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CONTACT: Mark D. Weinstein
Executive Director of Public Relations
[937-766-8800](tel:937-766-8800) (o)
[937-532-6885](tel:937-532-6885) (m)
Mweinstein@cedarville.edu
[@cedarvilleneews](https://www.facebook.com/cedarvilleneews)

The Pastor's Pastor Leaves a Legacy of Pointing People to Jesus

CEDARVILLE, OHIO -- Cedarville University celebrates the legacy of Warren Wiersbe, one of the foremost Bible teachers, professors and authors of the 20th century. Known as the pastor's pastor, Wiersbe passed away Thursday, May 2 at the age of 89—two weeks before his 90th birthday.

Last year, Wiersbe and his wife Betty announced their plan to gift his immense personal library of books to Cedarville University. This impressive collection of commentaries, nonfiction publications and works of literature, estimated at between 13,000 and 14,000 titles, will be housed in the Warren and Betty Wiersbe Library and Reading Room, to be located in Cedarville's Center for Biblical and Theological Studies.

"Warren Wiersbe was a personal hero, faithful preacher, word smith and a dear friend," commented Cedarville president Dr. Thomas White. "We will work hard to continue his legacy of service to our Savior at Cedarville."

Wiersbe began his ministry in 1951 at Central Baptist Church in East Chicago, Indiana, where he served until 1957. Next, he spent four years at Youth for Christ as director of the literature division before he became the pastor at Calvary Baptist Church of Covington, Kentucky, from 1961 to 1971.

It was during his ministry in Kentucky that he became a frequent guest speaker in Cedarville University's chapel program. Then Cedarville president Dr. James T. Jeremiah often returned the favor, preaching at Calvary Baptist when Wiersbe had engagements that called him away from his duties there.

Wiersbe spent a large portion of his ministry at Chicago's Moody Church, named for 19th-century American evangelist Dwight L. Moody. Wiersbe ministered over the radio through his "Songs in the Night" program while at Moody and with Back to the Bible radio network from 1980 to 1993. He had an active conference speaking ministry until 2004.

Wiersbe was a prolific author, writing more than 170 books, including his very popular "BE Series Commentaries," which characterizes books or sections of Scripture with a "being" verb matched with a descriptor, such as "Be Free" for the New Testament book of Galatians or "Be Amazed" for his commentary on the minor prophets.

He taught practical theology classes at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, from 1978 to 1982 and is a former distinguished professor of preaching at Grand Rapids (Michigan) Theological Seminary.

Jason Lee, dean of the Cedarville School of Biblical and Theological Studies, along with Cedarville's president Dr. Thomas White, visited with Wiersbe last fall.

"Dr. Wiersbe loved the Word," Lee said. "He took a strong stand on the authority of Scripture. And now our students can be shaped by the same resources that shaped him. He spent decades investing in the church through his teaching of the Word, and now he'll be able to continue that through students picking up the same resources for the same purposes.

"When we were with him, he said to Dr. White and me, 'Preaching is loving people through the Word.' We hope our students catch that spirit."

"Dr. Wiersbe's life and ministry has been committed to the right handling of the Scriptures, and pouring into others who would do likewise," noted White. "Cedarville has been blessed with the privilege of stewarding a portion of Dr. Wiersbe's tremendous legacy. This considerable collection, which is more than books on shelves because of the marginal notes and observations, is the accumulated wisdom and insight of one of the great servants of the church in the 20th century. We thank God for this amazing privilege."

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,193 undergraduate, graduate and online students in more than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings and leading student satisfaction ratings. For more information about the University, visit www.cedarville.edu.