



In 2005, the DBU Board of Trustees elected to name one of the Colonial Village Apartment Complex buildings in honor of Sheila Cook. Mrs. Cook is shown here at the dedication ceremony of Sheila Cook Hall, along with her husband, Dr. Cook, and (from left to right), Linda Raymer (sister-in-law), Elwyn Raymer (brother), Mark Cook (son), David Cook (son), and Nicole Cook (daughter-in-law).

# A TRIBUTE TO SHEILA COOK

by Kathy Knight,  
Director, DBU Intercessory Prayer Ministry

**M**y friendship with Sheila began in 1990 when she would visit and share in a time of fellowship during lunch in Dr. Raynal Barber's office. Dr. Barber, who was the chair of the English department where I served as the secretary when I began working at DBU, had been diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor, and Sheila's concern for her friend was a tribute to the caring and affectionate person that she is. I watched carefully as Sheila ministered to Dr. Barber in amazing ways through her infectious laughter, her ability to weave interesting and humorous stories, and just being a friend by helping meet her needs.

Sheila is, first of all, a very committed Christian woman—you will find that she truly loves the Lord with all her heart, with all her soul, and with all her mind...and then, she graciously and most beautifully shares that love, God's love, with others. Her love for the Lord and her commitment to serving Him in all she does is one of the first things that you come to love about her when you get to know her.

Sheila is the epitome of the Proverbs 31 woman—she is a woman of strong character, extraordinary wisdom, remarkable talents, and great compassion. She has a heart for serving the Lord, and she does it with a most joyful spirit. She is gracious and charming. Her home is a wonderful haven for her husband and children. Sheila has deep respect, love, and admiration for her husband, and we are blessed that she made

a commitment too in 1988 to serve alongside him at DBU. Dr. Cook's leadership and responsibility as DBU's president has been strengthened by her role as a godly wife and mother of their two sons (David and Mark)...for she has been, and is, his



In the fall of 2007, DBU hosted the southwest regional Helping America's Youth Conference, where First Lady Laura Bush served as the keynote speaker. Prior to her speech, Mrs. Cook and other members of the DBU family had the opportunity to visit with Mrs. Bush.

greatest asset as his confidante, encourager, and faithful prayer partner. I watched with wonder and awe at the strength and confidence that she displayed throughout Dr. Cook's battle with leukemia. We talked about it on several occasions, and she told me that the assurance of his healing and the peace she had could only come from the Lord. It had to be difficult for her to watch her physically strong and spiritually grounded husband go through such a critical time of illness; yet, God gave her the assurance and promise that He would see them through. Praise God for His power to heal and restore.

Before coming to DBU, Sheila taught in public schools for 18 years. During the early years while David and Mark were in school, she enjoyed the opportunity to volunteer in DBU's Lab School where they were enrolled as students. She has a wonderful way with children and provided a very happy and secure home for her precious boys as they grew up on the DBU campus. They are both remarkable young men who walk closely with the Lord.

Sheila, like her husband, is hard working and diligent in her pursuit to do all things well. With a genuine love and concern for others, she exhibits the gifts of mercy, hospitality, and teaching. Everywhere Sheila goes, she creates an inviting atmosphere of warmth and love and especially uses her gift of hospitality to minister to our DBU family. At countless receptions, luncheons, dinners, wedding showers, and baby showers, she has served as an exceptional hostess, making each person feel welcomed and at home. (I think we should campaign to have her listed in the *Guinness Book of World Records* for the most number of showers



Sheila Cook former Women's Auxiliary Board President Amy Jones, and Donna Jones, Amy's mother and chair of the 2007 Yellow Ribbon Luncheon. Amy Jones is also on the DBU Board of Trustees and is a DBU alumna.

ever hosted by one woman!) Each special occasion is a wonderful way for her to honor God with her talents and abilities and to demonstrate Christ's love for others. As a Bible study teacher for a women's group in her church, she is loved and appreciated for her remarkable ability to share God's Word effectively and apply relevance and practical application to women of all ages.

All of these qualities have helped Sheila serve God effectively. She is truly a woman after God's own heart and is a wonderful role model and mentor for our students. Sheila is committed to Christian education and service.

In Matthew 25, Jesus tells his disciples a parable about the master who entrusted his servants with various amounts of his property, or talents; to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one. The talents are representative of any kind of spiritual gift or ability we are given. God gives us opportunities, resources, and skills, according to our abilities, and He expects us to invest them wisely until Christ's return. We are responsible for using them well. Jesus concludes the parable by explaining that upon the master's return, he chastised the servant who refused to invest his talent and praised those servants who had invested their talents wisely. "Well done, good and faithful servant!" he exclaimed. I know that our Lord is glorified and honored by Sheila's commitment to use her talents to honor Him in all she does. God is, and will continue to be, her guide and her strength through all things. Can't you just hear His voice saying to her, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"



Dr. and Mrs. Cook, along with Mike and Mandy Arnold. Mike Arnold is a DBU alumnus and member and past chair of the Board of Trustees. The Cooks are close friends to the Arnolds, and Dr. Cook performed the Arnolds' wedding ceremony in 1997.

# A TRIBUTE TO DR. GARY COOK

by Dr. Jim Denison

Chair, DBU Board of Trustees

Pastor, Park Cities Baptist Church



Dr. Gary Cook is the finest servant leader I have ever known. He is my mentor, advisor, brother in Christ, and dearest friend. It is therefore a great and personal privilege to offer these words of tribute and thanksgiving on the occasion of his twentieth anniversary as president of Dallas Baptist University.

On the night Jesus washed His disciples' feet, He instructed His followers, "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" (John 13:15). In *Leadership Is An Art*, Max DePree illustrates Jesus' assertion: "The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you. In between the two, the leader must become a servant and a debtor." He described Dr. Cook's life and legacy perfectly.

For 20 years, Dr. Cook has fulfilled Jesus' mandate to lead by serving Christ and His Kingdom. He assumed the presidency of DBU during its darkest days as a commitment of sacrificial service. He founded his presidency upon an intercessory prayer ministry to seek and serve the call of the Spirit. He exemplifies every day the humility, integrity, and compassion of his Lord.

His family has supported and enabled Dr. Cook's pilgrimage of service across these decades. Sheila is one of the most godly and gracious people I have ever known. David, Nicole, and Mark walk in the Spirit and serve the Kingdom every day. During Dr. Cook's recent illness, he and his family have proven their faith in Jesus by their unwavering faithfulness to His Kingdom.

The results of Dr. Cook's unconditional commitment to the call of Christ have been nothing short of miraculous. The transformation of the University he loves and serves has been called "the miracle of DBU." The unprecedented growth of her student body, physical

campus, and financial health are testimony to the hand of God on the University. To step onto the grounds is to sense the Spirit of God. To worship in chapel, talk with students, or visit with faculty and staff is to be drawn closer to Jesus. I know of no school anywhere which demonstrates the presence of the Lord as does DBU.

And yet the University's greatest days are before her. Dr. Cook's remarkable vision for the future of DBU invites each of us to renewed commitment and service. His God-given dreams for the University will further her influence for Christ around the globe. As we celebrate 20 years of divine blessing, we are each called to a new level of personal investment in God's future for DBU.

Tonight we give thanks to our Lord for all He has done through Dr. Gary Cook. Tomorrow we join our president in following God's plan to give us hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11). As great people plant trees they will never sit under, Dr. Cook has been a leader of true greatness. He has given his life to servant leadership, seeking only to honor his Lord. Let us join him, to the glory of God.



Dr. Gary Cook and his wife, Sheila, along with (l-r) Nicole Cook (wife of David Cook), David Cook (their eldest son), Dr. David Hasan (DBU alumnus), and Mark Cook (their youngest son) at the special 20th Anniversary Dinner held in Dr. Cook's honor on the DBU campus. David Cook recently graduated from SMU Law School, Mark is a senior at Samford University in Alabama, and Nicole is a DBU graduate and currently teaching in Irving. Dr. David Hasan, who is a neurosurgeon, became a Christian while he was an international student at DBU.

Dr. Gary Cook and his wife, Sheila, along with Dr. Jim Denison, pastor of Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas, and his wife, Janet. Mrs. Denison is an active member of the DBU Women's Auxiliary Board, and Dr. Denison currently serves as the chairman of the DBU Board of Trustees and also as a distinguished adjunct professor at DBU.



# FROM: THE DBU FAMILY TO: DR. COOK

In recognition of his 20 years of service to DBU, members of the DBU faculty and staff compiled a *Book of Blessings*, containing verses for Dr. and Mrs. Cook, as well as notes thanking them for their service. Below are some excerpts from this special book.

Congratulations on 20 years of effective presidential service. Only a limited number of college presidents have reached such a milestone. You have faithfully fulfilled your calling to lead this institution in carrying out the mission of Christ-centered education. Your passion has been to do whatever God has planted in your heart, and the result has been an abundance of the Lord's blessings on DBU. Your leadership has reflected that which Barnabas modeled. Like Barnabas, you have fervently sought to serve the needs of others and have lived a life convinced that God called you to help others lead fruitful and significant lives.

The Blackburn family is grateful for all that you have done to abundantly impact our lives. We have been touched by your sincere love and care for our family. We pray for your health every day and ask that God continue to shower you with His grace and wisdom.

-Blair, Michelle, Taylor, Betsy  
and Parker Blackburn

Thank you very much for following the Lord's will and leading Dallas Baptist University for the last 20 years. The Lord truly used DBU for me to come to Christ, learn the truth, and grow spiritually. Thank you so much for serving so faithfully to lead us to share the Gospel and the love of Christ with everyone who comes to the University. I am so excited that DBU is touching every corner of the world and being a true lighthouse on this earth today. May the Lord continue to bless you and your family as you bless so many people continually.

-Mamo Ishida

It is my firm conviction that your coming to DBU was divinely orchestrated. Because you both have given your lives completely to God's service, He has done great things for Dallas Baptist University through you. It gladdens my heart to have been a witness over the past 20 years to such a mighty work and to look forward to witnessing God's continued work through you. I have chosen this scripture (Psalm 126:3) as a tribute to you both.

-Marsha Pool

The Lord has taught me so much by your example. Thank you for helping me realize that no matter the size of the task, with God all things are possible. My prayer is that you would be boldly reminded and affirmed by this scriptural truth (Mark 10:27) and blessed by all that God has accomplished through you. I so much appreciate how you daily resolve yourself to be totally used by God to complete His work. Not a day passes before I thank God for your influence in my life and for the blessings I have enjoyed of experiencing God at DBU, because one of His servants named Gary Cook decided a long time ago that DBU would choose to serve and exist for God and His glory alone. Congratulations on twenty wonderful years at Dallas Baptist University!

-Adam C. Wright

Watching both of you this past year has deepened my understanding of this verse (Isaiah 40:31). Dr. Cook, I have been amazed by your determination to

keep working and to keep exercising throughout your treatment. You are an inspiration and an example of dedication to the Lord's service no matter what obstacles come your way. Mrs. Cook, as a wife, I know that I can only begin to sympathize with you as you have sought the strength of the Lord to sustain you during this time. Every time I saw you, you still had a warm smile to share, and I could see the Lord's strength holding you up. Both of you have been a testimony to the power that God has through a life wholly committed to Him. Your journey through this time at DBU has touched lives beyond what you will fully know until you hear God's encouraging words, "Well done, Gary...well done, Sheila...my good and faithful servants."

-Layna Evans

Two verses that have always been a blessing to me and that have helped me understand how God has been working in Dr. and Mrs. Cook's lives are 1 Kings 19:11-13 and Isaiah 30:21.

I have watched Dr. Cook as he works and it's almost as if he is always in a constant conversation with God. I've seen a student walk past him on campus, and he will suddenly turn and begin to talk to the student as if God just told him to.

I believe he has a "keen" sense of hearing and it comes as a result of praying without ceasing and knowing that He is not in the powerful wind, nor the earthquake, but He is in the gentle whisper that directs us in the way we should walk.

-Eric Bruntmyer

# To God Be the Glory!



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