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## A Legacy of Excellence

Pamela D. Johnson

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# A LEGACY OF EXCELLENCE

When the Lord blessed me in 1974 to become part of what He was doing in and through Cedarville College, it was obvious there was a focus on academic excellence throughout the institution. It was verbalized and exemplified not only by President James T. Jeremiah and Academic Dean Clifford Johnson (who would later become my husband) but also by my new outstanding faculty colleagues, many of whom were working diligently to complete their terminal degrees while teaching fulltime at the college and serving faithfully in their local churches. Having just completed my Ph.D., I was in awe of their passion and fervor.

God had clearly brought each one of them to the college to be an integral part of what He was doing here. In President Jeremiah's annual president's report in 1967, he wrote that "spiritual vitality and academic excellence are not opposite and unreconcilable extremes. They can and must be a part of any Christian college. The trustees, faculty, and administration of Cedarville are committed to the emphasis of both." (James T. Jeremiah, President's Annual Report 1967, p. 1).

Both President Jeremiah and Cliff understood that offering an excellent education would require accredited professional programs. They both believed they could maintain their doctrinal and theological purity while achieving these outside verifications of academic quality and excellence. While not a common position among Christian colleges of the day, they were absolutely right.

Cedarville College had lost the ability to prepare teachers in the last years prior

to the merger with the Baptist Bible Institute. Eager to work on this important assignment, Cliff went to Columbus to meet with the assistant superintendent of public instruction. The gentleman went on a bit of a tirade for several minutes, rehearsing many of the past failures of the college.



After several minutes and a momentary pause,

Cliff, in his own inimitable style, said, "Yes, sir. You're right. Can you help us do what we need to do?" Cliff said the gentleman's demeanor changed dramatically, and he agreed to help lead Cedarville toward the desired accreditation. Our first elementary education graduates were granted their degrees in June 1967, followed by secondary education in 1968.

During my tenure here, our teacher education graduates have been eagerly sought by area schools, and I have often heard how they are a blessing as they serve their Savior as excellent teachers. I hear the same about our engineers, nurses, business graduates, artists, pastors, musicians, history majors, and on and on.

Thank you, President Jeremiah and Cliff, for building this legacy of excellence as we seek to live out Colossians 3:23–24: "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ" (ESV).

**Pamela D. Johnson** is Dean of Undergraduate Studies. She earned her Ph.D. from The Ohio State University.

