

Vol. 9

An update for Florida Baptist Historical Society Board of Directors and Friends

No. 1

January, 2017



Donald Hepburn
Acting Sec.-Treas.

Directors

Jerry Chumley
Lake Mystic

David Elder
St. Augustine

Dana Greatrex
Oak Hill

Thomas Green
Jacksonville

David Hecht
Panama City

Donald Hepburn
Jacksonville

Judith Jolly
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Dade City

Thomas Kinchen
Graceville

David Lema
Hialeah



Penny Baumgardner
Administrative Assistant

Florida Baptist Historical Society Undergoes Leadership Transition

Dr. Jerry Windsor, retired at the end of 2016 as the ninth Secretary-Treasurer of the Florida Baptist Historical Society. Windsor, age 76, had served 14 years in that post since 2002.

The Society's board of directors, during their November 14, 2016 meeting, "reluctantly accepted" Windsor's retirement decision. Recently the Board's chairwoman, Judith (Mrs. Lawson) Jolly of Dade City, said in a statement, "During his 14-year tenure Dr. Jerry Windsor's diligent leadership has ably guided the Florida Baptist Historical Society. As a result of his faithfulness, the ministry of the Society has been enhanced and the historically significant holdings of the Society have greatly increased, providing valuable resources for all Florida Baptists. I believe history yet to be told will record his name with honor and Florida Baptists will remember him as one who protected and preserved our past for future generations."

The group elected one of its fellow directors, Donald Hepburn of Jacksonville, to serve as the Society's acting secretary-treasurer beginning in January, 2017. Hepburn served 32 years as public relations director of the Florida Baptist Convention, during which time he was the Convention's staff liaison to the Society's directors. He co-authored, with the late E. Earl Joiner, *Favored Florida: A History of Florida Baptists*, Volume One, 1784 – 1939. He is currently working on volume two which is expected to cover the period 1940 – 2015.

Jerry Windsor began working as the part-time Secretary-Treasurer of the Historical Society in 2002 while concurrently serving on the faculty of The Baptist College of Florida. In 2006, Dr. Windsor retired from his faculty position, having completed 16 years' service as a professor of preaching. Since that time he has worked to enhance the role, purpose and Florida Baptists' awareness of the Historical Society as it seeks to help individuals and churches research significant Florida Baptist history.

"I felt led to teach (1953), called to preach (1956) and called to research, write and publish in successive order," Windsor told the Society directors in his retirement announcement. "The Florida Baptist Historical Society was very fitting for my interest, my calling and training."

Before joining the college faculty, Dr. Windsor had served as pastor of four different Southern Baptist churches in four different states. Additionally, he has written eight books, scores of articles, and served 17 interim pastorates, some of which has occurred while serving the Historical Society.

"Numerous strengths marked Windsor's pastorates," Joel Breidenbaugh, pastor, First Baptist Church of Sweetwater, in Longwood, wrote in a 2010 article about Dr. Windsor. These included, "strong expository preaching, wise administrative leadership, a clear emphasis upon church evangelism, warm-hearted shepherding and denominational support." These characteristics, coupled with his strong interest in research and writing, came to be utilized in Dr. Windsor's leadership of the Historical Society.

During his tenure with the society Dr. Windsor led in the expansion of the holdings of the Florida Baptist Historical Collection. This collection includes historically significant books, reference materials, and memorabilia, among other collectibles. He also expanded the numbers of biographical files on historically significant Florida Baptists and increased the holdings of Florida Baptist church histories.



Jerry M. Windsor

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He actively sought to secure the personal papers of several Florida Baptists including former missionaries Franklin and Dorcas Fowler and Rufus and Marian Gray, among others. Among the many significant acquisitions were all the historical records and memorabilia of the former Central Baptist Church, Miami.



It is noteworthy to highlight the fact that Mrs. Windsor was more than an admiring wife. After a long and productive career as a public school teacher, Mrs. Windsor joined her husband in his travels across Florida highways and byways promoting the historical society. But she was much more than a travel companion, Jerry Mae assisted in the visitation with historically significant people and congregations. She worked along side Dr. Windsor as he researched Florida Baptist history and she provided wise counsel and proof reading for his history related narratives. To her everlasting credit, Jerry Mae patiently listened repeatedly dozens of times to the same sermons by Dr. Windsor necessitated by congregations' anniversary observances.

Jerry Mae
Windsor

Concluding his retirement notification to the Society directors, Windsor briefly highlighted his future plans to be pursued with his wife of 53 years, Jerry Mae. "I have one huge writing project, two smaller writing assignments, and my stamp collection and citrus trees await."

The Florida Baptist Historical Society is a fraternal organization of the Florida Baptist State Convention and operates under the auspices of the State Board of Missions.

As early as 1894 the Florida Baptist State Convention approved a call for "compiling the history of our denomination in this state." Three Marion County pastors—D. B. Farmer, N. A. Bailey, and E. H. Rennolds—made the case to (1) gather material; (2) protect resources; (3) interview witnesses; (4) appoint a committee on history preservation; and (5) compile the history of the state convention. Those five goals continue to be benchmarks for the Florida Baptist Historical Society.

Historical Society Directors

1894-1912	Edwin H. Rennolds, Sr.	Historical Secretary
1950-1952	Pope A. Duncan	Secretary-Treasurer and Curator
1953	Hugh McKinley	Secretary-Treasurer and Curator
1954-1960	H. C. Garwood	Curator-Treasurer
1961-1962	Edward A. Holmes	Curator
1962-1972	Rollin S. Armour	Secretary-Treasurer
1973-1996	E. Earl Joiner	Secretary-Treasurer
1997-2002	Mark A. Rathel	Secretary-Treasurer
2002-2016	Jerry M. Windsor	Secretary-Treasurer

Latest *Journal of Florida Baptist Heritage*—Released

The Florida Baptist Historical Society unveiled its 18th edition of *The Journal of Florida Baptist Heritage* during the 2016 Florida Baptist State Convention.

The current *Journal* highlights the life and ministry of Florida Baptist Rufus Gray who was the only Southern Baptist missionary to die in a Japanese prisoner of war camp in 1942. Rufus died after being tortured by the Japanese while his wife Marian and son Billy survived 37 months under Japanese internment. The Rufus Gray story is told through the letters exchanged between the Grays and their families and colleagues.

A copy of the *Journal* may be purchased for \$17.50 which includes shipping and handling, by sending a check payable to the Florida Baptist Historical Society, located at 5400 College Drive, Graceville, FL 32440 or call 850-263-9080.

**The Journal of
Florida Baptist Heritage**

Florida Baptist Historical Society



*Rufus
and
Marian Gray*

VOL. 18  FALL 2016