marvel.

But the process of baring one's soul in supposedly clever words – only to have them diced by the tip of an editor's pen or banished by the click of the "delete" key – can be as excruciating as it is humbling.

"I hate it," he says. "It's like somebody pointing out all the ugly parts of your baby. However, there's a time when I have to say, 'I no longer own this. It belongs to my editing team now.'"

Lucado says his toughest week each year is the first or second one in January when Heaney sends back his first draft with her comments. "My stomach is tight all week long," he says. "It typically comes back with something comparable to a B-minus grade on it, and the rewriting work starts. I'm so thankful she's honest with me."

Later, Heaney travels to San Antonio, where she, Lucado and Max's longtime administrative editor and assistant, Karen Hill, read the manuscript aloud to each other several times, making further edits.

"He pursues excellence in his writing, but he wants honest feedback and evaluation. Believe me, not every author's like that," Heaney says. "Max's standard gets higher and higher with each book he writes. He's his own worst enemy that way. He sets the bar really high for himself."

What he's learned about writing best-selling books has helped Lucado evolve into a ravenous rewriter in his spare time.

"I have a plaque in my office that says 'The ability to rewrite separates the Steinbecks from the Smiths.' I try to keep that in mind," he laughs.

An unabashed storyteller at heart, Lucado has perfected the art of weaving an elaborate narrative in compelling fashion. "I rely on stories because I think they communicate more clearly," he says.

Lucado's skill may be best seen in "The Crippled Lamb" or "Just in Case You Ever Wonder," two of the children's books which Hill has edited for him.

"I love stories and I love kids. I feel more comfortable with 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds some days than I do 45-year-olds," he laughs. "Telling stories from a Christian perspective fits my strengths real easily. I don't often admit this, but some days I wouldn't mind retiring and spending the last 20 years of my career writing children's books. To leave a room full of kids' books for the

next generation would be a pretty neat idea. Each summer I go on vacation for two weeks, then spend two weeks writing a children's book. This summer I may write two; we'll see."

Lucado earned two degrees from Abilene Christian: a B.A. in journalism and mass communication in 1978 and a master's in Bible and biblical related studies in 1983. He met Denalyn Preston ('79) while on the ministry staff at Central Church of Christ in Miami, Fla., and they married in 1981. That's where he caught the writing bug – crafting church bulletin articles. He and Denalyn served as missionaries in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 1983-87.

He is the first author to win three Book

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of the Year awards from the Evangelical Christian Publishers' Association, and at least one of his books has appeared on the ECPA's best seller list every month for the past 12 years. In 1994, he was the only author to have all but one of his books simultaneously appear in paperback, hardcover and children's on the Christian Booksellers Association bestseller list.

In 1993, *Christianity Today* named Lucado one of the seven most admired Christian authors. Not bad for someone whose first book ("On the Anvil," a collection of articles from his time in Miami) was rejected by 14 publishers before being printed by Tyndale House.

"In the sense that all my books come out of a message to the church, yes, there's a lot of me in each one," says Lucado. "Each book starts with communication with the people in this congregation, and is based upon my interaction with them. Each book comes out of what I perceive the church needs to hear. I'm by nature a pretty transparent person. My writing is

personal and comes from the heart."

For Lucado, the attention his success has brought cuts two ways. He enjoys each publishing venture and his national radio ministry, "Upwords," and the doors they open to the gospel. He is grateful for opportunities to be a guest on CNN's "Larry King Live" and for trips to the White House to meet with the President and other government leaders. But he's also uncomfortable when his family and congregation must accommodate both critics and admirers.

"It can be awkward," Lucado says of the need at times to monitor crowds at Oak Hills because of threats he has received. "But we're looking for every way possible to reduce that sort of precaution. We also don't allow photos to be taken in the auditorium, and I don't sign books during Sunday services. Mostly it's to protect the real reason people come to church – to encounter Christ."

For a change, Lucado enjoys being in the shadow of publicity created by the newest addition to Oak Hills' staff: David Robinson, the appropriately named minister-at-large and 7-foot, 1-inch former captain of the 2003 NBA champion San Antonio Spurs.

"He's an amazing guy. He leads a 6 a.m. men's Bible study every Thursday that attracts about 350 guys. David gets 100,000 times more attention than I do these days. He receives so much mail that he can't get it read much less respond to it," says Lucado.

Outside San Antonio, Lucado enjoys the relative anonymity of occasional trips back to Abilene to visit his daughter, Jenna, an ACU sophomore. His early morning jogs around campus give him time to think about how much the university has grown since he was a student. And the reasons why he and Denalyn sent Jenna to Abilene Christian.

He remembers that August day clearly.

"I just stood there and cried. I was a basket case," he says. "I gassed up the car and was so distracted I left the nozzle in the gas tank and yanked the thing out when I drove away."

Lucado says he has never understood why parents would not prefer a Christian university for their children.

"You have the rest of your life to live in 'the real world' as some people like to call it," he says. "Why not take four years to live in something of a greenhouse where you can dig deep in scripture and spend time with such spiritual people? It's a no-brainer to me. A college-age person makes so many key decisions in those few years that will affect the rest of his or her life. Why not make them in the best possible environment?"▲

– RON HADFIELD

2003 Young Alumnus of the Year

Pat and Joann Sublett don't remember much about Christmas 2002 after opening a big box from daughter Karen Mitchell ('86) and son-in-law William ('87). Inside it was a beautifully framed document announcing the endowment of the Pat and Joann Sublett Government Leadership Scholarship at ACU.

"It was the last package we opened. At least I think it was. I don't remember much after that," Joann says. "Christmas was a blur."

"I wanted to do something for my parents while they were living and could enjoy it," says Karen, ACU's 2003 Young Alumnus of the Year. After she and William discussed what would be appropriate, they decided to donate \$25,000 to endow the scholarship in her parents' honor. Karen believed the scholarship would have great significance to the Subletts, who have awarded a \$1,000 scholarship to a high school graduate annually for the past 20 years through the Ace Hardware Store they own in Gordon.

"It is so dear to us to see our young people go on to college," Joann says. "When we saw our children do this [give a scholarship], it just thrilled us."

The scholarship meshes two of Karen's highest priorities – her family and her desire to serve others – so evident in her daily life. A devoted daughter, sister, wife, and mother of two, she has chosen a career in public service, most recently as the U.S. Clerk of Courts for the Northern District of Texas.

Both priorities have roots in her childhood.

Growing up in the small West Texas town of Gordon (pop. 500), Karen lived next door to her maternal grandparents, a caring couple who always helped those in need. Inspired by their example, Karen decided her junior year in high school that she wanted to be a lawyer.

"I wanted to be in a position to help people," Karen adds. "I really felt like a law degree would enable me to do a lot of different things."

It wasn't until 1983 when she enrolled in ACU that she discovered how she could use a law degree to help others. Majoring in government (political science), Karen was exposed to public agencies through classes and internships, including one with U.S. Rep. Charles Stenholm's office. She developed a profound interest in public sector work and

decided to pursue a career in that area.

"I really believe the mission of ACU to train people for service is an important one. For me it meant public service," Karen says.

"Everything we would like to see happen to students at ACU, you can look to Karen as a role model," says Dr. Mel Hailey ('70), professor and chair of political science. Hailey remembers Karen as an intelligent student with the "heart of a servant."

"She is just the type of person who makes teaching a joy," Hailey says. "I'd say Karen is definitely in the top one percent of the students with whom I have ever been associated."

A focused student, Karen finished her undergraduate studies in three years as valedictorian and received her law degree from Baylor in 1990.

After law school, she and William moved to College Station to be closer to Karen's sister, Jill ('85).

William went to graduate school at Texas A&M

University, while Karen landed her first public service position: directing a new Texas Worker's Compensation field office in Bryan. That position laid the groundwork for ensuing jobs in risk management for the A&M and University of Texas systems.

In 1995 Karen and William sought jobs in Dallas, once again to be close to family. He landed one with American Airlines, and Karen became the director of judicial operations for the Northern District Court. In two years, she was promoted to chief deputy for the court, a position responsible for the daily operations of the court.

When the District Clerk was stricken with cancer in 2000, Karen was appointed acting clerk, the youngest person to hold that office. Karen had just had her second child in March. Because of job demands, she returned to work after two weeks' leave with baby in tow.

In 2001 Karen became one of only 12 women to be appointed U.S. District Clerk, the chief operating officer for the court system. The Northern District oversees court business in 100 counties from Dallas west to San Angelo and north to Amarillo.



DANIEL RENEE

Karen Mitchell

"I think that she is perceived as a rising star in the national judiciary," says Joe A. Fish, chief judge of the Northern District Court. "She now is being asked to come to Washington to confer about court business and speak to other clerks."

"I do believe that I am here to be of service to the courts," she says. "Not many clerks approach their job that way, but I do."

And Karen believes that service does not end when she leaves her office. She is involved in many church and community activities, helping others in the way that her grandparents modeled.

"Karen is a person who has great balance in her life. She knows the importance of family, she knows the importance of church, and she maintains a high degree of professionalism," says Hailey.

In establishing the scholarship, Karen has left a legacy for future public servants. Designed to help students become leaders in government, the scholarship has already been awarded to the first recipient, Monica Guerrero of Abilene, who plans to attend law school after graduating in May.

But Karen considers her sons Will, 5, and David, 3, to be her true legacy. "No doubt my children are the best thing that ever happened to me," she says.

Surely Pat and Joann Sublett must feel the same way.▲

— TAMARA THOMPSON

"I wanted to be in a position to help people. I really felt like a law degree would enable me to do a lot of different things."

2003. Distinguished Alumni Citation



On his way to work each day in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Jose Gonçalves would pass a home that had a blackboard posted outside with a verse from the Bible written on it.

Antenor Gonçalves ('86) laughs as he tells the story, "This was mass media evangelism from the 1950s here in Brazil."

And now Antenor, Jose's son who came to the U.S. for college to prepare for a career sharing Christ with his fellow Brazilians, reaches more than 40 million people every week through the Impacto television and radio programs, a 21st century method of mass media evangelism that produces more than 300 telephone contacts each week.

Antenor and his wife, Phyllis (Sheppard '74), also travel extensively to teach at family retreats, marriage seminars, workshops and lectureships in Brazil. He speaks during evangelistic campaigns, teaches at the preacher training school, and preaches each Sunday at the church in Itu, Brazil, where he and his family have lived for the last seven years.

His daughter, Alice ('04), is a senior at ACU, also preparing for mission work. Paul ('08), a son who was born on Antenor's graduation day in 1986, recently graduated from high school and plans to enroll at ACU in August. His major? Bible and missions.

Antenor and Phyllis will soon make another of their periodic visits to the U.S. This time he'll take back a Distinguished Alumni

Citation from Abilene Christian University, which will be presented in January at Highland Church of Christ in Abilene.

Antenor describes his ACU experience as "simply indelible." He recalls ministry classes with Dr. Royce Money ('64), a class on Revelation with Dr. Ian Fair ('68), studying church history with Dr. LeMoine Lewis ('36) and exegesis with Dr. Neil Lightfoot, and learning counseling from Dr. Paul Faulkner ('52) and family relations with Dr. Carl Brecheen ('52).

"I keep telling my kids they will not find better professors and a greater environment than at ACU," he said. "The thing that was engraved on my heart from ACU was the empathy from my professors, who served infinitely more than just teachers, but as mentors, fathers and friends."

One of six children of Jose and Joana Gonçalves, Antenor grew up playing soccer in Sao Paulo, a city today of 18 million people. Jose worked for the health department, and Joana was a housewife. Antenor graduated from high school in 1976, then enrolled in a preparatory school to ready himself for medical school.

But missionaries John Paul Simon and John Curtis persuaded him to attend the preacher training school in Sao Paulo to better equip himself to serve Churches of Christ in Brazil.

After finishing preacher training in 1978, he began studying psychology at a Brazilian university. But there was another change of plans. He married Phyllis and came to the U.S. in 1980 to visit her



Antenor Gonçalves

family, and he enrolled at ACU in 1981.

Antenor admits he couldn't speak English when he came to the U.S. "But people welcomed me and treated me with a Christ-like love, and I fell in love with the place and the people in Abilene," he added.

To aid his transition to life in Abilene, he volunteered to help coach the Mustangs, a youth soccer team, on the playground of nearby Taylor Elementary School. "I remember those days," he said. "I could hardly understand what was going on on the field."

Antenor says he's "in awe" of the Distinguished Alumni Citation from ACU. "I just couldn't understand how among thousands of brilliant students and wonderful people, I was one of the chosen ones," he said.

He received his letter announcing the award at home in Itu on a Monday, typically his day off. "On that particular Monday I was sick in bed," he continued. He came home from a weekend of traveling and speaking "exhausted and totally depleted," but news of the award "really made my day. It was an encouragement pill or intravenous injection."

The work of Antenor and Phyllis in Itu is supported by churches in Abilene, San Angelo, Granbury, Midwest City, Okla., and Hobbs, N.M., enabling him to accomplish "this vision on my heart

to come back to Brazil and help families all over this great country."

In his seven years in Itu, average attendance at the congregation has grown from 30 to 220 people at worship services.

Antenor says his father Jose "served as my role model all my life for being a gentle-hearted, kind servant and a visionary man. From the time I was about 10 years old, he would take me whenever he went to help start a congregation or even if he was just teaching a Bible class to someone... That made me feel part of his ministry.

Never a salaried minister, Jose "was simply a servant who had the vision and volunteered his time to preach the gospel to the lost," Antenor said.

A Catholic who had "never studied the Bible," according to Antenor, Jose was intrigued by the Bible verse on the blackboard at the home of Ivan Rude, an American missionary. One day he inquired, learned that Rude taught Bible classes, and accepted an invitation to attend.

Later Jose took his wife and children to the classes, and Jose (in 1960) and Joana (in 1961) were baptized. "My parents were among the first converts of the Churches of Christ in Brazil," Antenor said, even before the first mission team arrived led by Glenn Owen, Dr. Howard Norton ('57), Dr. Ellis Long ('57) and others. Now Antenor also serves on the board of a Brazilian orphanage. He helps orphans who leave the facility in a transition to life in Brazil.

And what better person is there to help Brazilian young people in their transition to a new life? ▲

— GARNER ROBERTS

"I have a great pride in the fact that my kids also have decided to come to ACU. It was a great blessing in my life."

2003. Distinguished Alumni Citation

He's a classic example of a great teacher inspiring one of his or her students to also become a teacher. "I always valued good teaching," Dr. Carl Holladay says, "and tried to be a good teacher myself."

Now a noted teacher, author and scholar of the New Testament, Holladay ('65) fondly recalls how his days as a boy in Tennessee and later his professors at Freed-Hardeman University and Abilene Christian University inspired him and shaped his career.

He grew up in Huntingdon, Tenn., a town of about 3,000 people. "My father (Ben) was an elder in the church, and the church in that little town was formative for me," Holladay said.

So now Carl Holladay, Ben's and Inus' son from Carroll County, Tenn., who planned to study math at a nearby junior college, has B.A. and M.Div. degrees from ACU, a Th.M. from Princeton Theological Seminary, and a Ph.D. from University of Cambridge in England. He is the Charles Howard Candler Professor of New Testament at Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta.

"I had the good fortune of having excellent teachers, such as Drs. LeMoine Lewis ('36) and Abe Malherbe ('54) in Abilene and William Woodson at Freed-Hardeman," Holladay says. "They were exceptional at igniting interest in their students and making the subject exciting. They were not just teaching or conveying information, but they also made their material interesting."

Holladay, 60, joined the Emory faculty in 1980 after teaching at Yale Divinity School from 1975-80. At Candler's fall convocation in 2002, he was installed as Charles Howard Candler Professor of New Testament and delivered the opening address. He also served in 1992-94 as dean of the faculty and academic affairs at Candler, the largest United Methodist seminary in the United States.

Holladay says a good teacher faces two challenges. He must be well prepared with the facts of his subject, and he must make it interesting.

"I always try to teach the New Testament in a way that is true to the material and so that students catch the vision and are gripped by it," he said. "It can be transformative."

For this distinguished career, his service as an elder at Northlake Church of Christ in Atlanta, and his allegiance to his family and Christian education, Holladay has received an ACU Distinguished Alumni Citation. The award was presented Sept. 14, 2003, at Northlake, where Holladay also teaches Bible classes for adults.

Holladay's wife, Donna (Hardeman '65), also has bachelor's and master's degrees from ACU and is a counselor at Greater Atlanta Christian Schools. The Holladays have three sons, Krister, Ben, and Andrew, and two grandchildren, Sarah and James.

"Both the church and the academy benefit from his contributions," says Dr. James Thompson ('64), ACU professor of New Testament and associate dean of the Graduate School of Theology. "Carl has been a vital source of encouragement and support to young scholars from the Churches of Christ. He has taught many faculty members of Christian colleges at Emory. Few people combine the gifts of organization and leadership with their scholarship as well as Carl does."

Dr. Carl Holladay

Thompson also pointed to the importance of the Christian Scholarship Foundation, which Holladay helped establish in 1983 as a private, non-profit corporation to provide financial assistance to scholars from Churches of Christ. Its mission is "to perpetuate and foster the Restoration tradition of doing scholarly work in the service of the church."

It has awarded more than \$250,000 in graduate fellowships to more than 50 doctoral students preparing for teaching careers in biblical studies.

His first book was "Commentary on First Corinthians" in the Living Word Series. Among his other articles and books are the commentary on Acts in "Harper's Bible Commentary," "Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook," and "Preaching Through the Christian Year." He is writing two other books, "The New Testament as the Church's Book" and "A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles."

In 1994-95 he received a Fulbright Senior Scholar research grant to study in Germany on his four-volume series titled "Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors." In 1999 he was named a Henry T. Luce III Fellow in Theology by the Association of Theology Schools in the U.S. and Canada.

He has lectured across the U.S. and in England, Germany and Israel. He is a member of the Society of Biblical Literature, the major professional society in North America for professors of biblical studies, and the Society for the Study of the New Testament, an international society for New Testament scholars. His other activities include president of the Georgia chapter of the Fulbright Association and editorial board member for *Restoration Quarterly*.



Holladay had planned to major in math at Freed-Hardeman and become an actuary before what he called a "vocational conversion" at FHU. "My first year there I started preaching every Sunday," he remembers. "I was going to school during the week and preaching on the weekends. And I did that all through my years there and in Abilene.

"At Freed-Hardeman I became aware of my gift for teaching, and it became more clear while I was in Abilene," he adds. "William Woodson told me of the impressive, young professors at ACU, and Dr. Clyde Austin ('53) visited the campus and influenced several of us to make the 13-hour drive to Abilene. It was typical for Freed-Hardeman students after their two years to transfer to Lipscomb or Harding, so my wife and I and several others decided to break the mold."

At ACU he also studied under Dr. J.D. Thomas ('43), Dr. J.W. Roberts ('42), Dr. Everett Ferguson ('53) and Dr. Tony Ash ('56) and local minister John Allen Chalk. "The '60s were 'heady' years, years of turbulence. Intellectual vitality was stirring in Abilene, and I was caught up in it and inspired by it. It broadened my horizons," Holladay says.

At Cambridge he studied under internationally known New Testament scholar C.F.D. Moule. Holladay is believed to be the first from Churches of Christ to receive a Ph.D. from Cambridge.

He also has been a visiting professor at ACU and served as a consultant to the university's Graduate School of Theology and on its visiting committee. ▲

— GARNER ROBERTS

2003. Distinguished Alumni Citation



He's a decorated military officer, successful businessman, inventor, world-record bow hunter, and devoted husband, father and grandfather. And now Maj. Gen. Leroy Sisco ('67) is the winner of a Distinguished Alumni Citation from Abilene Christian University.

"Abilene Christian means a lot to me," Sisco said recently before leaving his home in the Dallas-Fort Worth suburb of Southlake to speak at Texas A&M University. "I'm very honored by this award. I wouldn't be the person I am today if it hadn't been for ACU."

Archery World calls him "part affable, intelligent southern gentleman, part brilliant inventor, and part super patriot with a 'don't mess with the U.S.' attitude."

The 60-year-old Sisco admits, "It's been a lot of fun, and I'm still having fun."

Sisco retired April 27, 2003, after serving as commander of the Texas State Guard since 1997. He has been honored by the House of Representatives and Senate of Texas, received the Legion of Merit Award and Army Commendation Medal and other honors, and was inducted into the Texas Infantry OCS Hall of Fame, an honor reserved for Texas' finest soldiers.

President George W. Bush promoted Sisco to brigadier general while Bush was governor of Texas, and Sisco has been a friend and hunting partner of the state's current governor, Rick Perry, since Perry's days as a rancher and banker in Paint Creek and Haskell, Texas.

Perry recently enlisted the aid of Sisco in recommending hunting bows for his children, and that resulted in a rare session of target practice on the lawn of the Governor's Mansion in Austin.

In 1998 Sisco scheduled a hunting trip to Roosevelt, Texas, with another hunting partner, former Texas Rangers catcher Geno Petralli. Petralli

had to cancel his plans to join the hunt, leaving for Sisco a shot at what proved to be the world's largest axis buck taken by a bow hunter.

Sisco also invented a popular bow sling sold in Cabela catalogs and in archery shops across the U.S. and rated a perfect five stars by the product-rating system of *Archery World*.

A bow hunter for 40 years, Sisco also has successfully hunted turkey, elk and bear. The Texas Trophy Hunter Association is currently filming a show about him for the Outdoor Life Network.

Sisco got his starts to his pastime of hunting and his military and business careers early in life. He began hunting as a youngster in McAlester, Okla., before moving to Abilene at the age of 14.



Maj. Gen. Leroy Sisco

He joined the National Guard in 1961 while a senior at Abilene High, starting a 42-year military career. Upon graduation from Officer Candidate School, he was commissioned a second lieutenant. His three years as an enlisted soldier delayed his

graduation from ACU, but he eventually worked his way through college as a draftsman and received a B.S. degree in business in 1967.

Before assuming command of the Texas State Guard, he was deputy commander of the 49th Armored Division. His other commands included the 231st Engineer Company, 386th Engineer Battalion, and 111th Area Support Group. He served in Germany with the 21st TAACOM, leading units that moved millions of

tons of military training equipment.

He has been president and member of the executive board of the National Guard Association of Texas with more than 40,000 members.

"I learned a lot in the military that helps me in my civilian life, and I learned a lot in my civilian life that helped me in the military," Sisco said.

"It's been a very positive experience."

He always made sure the units he commanded had religious services each Sunday. "If they didn't have a chaplain, I got a church to adopt them," he said.

His military career with the Guard and his travel for speaking appointments limited his church activities, but after retirement he's devoted time to helping with business matters, including financing for a new building for Lake Cities Church of Christ. It's in that new building Jan. 18, 2004, that he'll receive the Alumni Citation from the ACU Alumni Association.

Sisco says the second best decision in his life was to enroll in a bowling class at Abilene Christian because "it led to the best decision I ever made, and that was to marry Frances (Wiseman '66)," a classmate from Sudan, Texas.

"She's the cornerstone of our family," Sisco said. "The good Lord knew I would need a lot of help so he blessed me with an angel."

They have two sons, Brandon ('95) and Trevor ('97), both former ACU student-athletes, and daughter Shae, now a student at Texas A&M after studying in Japan. And there are five grandchildren — Blake, Alexia, Ty, Jayden and Trenton.

Sisco is a principal and an owner of BANC:source, a selling and servicing firm that provides and supports hardware, software and other products for banks and financial institutions in 47 states.

"ACU has been a big part of our lives," he added, "a very positive part." ▲

— GARNER ROBERTS

"I always wanted to go to Abilene Christian. A lot of people influenced me to attend, including my uncle, Gene Knight, who was a part-time preacher. It was easy to step into school there. I made a lot of good friends."

2003. Distinguished Alumni Citation

As an engineer, Dr. Paul Cox ('56) often delved outside his chosen field to make discoveries and create inventions.

As a man, he took a similar approach to life's challenges by going outside his comfort zone to live his faith and touch countless lives.

And when life presented him the ultimate challenge – the diagnosis of terminal cancer in 1997 – he didn't deviate from his usual approach. Given less than two years to live, Cox prayerfully tended to his health and went about his business. He traveled to Southeast Asia on a mission trip, became an elder, and pursued a degree in counseling at ACU.

In September 2003, six years after his diagnosis, Cox lost his battle with cancer. His death came just seven weeks after being honored by ACU with a Distinguished Alumni Citation.

The son of a preacher, Paul Frank Cox enrolled in Abilene Christian in 1952 after excelling in chemistry in high school. "My real intent was to probably go there (ACU) for two years and then go on to UT," Cox said in an interview last July. "But then I became involved in the Texas Collegiate Academy of Science."

After being elected president of TCAS, Cox stayed at ACU and graduated summa cum laude in 1956 with a bachelor's degree in chemistry. The summer following his graduation, he met Lahoma Childs ('59), and their marriage in 1959 lasted 44 years.

Cox did enroll at the University of Texas for graduate school, receiving his master's and Ph.D. degrees in chemistry.

He regarded himself as an engineer more than a chemist or a scientist. He established himself as an expert in spectroscopy, specializing in the use of nuclear magnetic resonance to identify compound materials. He worked as a spectroscopy expert at Continental Oil Co. in Ponca City, Okla., and for 30 years at Texas Instruments in Dallas.

During his career at TI he was responsible for several developments in design automation software, in which he held five patents. He wrote more than 50 articles on his research for national and international journals. Cox's inventions dramatically improved the design of electrical circuits and electronic circuitry.

"As a scientist, he was extremely competent,

extremely thorough," said Dr. Ira Hill ('56), Cox's roommate at ACU and lifelong friend. "He was willing to take on challenges in fields outside his education."

Hill credits Cox with "developing many of the systems TI uses to determine how a [computer] chip is made. He made an impact on hundreds of items we take for granted that have computer chips."

A member of the American Chemical Society and the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers, Cox shared his expertise by serving on ACU's visiting committees for chemistry and physics.

Despite his professional success, Cox never let his accomplishments cloud his faith. "As he became a well-educated person, Paul still put the Lord first in his life," said Dr. Victor Allen ('58), an ACU colleague and close friend.

He taught Bible classes and served for three years as a part-time preacher in Kaw City, Okla. At the Waterview Church of Christ in Richardson, where the Cox family worshipped for 30 years, Cox was a deacon and worked with teens.

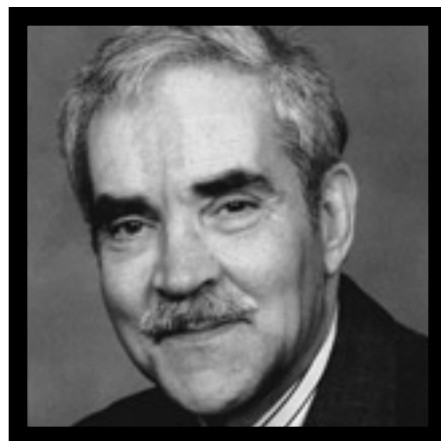
"We were scared of death of teens," Lahoma Cox said, "so we thought that the best thing we could do was to become involved with them." The Coxes opened their house weekly for gatherings and devotionals.

Cox also worked with youths, including his own sons, in soccer for 15 years. First a coach, he later became a referee, participating at the state level and even refereeing in a few international youth soccer games in Dallas.

The Coxes' involvement with youth led them to settle in Holly Lake, near Tyler, after Cox retired in 1997. Their home is 12 miles from Camp Deer Run, where son Shawn ('86) and daughter Paula ('90) were baptized and son Brad ('88) met his future wife.

Cox cherished most the year-and-a-half he spent as an elder at the Holly Lake Church of Christ before his death. He took seriously "the responsibility of working with and helping people," he said. In 2001 he sought to expand his capability to help others by pursuing a degree in counseling for church leaders at ACU. He completed half the program before his health prevented taking additional classes.

"Right up to the end he was thinking he would have more time," Lahoma, also a talented



Dr. Paul Cox

elementary teacher, said. "He loved being an elder."

"He was extremely supportive of his wife Lahoma's ministry of teacher training," said Hill, whose wife, June, partners with Mrs. Cox in training workshops. Cox traveled with the pair in 2000 to Southeast Asia, where he taught adult Bible classes in Singapore, Malaysia and Bangkok.

A respected family man, Cox also spent time with his three children and seven grandchildren. He didn't seek the limelight, according to Hill, and he was known for his keen sense of humor. "He had his priorities straight so he had a good ability to laugh at whatever situation came along, particularly himself," Allen added.

"He was always trying to surprise somebody with one of his jokes," Lahoma said. He often dressed in old, sloppy clothes or tucked his pants in his cowboy boots to embarrass his children, she said.

While he loved to joke with them, Cox held his family and friends close to his heart. His three roommates at ACU – Hill, Alvie Davis ('55), and Eddie French ('56) – also earned doctorates in chemistry and have remained friends.

Mrs. Cox believes that her husband would advise ACU students today to "make good friends because they will mean the world to you in the future."

After receiving the alumni honor last July, Cox said, "I've always tried to live my life to be a credit to myself, my family, the church, and [ACU]." No one would deny, with his knack for going beyond expectations, that he reached his goal – and then some. ▲

– TAMARA THOMPSON

"I've always tried to live my life to be a credit to myself, my family, the church, and [ACU]."