Years of Faithfulness

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For 130 years, God has brought the right faculty and staff members to Cedarville, at just the right time to accomplish His purposes. Read the stories of four long-time members of the Cedarville family, whose experiences parallel those of so many faithful servants through the years. Discover how Cedarville has blessed them as they have blessed so many others.
Cedarville University made a profound impact on Pamela Johnson’s life long before she stepped foot on campus as a faculty member. As a college junior at the University of Dayton, Johnson came to know the Lord through interaction with Cedarville athletes. “They were so nice, and their faith was so real,” she recalled. “They had the answers I was searching for.”

Several years later, after completing master’s and doctoral degrees at The Ohio State University, Johnson accepted an offer to teach at Cedarville in 1974. “I was a baby Christian,” she said. “The students had mostly been Christians for years and I thought, ‘You want me to teach them?’” But in His faithfulness, God prepared her to serve where and when she was needed. “I always say that God has used me here in spite of me,” she commented.

Now entering her 44th year, Johnson currently serves as Dean of Undergraduate Studies. She has found much joy working with students one-on-one, whether helping an athlete perfect her serve as the tennis coach for 30 years or helping an undergrad work out a tough class schedule today. “When you know you’re doing exactly what God wants you to do, it’s not hard to come to work,” she explained.

Johnson recalls faculty meetings in her early days at Cedarville on the second floor of Founders Hall. “I grew up in those meetings,” she recalled. “Listening to godly, wise men discuss and disagree was beautiful. I learned so much. Being part of the faculty here is such a blessing. And God continues to bring outstanding new faculty members.”

As a new Christian, craving to know more about God’s Word, Cedarville was a special place for Johnson. “This firm foundation on God’s Word was what I was looking for, what I needed,” she explained. “God’s Word became who I was.”

And, Johnson explained, that biblical foundation has guided Cedarville through the years, during good times and trials. “We do what we do on the basis of Scripture,” she said. “It has brought a confidence and a comfort. We can stand firm knowing we’re doing what we must do.”

And that stand is more important today than ever. “We are facing cultural trials today that we couldn’t have imagined years ago,” Johnson said. “Our commitment to the Word of God has prepared us to stand firm. God doesn’t change. His Word doesn’t change. The day we stop doing what it says is the day we should close the doors.”
If you have a question about the history of Cedarville University, Lynn Brock ’68, Dean of Library Services, is a good place to start. “I love history,” he explained. “You have to understand how we got where we are today, and the people who helped us get here, to truly understand Cedarville.”

And Brock’s history with Cedarville is long. “This place was a part of me before I even got here,” he said. His father, William Brock, was a trustee, so it was only natural for him to attend Cedarville. After receiving his master’s degree, he returned as a reference librarian in 1969, and worked his way up through the library, eventually being appointed Director in 1975 and named Dean in 2006.

The library is naturally about serving others, and it’s a role that Brock takes seriously. “If we do our job well,” he explained, “it helps our students and faculty be successful.” Each year, he chooses a theme verse for his staff. This year’s verse, 1 Corinthians 15:58, underscores the importance he places on the contribution of each staff member. “There is nothing too small to be done,” he said. “Everything we do matters to God. No one here is more important than anyone else. It’s what has made this a great place to work.”

Brock credits the variety of his responsibilities for keeping him engaged in his work. “There’s always something else to do that takes advantage of your skills and abilities, even outside your normal job,” he explained. “I’ve never gotten in a rut here.”

He served as Director of Planning for the University from 1988 to 1996 and played an integral role in developing several buildings on campus. In 2006, he led the building program for the Center for Biblical and Theological Studies, including creating the Biblical Heritage Gallery, where six exhibits showing the Bible in history rotate every six months. Brock personally created each of these exhibits — depicting the history, preservation, and influence of the Bible — which highlight the importance of God’s Word to Cedarville. “It defines everything we do,” he said. “Without Scripture, there’s no reason for us to be here.”

Perhaps Brock’s favorite role is University Archivist. In 1996, he took a sabbatical to begin the long, careful process of organizing Cedarville’s archives. “It’s been a lot of fun to trace the history and the heritage of the University,” he said. “To be able to see God’s hand — his blessings, provisions, direction. We’ve only survived because of Him.” And he enjoys sharing the archive with others, especially students. “I always end by asking them what their role will be in continuing the legacy,” he explained. “I’m always amazed by the introspection I see.”

He’s a bit introspective himself as he begins his 49th year at Cedarville. “There’s just something about this place, looking back at all the Lord’s done,” he commented. “Now as I’m nearing the end of my career, my hope is that I’m able to leave something behind.” There seems little doubt of that.
Jim Cato ’83, Associate Vice President of Christian Ministries, first came to Cedarville in the early 1980s, a young married transfer student, searching for deeper meaning in his faith. Now entering his 34th year as a staff member, he credits Cedarville with altering the trajectory of his life. “I’ve grown up here,” he said. “Cedarville changed the person I’ve become — in my marriage, in my faith, everything.”

From leading worship, discipling students, and directing Cedarville’s HeartSong teams, Cato has always known he was doing what God had called him to do. “This may sound hard to believe,” he explained, “but there’s never been a day that this has been just a job. God has been gracious to me in letting me have a job that I absolutely love, a job that I’m wired to do.”

Years ago, his former boss and mentor Harold Green (or “PG” to the students) taught him that his service to Cedarville had to be all about the students and wanting to see lives changed. And later, other bosses, Bob Rohm ’68 and Jon Wood, reinforced that idea. Watching these men and their love and commitment to students encouraged Cato to maintain a humble, servant’s heart in his work. “I’ve had the privilege of working under three vice presidents who all had the same passion to center on students and discipleship,” he said. “All of my favorite memories include students, when the light bulb comes on spiritually and they experience true life change because of Jesus.”

For Cato, Cedarville was the place where he learned to balance his faith with the rest of his life. “Cedarville brought balance to my life that I didn’t know was possible,” he said. “Before Cedarville, my whole life had been about following rules; there was never a connection between my faith and my daily life. It was the first time I came face-to-face with how to confront culture with the Bible,” he said.

And it’s that kind of connection that he wants for students he’s privileged to serve. “What makes Cedarville unique is that we get to help kids embrace the truth of God’s Word and watch real transformation take place,” he said. “We’re seeing students leave here ready to live out the reality of the Gospel.”

In a time when pop culture shapes societal values, Cato is grateful for Cedarville’s unwavering biblical stand. “‘For the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus Christ’ is not a cliché,” he said. “It’s our foundation. It gives stability. Everything we do starts and ends with God’s Word. And then the next part, ‘for the Testimony of Jesus Christ,’ reminds us that it’s all about Jesus and what He’s done for us.”

While keeping an eye on what has been, Cato maintains his focus on what is yet to come. “The mission of Cedarville must go forward. It matters because God’s Word matters. It’ll never go out of style,” he added. “I’ve never been more excited to be here.”
Walk around Cedarville’s campus, and you’ll see Paul Ware’s handiwork almost everywhere you look. From well-manicured flower beds to healthy trees and shrubs, you’ll see evidence of Ware’s green thumb. If it has roots and grows in the ground, Ware probably designed, planted, or cared for it. Even after serving on the University’s grounds crew for 40 years, he “never gets bored and seldom feels tired.”

Ware considers it a blessing to be part of Cedarville’s long history of equipping Christian young people with a Christ-centered education. “There’s something special here,” he said. “You look around, hundreds of like-minded people. Something bigger than yourself, people who have gone on before you. I want to be a part of that.”

And Ware takes his part of Cedarville’s mission very seriously. “The grounds have a big impact on visitors’ impressions of Cedarville, and I want them to look good,” he explained. “I want to make the University look good, make the Lord look good. I want people to want to come back to our campus.

“Everybody has a really important role to play, and I think mine’s big,” he continued. “People will notice the flower beds long before they step foot in a professor’s classroom. They’ll be making judgements as they first drive down the boulevard on campus.”

It’s that pride in his work and sense of purpose that makes every day enjoyable for Ware. “I think I was made for this job,” he explained. “When you’re doing what you love, the days go by quickly. We’re always busy, but I love it.”

Ware’s impact goes beyond the beautiful trees and well-tended lawns, however. “I want students to see an example of a good work ethic,” he said, “to see how any work can be a service to the Lord.”

It’s a lesson that hundreds of students have taken with them to God-given vocations all around the world. Ware and his wife, Marilyn, have also coached young couples for years with Fit To Be Tied, Cedarville’s premarital mentoring program.

“Cedarville is a wonderful place,” Ware concluded. “It’s been a blessing from start to finish.”

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