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Pastor Desmond B Hills

President, Avondale College Alumni Association

“Life isn’t tied with a bow, but it is still a gift.”

“Forgive everyone everything.”

“Don’t compare your life with others. You have no idea what their journey is all about.”

These sayings by Regina Brett are selected from “Regina Brett’s 45 life lessons and 5 to grow on.” Regina is a columnist for *The Plain Dealer*, a newspaper in Cleveland (Ohio, USA). “To celebrate growing older, I once wrote the 45 lessons life taught me,” says Regina. “It is the most requested column I’ve ever written.”

When Regina turned 50 years old in 2006 (not 90 years as reported), she added the final five lessons. The updated list is on her website at www.reginabrett.com.

Past and present students of Avondale College have the opportunity to learn more than 50 significant and even life-changing lessons while on campus. As most of us will agree, college days are so special and provide so many opportunities to appreciate the gift of life, to discover the life giver, God, to develop relationships with others and to be content in all circumstances.

Yes, our Avondale features fourfold Christian education and continues to inspire students with a greater vision of world needs. As we all know, the greatest need of humanity is spiritual. People desperately need to learn of Jesus—the way, the truth and the life.

The Avondale College Alumni Association is primarily dedicated to helping past and present students learn life lessons, develop Christian character, engage in humanitarian and gospel service, and discover the assurance of eternal life.

This vibrant association of students, formed in 1988, also helps to maintain and encourage contact among members, to foster and encourage interest in Avondale and to work for the development and strengthening of Christian education at the college.

The association organises the annual (and popular) Homecoming and produces this magazine, *Reflections*. It nominates recipients for and presents the Young and



the Outstanding Alumni of the Year awards, and it sponsors and presents the annual Community Service Award. It also promotes and maintains the Alumni Heritage Walk on Avondale’s Lake Macquarie campus.

The association membership enables us to continue lifelong relationships with Avondale in

several ways including:

- Access to the library on campus
- A complimentary subscription to *Reflections* emailed or mailed to you
- Information about and invitations to Homecoming
- Access to the Avondale alumni website at www.avondale.edu.au/alumni
- Service opportunities—the association is now coordinating working bees to improve beautification on the Lake Macquarie campus
- Giving opportunities through bequests, donations, endowments and gifts in kind—many alumni are buying a black, granite paver engraved with their name to place on the Alumni Heritage Walk on the Lake Macquarie campus; profits from the pavers go into a trust fund for improvements on campus

Avondale alumni are scattered over the world, but let us all keep the spirit alive and maintain contact with the college and with each other. A Kiwi graduate of the 1950s, Belle (Gillespie) Howard, who is now living in the United States of America, closes her communications with the words, “Keep the circle close. The Avondale circle is very close and supportive and it is a strong network.”

Please advise us of former students who may have lost and are now seeking contact with Avondale.

Let’s keep the circle close, and let’s also keep Avondale College Council, staff members and students in our prayers.

Record number graduate “for Him”

Linden Chuang

God’s providence and service to others were the key values promoted by the class of 2009 at Avondale College’s graduation.



Ann Stafford

Nerliza Sales from Thailand shakes hands with Dr Cedric Grieve after graduating from Avondale College with a Master of Education. She is the only student from Thailand to graduate through Avondale’s partnership with Mission College this year.

The acknowledgement of God’s providence came in a variety of forms. Graduation class co-president Makushla D’Costa expressed thanks in her speech during Sunday’s graduation ceremony, declaring God as “the author of our story, who loves us all so deeply and passionately that He sent His son to die on a cross that we might be saved.” Keynote speakers also emphasised God as the source of life and success in their addresses during the consecration and valedictory services.

For four graduands, the weekend provided the setting for a public display of faith in God, with Tahlia D’Costa, Jodie Eckert, Samantha Knopper and Robert Stanton each joining the Seventh-day Adventist Church through baptism.

Graduands also recognised the importance of serving others. The graduation class degree co-representative Samantha Wynne announced the students’ gift to the college during Friday’s consecration service on the Lake Macquarie campus. One-third of the money the class raised from two events it organised in the weeks before graduation will go into an Avondale College Seventh-day Adven-

On a weekend (December 4-6) that saw a record number of 310 graduands receive their testamurs, what stood out the most was the desire of class members to look beyond themselves to God. They expressed this desire in the theme of graduation: “From Him . . . through Him . . . for Him.”

tist Church fund to provide Bibles for newly baptised students. The class will donate the other two-thirds to Barnados—a not-for-profit organisation helping and raising awareness of Australian children in desperate need.

Pastor Brendan Pratt, director of Sabbath School and Personal Ministries for the Adventist Church in Greater Sydney, reminded graduands during his worship service sermon on Saturday of the importance of reaching out to others. Avondale College’s yearbook, *Jacaranda*, edited by graduand Kim Brown, also centred on the concept of “A better world.”

In his graduation ceremony speech, class co-president Andrew White encouraged his peers to continue to have a service mindset. “It is my sincere hope that every graduate of Avondale College, irrespective of their field of learning, should embrace their future professions as a true calling. With this attitude, our impact on the world around us can be profound and far-reaching.”

The ceremony saw most of the record number of graduands take to the stage to receive their testamurs. Some 310 students—nine more than last year—were eligible to march during the ceremony. In his presidential remarks, Dr Ray Roennfeldt noted the steady growth of Avondale, which has seen a 40 per cent increase in students since 2004.

Professor Raymond Nobbs, senior research fellow at Macquarie University and director at Newington College, presented the graduation ceremony address. He also emphasised the importance of being God- and service-focused. “I challenge you to consider the skills you’ve acquired out of which you’re called, as your college motto says, to have

‘a greater vision of world needs,’ and to share the good news of Jesus Christ.” He concluded with this challenge: “Go with God.”



Ann Stafford

Nursing students begin graduation celebrations with a lamp lighting ceremony during their valedictory service.

Awards recognise teaching excellence

Linden Chuang/Lyn Daff

Avondale College presented its 2009 Learning and Teaching Excellence Awards during the inaugural World Teachers' Day breakfast in October.

Dr Peter Beamish, dean of the Faculty of Education, received an individual award, while Dr Kevin de Berg and Ken Chapman from the Faculty of Science and Mathematics received a team award.

Peter received his for innovative use of technology in the classroom—his students build websites, produce videos and edit wikis rather than write essays. Kevin and Ken received theirs for developing two pieces of equipment for the chemistry laboratory—electrochemical cells and an apparatus for measuring the magnetic properties of crystals.

Vice-president (learning and teaching) Dr Philip Brown says the awards affirm the three for their “special efforts to excel in facilitating student learning.”

Two other lecturers received Teacher Recognition Awards from the Hunter region of the Australian College of Educators after being nominated by their students.

Dr Keith Howson, dean of the Faculty of Business and Information Technology, and Tony Martin, a lecturer in and the course coordinator for the Faculty of Arts, joined 59 other educators from the region's primary, secondary and tertiary institutions as award recipients.

Citations reflect comments by nominating students describing why educators serve “above and beyond the call of duty.” Keith's is for being “a visionary and champion to his students” while Tony's is for being “compassionate and considerate of every student's individual needs as well as encouraging us to do our very best, and to ‘dig a little deeper.’”



Ann Stafford

President Dr Ray Roennfeldt presents the Avondale Learning and Teaching Excellence Award to Dr Kevin de Berg and Ken Chapman for developing equipment for the chemistry laboratory at Avondale College.

Record ratings: *Guide* good for Avondale

Brenton Stacey

Avondale College has received an unprecedented seven five-star ratings in *The Good Universities Guide 2010*.

Most of the ratings are in the key “The educational experience” area—for student-staff ratio, staff qualifications, teaching quality, generic skills and overall satisfaction.

Avondale has consistently received five-star ratings in this area. President Dr Ray Roennfeldt says it is because quality education and quality of student life are at the core of Avondale's reason for being. “These values drove a group of education reformers to establish Avondale in 1897 and they continue to drive us today.” He describes the ratings as “wonderful” and acknowledges the influential role of Avondale's staff members. “They make the ‘Avondale experience’ real for our students,” he says.

The other five-star ratings are for access by equity groups and for graduate starting salary. Avondale also receives



four stars for indigenous participation, three for student demand, the proportion of entrants who are school leavers and getting a full-time job, two for entry flexibility and positive graduate outcomes, and one for gender balance and cultural diversity.

The guide is the only publication that contains independent five-star ratings and comparisons of all Australian courses and the universities and higher education providers that offer them.

New titles good for reputation and research

Brenton Stacey/Kirsten Bolinger

Three Avondale staff members have earned new academic titles in recognition of their contribution to research and of the college's quest for university status.

Drs Kevin de Berg, Rob McIver and Daniel Reynaud are now associate professors after a six-member panel that included two academics at an associate and a professor level at Australian universities approved their applications. "It's a great honour," says Kevin, who lectures in chemistry in the Faculty of Science and Mathematics. He received his title for his consistent contribution to scholarly literature in all the major science education journals. "We're going to have a lot more responsibility when it comes to our research, but I think we're happy about that."

The change in title from senior lecturer means the three become research leaders at Avondale—their availability for heading research centres and teams, mentoring staff members and supervising postgraduate students should give them an advantage in applying for grants. They also receive more pay.

Rob, the dean of the Faculty of Theology, speaks highly of the educational and the financial help he has received. "Avondale takes a gamble on me by allowing me time to complete my research projects, and I'm thankful for that." Rob's projects include researching tithing in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the preservation of memories of Jesus and the transformation of theology students. He has also published in high-rating journals and in books, developed links with collaborators at Australian Catholic University, and received a competitive, externally funded research grant of up to half-a-million dollars through the Australian Learning and Teaching Council.

Daniel's publication of a range of books and other items, including three articles in the highest rated journals, his long association with the National Archives of Australia and recognition as an innovative lecturer earned him his title. He notes while the title is "professional recognition of my educational status," it is also "another little brick in the building of a university institution." "I've received a lot of support from Avondale," says Daniel, an expert in

Anzacs and religion—he is currently writing a biography of Salvation Army chaplain William McKenzie—and a scriptwriter who lectures in history in the Faculty of Arts. "It has helped me balance my workload so I can research and then fund that research."

The conferring of the titles is part of Avondale's profile in addressing the criteria of the new national protocols for higher education providers. It will also improve the status of Avondale because "associate professor" is a title that has national significance. "The criteria for making an original contribution to research at Avondale at this level is commensurate to the level of associate professors at any other university," says vice-president (administration and research) Dr Vivienne Watts.

She is proud of Kevin, Rob and Daniel "not only because they are good researchers but also because they engaged in research at a time when they didn't have to."



Ann Stafford

Avondale's first associate professors: Drs Rob McIver; Kevin de Berg; and Daniel Reynaud.

Former principal a man of principles

Brenton Stacey

Family and friends have remembered Dr Eric Magnusson's personal traits rather than his academic achievements in their eulogies for the former Avondale College principal.

Son Roger spoke during Eric's memorial service of his father's "relentless decency." Roger's younger brother, Tony, described Eric as "a man of humanist principles" who "never judged others, even as they judged him." Friend Dr Trevor Lloyd listed the loves of Eric's life, including a love for "truth and honesty."

Several of those sharing memories referred to the way Eric managed this tension between faith and science. Dr Lynden Rogers, dean of the Faculty of Science and Mathematics at Avondale, described his former lecturer as "habitually looking further ahead than most."

Others noted Eric's influence as principal of Avondale (1971-1980) as the college sought accreditation for its courses. "He understood the intricacies and language of the academic world, but with a vision that could combine the time-honoured ideals of Adventist higher education with the academic realities needed," said Avondale College Seventh-day Adventist Church senior minister Dr Bruce Manners during the reading of the life sketch.

Eric, born into a minister's family in Townsville, Queensland, in 1933, spent the first 16 years of his life travelling up and down eastern Australia. Then, in 1950, principal Dr William Murdoch encouraged Eric and two other teenagers, Laurie Draper and Ken Thomson, to study at the then Australasian Missionary College. They became the first Avondale students to graduate with a Bachelor of Science, completing the degree through the University of London.

"Eric's ambition was to put the Australasian Missionary College on the map academically," said Laurie during the service. "That seemed arrogant coming from a mere teenager, but as the years passed, I have recalled those words many times."

Eric earned two PhDs in science, one in Sydney and one in London, after completing compulsory national service. He then accepted a teaching position at the college (1961-1963) and moved into the new Science Department (1963-1968) of which he became chair (1968-1970). After his tenure at Avondale, Eric returned to research and teaching, first at the Australian National University and then at the Australian Defence Force Academy, where he retired as associate professor and continued to serve as a visiting fellow.

"He was passionate about education but humble about his own achievements," said Roger during the service. He remembered Eric marching during the processional at an Avondale graduation ceremony in the 1970s, one man in a suit surrounded by flowing gowns and silly hats.

Dr Norm Young, an honorary senior research fellow at Avondale, presented the homily. He reminded the congregation of the biblical imperative to seek the good of others, "and Eric certainly did that." He reflected on his



Dr Eric Magnusson.

Ann Stafford

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Eric Magnusson: Eulogies

Also sending eulogies in memory of the late Dr Eric Magnusson are:

Dr Niels-Erik Andreassen, president, Andrews University (Berrien Springs, Michigan, USA), and a former colleague of Eric's at Avondale College: "I will miss Eric's probing intellect, his sensitivity to others and his faith commitment."

Dr Ross Grant, chief executive officer, Australasian Research Institute: "Eric was a mentor and, as chair of the Research Advisory Committee and ex-officio member of the Management Committee, an active supporter of the

Australasian Research Institute. He would often spend hours discussing with me the direction and progress of the institute and make himself available for meetings by flying at his own expense from the Gold Coast. Eric was well read and erudite and while we did not always come to the same conclusion, his apprehension and appreciation of the logic of an argument was satisfying."

Dr Bruce Manners, senior minister, Avondale College



Dr John Skrzypaszek



Dr Wayne Miller

Lecturers receive doctorates

Kirsten Bolinger/Anjuli Cruz

Wayne Miller and Pastor John Skrzypaszek are the latest Avondale College lecturers to receive their doctorates.

Wayne, a senior lecturer in health and physical education and outdoor education in the Faculty of Education, received strong endorsement from his examiner. Professor David Fetterman described Wayne's thesis as among the best he has read. "Practical methods to evaluate school breakfast programs: a case study" examines the use of empowerment evaluation with the Australian Red Cross's Good Start Breakfast Club. Wayne served as facilitator and "coach" as club personnel engaged in a process of self-evaluation and developed practical tools to evaluate the program. This "generated a high level of cooperation and commitment to the ongoing evaluation process from those who participated," says Wayne. He graduated from the University of Wollongong in December.

The Australian College of Theology awarded John his

"Magnusson" continued from page 6

days as a student at Avondale to illustrate two of Eric's characteristics. A man with two PhDs teaching theology to a fitter and turner—that's humility, he said. "And the fact that I passed, that's mercy."

"Those of us who knew [Eric] found him to be a person of great honesty and integrity," says Avondale president Dr Ray Roennfeldt. "Within the context of Adventism, Eric was often dealing with issues that were, and still are, controversial and polarising. Yet, he was always careful of others' views, while stating the arguments plainly." Ray describes Eric as "a great friend to the college," noting even in

Seventh-day Adventist Church, and a former minister to Eric and his family at the Canberra National Seventh-day Adventist Church: "The thing I appreciated about Eric was sharp intellect, his ability to quickly get to the core of an issue, yet his graciousness to those who couldn't see it his way. He was a class act, but it was never an act."

Emeritus Professor Ben Selinger, Research School of Chemistry, The Australian National University: "Eric demonstrated the power of belief, commitment and perseverance to a cause, ignoring the sneers and the jeers of his

Doctor of Ministry for "Examining trends in contemporary conversion patterns in the Seventh-day Adventist tradition in Australia: suggested strategies for arresting the inertia which impacts conversion growth in the contemporary Australian culture."

In his study, John, the director of the Ellen G White/SDA Research Centre, interviewed church administrators, including conference presidents, Ministerial Association secretaries and church planting leaders, and those who have joined the church as new members. He discovered a tension between the two groups.

"The top-down approach produces a maze of complex barriers that leads to a cultural distancing between the church and the secular 'unchurched' society," says John. "This contributes to congregational malaise and to the scrutiny that overrides the liberating qualities of the gospel."

retirement Eric's contribution as a guest lecturer, chair of accreditation and research committees and a speaker at conferences. "Eric was irreplaceable and is irreplaceable."

Eric complained about not feeling well after arriving home in Koolewong on the Central Coast from a walk with friends on August 31. He visited neighbours who called the ambulance that took him to hospital where he died shortly after.

Now buried in Avondale Cemetery next to first wife Leonainie (nee Tolhurst), Eric leaves sons Trevor, Roger and Tony, daughter-in-law Risa and grandchildren Andrea and Sean. He was 76.

peers. Contrary to the words of the bard, 'The good that men do, lives after them.'

Dr Vivienne Watts, vice-president (administration and research), Avondale College: "Eric always had the best interests of Avondale at heart and gladly sacrificed himself, his talents and his time. Although he had already developed and implemented groundbreaking innovations, he still held unrealised dreams and ideas for the college's future. The loss of one of our 'founding fathers' leaves a large void."

Feature

The creation stewardship challenge

A call for Seventh-day Adventists to care more for the environment



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Brad Watson

Lecturer in development studies and geography, Faculty of Arts, Avondale College

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is struggling with the idea of, and commitment to, creation stewardship. In a 2008 survey of 278 Adventist ministers in Australia, my fellow researchers and I asked participants to rank the church's performance on environmental stewardship. On a scale of A to E, with A the highest score and E the lowest, 76 per cent gave Adventism a C or lower.

The Biblical Mandate

The Judeo-Christian belief system is criticised for placing humans above nature, in the role of rulers or conquerors. In Genesis 1:26* we read, "Then

God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule' In Strong's Concordance, *radah* (rule), means "to tread down, ie. subjugate"

Critics pounce on such powerful language. Fairy or not, Lynn White's influential 1967 essay argued that much of the then ecological crisis was due to an imbalanced Christian perception of the dominant, conquering role of humans in nature and the subsequent plundering of the earth's resources.

Of course, "rulership" in the Judeo-Christian tradition also requires justice, wisdom, compassion and

benevolence appropriate to the idea of “servant kingship” (as seen in Psalm 72:1-3). Further, the creation account portrays God as a benevolent creator, a model that humans might aspire. Humans are created by a loving God in His image, to “work” and “take care of” His garden (Genesis 2:15). This is far from the Cartesian world view of scientific materialism, in which the cosmos is viewed coldly as a machine composed of independent, externally related pieces.

Interestingly, the first task given to humans in the creation story is to care for creation. Stewardship of creation is part of God’s plan for humans.

Australian Adventist Ministers Surveyed

Adventist ministers in Australia are concerned about the environment. Almost 90 per cent of the 278 ministers we surveyed agreed one of the most important tasks given to Adam and Eve was to tend to God’s creation.

On a scale of A to E, with A the highest score and E the lowest, 76 per cent gave Adventism a C or lower.

Although almost 95 per cent agreed the Bible forecasts widespread environmental destruction at the end of time, 92 per cent agreed or strongly agreed the Bible requires humankind to protect what God created. Ninety per cent thought Jesus would be interested in modern environmental problems and 85 per cent agree or agreed strongly that the western way of life is harmful.

Unfortunately, more than 75 per cent indicated their local church had not taken steps to reduce the impact it makes on the environment.

Structural Sin

Structural sin, as conceptualised by liberation theologians in Latin America, is useful in moving our prioritisation of individual wrongdoing to a more holistic idea of societal, political and systematic wrongdoing. This challenges individuals and institutions to “work for systemic changes

in our laws, institutions and practices that will help bring about a more just and sustainable planet” (McFague, 2008, p 38).

At an institutional level, the Adventist Church can make proactive choices to engage with this issue. Micah 6:8 urges believers “to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” It is argued here that care-taking creation (of which humans are a part) with justice and mercy is important to God.

Albert Einstein beautifully expresses the need for a holistic view of our thinking. “We experience ourselves, our thoughts and feelings, as something separate from the rest,” he says, “a kind of optical delusion of our consciousness. This delusion is a prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires, and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of understanding and compassion, to embrace all living creatures in the whole of nature and its beauty” (in Maxwell, undated).

The Official Adventist Discourse

The official website of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists contains several key documents regarding environment.

A December 1995 *Statement to Governments of Industrialised Countries* (GC, 1995, online) warned the “climate would change, resulting in more storms, more floods, and more droughts.” It urged for reductions in CO² emissions and noted the injustice of small island states and low-lying coastal countries becoming the first victims of climate change. Bravely, church leaders called on world governments to fulfil the 1992 Convention on Climate Change, establish real reductions in greenhouse gas emissions after 2000, and stimulate public debate. In historical context, this statement can be viewed as a landmark, immersing the church in advocacy for God’s creation at a time when the science was heavily contested.

The current official *Statement on Stewardship of the Environment* is dated 1996 (GC, 1996, online). Humans are identified as stewards, nature as a gift. It incorrectly identifies destruction of ozone as the “so-called green-

house effect” and asserts “the ecological crisis is rooted in humankind’s greed and refusal to practice good and faithful stewardship.” Adventism is praised because it calls for a “simple, wholesome lifestyle, where people do not step on the treadmill of unbridled over-consumption, accumulation of goods, and production of waste.”

While the statements are useful, they are built on overconfidence in vegetarianism and the thriftiness of rich world Adventists. They are missing a personal call to action for Adventists. They are missing a repentant spirit, lacking a personal call to church congregations, avoid a practical commitment of the corporate body, and do not reveal a thorough understanding of climate change and the ecological crisis.

What Can We Learn From Others?

Before his death, Pope John Paul II called for an ecological conversion. He called on the Catholic Church to change the way its members saw themselves within creation. Worldwide, there is growing interest within religious groups in the environment.

The Micah network is a movement of more than 500 Christian humanitarian organisations, churches and individuals, and is inspired by Micah 6:8. In July 2009, Micah network delegates met and developed a statement on creation stewardship. Foremost, they state God delights in His creation and calls men and women to care for it as an act of obedience and respect. In a spirit of repentance, the statement admits Christians have been unfaithful stewards and must seek forgiveness for their tendency to separate the spiritual and material, ignoring the earthly. Objectively, the statement names multiple ways humans have made an impact on creation, wisely avoiding a singular focus on greenhouse gasses. Like Adventist statements, the Micah statement warns of grave danger to biodiversity and unjust affects on the world’s poorest people. Among other things, the Micah statement calls for action, beginning with Christians in their own lives and moving to advocacy at the highest of levels.

The Adventist Church can, and should, develop a statement on creation stewardship. As a corporate body, the General Conference should explore ways of engaging members in acts of creation stewardship that deepen their relationship with the creator. As individuals, we can

witness God’s love to others through our commitment to creation. We can all grow as stewards.

Conclusion

While global warming remains controversial, there is little doubt humans are now harming creation in disturbing ways. If we say we believe in the Creator, yet ignore His call to be good stewards of His creation, and absent ourselves from the debate, are we acting justly and loving mercy, or are we unwittingly engaging in structural sin?

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In memory: Avondale alumni honour classmate

Brenton Stacey

A massed choir's performance of a song dedicated to a recently deceased classmate added poignancy to the Sabbath worship service at Avondale College's Homecoming (August 28-30).



Ann Stafford

Avondale College president Dr Ray Roenfeldt preached the sermon during the worship service at Homecoming. Earlier, the massed choir, conducted by Alan Thrift, dedicated its performance of "O Still, Small Voice of Calm" to Gail Valentine.

Conducted by a long-serving former head of music Alan Thrift, members of the Homecoming honour years joined to sing Eugene Butler's arrangement of "O Still, Small Voice of Calm" in memory of Gail (Cover) Valentine. A member of the class of 1969, Gail had been planning to attend Homecoming before her death from cancer in March.

The Avondale College Alumni Association surprised the recipient of its highest award by keeping his name secret until the official presentation during the service. Members of the association's committee voted in February to present the Outstanding Alumni of the Year to Dr William Johnsson (see "Outstanding Alumni of the Year" next page). However, they revealed the name only during the reading of the citation.

Eight other alumni, one from each honour year, joined Bill as award recipients. Receiving citations from their classmates were: retired minister Leslie Coombe (1939); a former director of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in southern Asia's Health and Temperance Department, Ronald Baird (1949); a former director of the worldwide church's Health Food Department, Eugene Grosser (1959); teacher Helen Schulz (1969); teacher Coralie Fraser (1979); busi-

nessman Rodney Long (1984); church planter Loren Pratt (1989); and Avondale lecturer Jason Morton (1999).

Graham Mitchell, a retired accountant and a former head of the Commercial Department at Avondale, presented the annual Alumni Lecture on Friday morning, posing the question, "Business education at a theological college?" Influenced partly by Adventist Church pioneer Ellen White's support for the "adequate control over church finance," Graham criticised the church for showing more interest in cost allocation than in understanding cost behaviour. "We allocate costs . . . as far down the chain as possible, so that we come up with financial statements where the sum of parts equals the whole. It looks good, but we are fooling ourselves with arithmetic."

The alumni association dedicated the lecture to George Laxton, who served the church in various business and educational roles for more than 50 years.

During the annual general meeting following the lecture, members of the association voted Pastor Des Hills as their new president. Outgoing president Jenny Laredo Hilder will serve as vice-president.

Former Avondale lecturer Dr Don Hansen spoke at vespers on Friday evening. When we return for Homecoming, are we really coming home? he asked. He compared his home with the Avondale he remembered from his student years—not like home at all, he said. Then, this question: What are we actually celebrating at Homecoming? Until the true Homecoming, which Don described as "our rightful inheritance," Homecoming at Avondale will only ever be a great reunion, he said.



Ann Stafford

Russell Gibbs recalls an interesting story with fellow 1969 classmates.

Outstanding Alumni of the Year



Dr William Johnsson.

The Avondale College Alumni Association honours as its Outstanding Alumni of the Year for 2009, Dr William Johnsson.

Bill grew up in South Australia. He completed his primary schooling at Walkerville and his secondary schooling in Adelaide then felt the Lord calling him to enter the ministry.

At Avondale, Bill received not only

a broader vision of a worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Church and a desire to serve wherever the Lord should lead, but also a good grounding in Greek from the late Dr Alwyn Salom. However, according to Bill's wife, Noelene, "he would probably say finding me was the first benefit."

He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in theology in 1959 before serving as dean of boys at Vincent Hill School in India. The country fascinated him, because he would teach at Spicer College over the next 17 years. Further study

followed: a Master of Arts in theology from Andrews University (Berrien Springs, Michigan, USA) and a Bachelor of Divinity from the University of London.

Bill would go on to serve as a professor and an associate dean at Andrews after completing a Masters and a PhD in biblical studies from Vanderbilt University (Nashville, Tennessee, USA).

Then came his career calling, as editor of the flagship journal of the Adventist Church, the *Adventist Review*. He would serve as an editor from 1980 to 2007.

Bill is now special assistant to the president of the worldwide church for interfaith relations. In this role, he chaired an Understanding Islam from a Christian Perspective Conference at Avondale in January this past year. In the opening address, he reflected on his experience of working and talking with Muslim leaders and academics. "I have been learning and unlearning a lot," he said. "Islam and Adventists are everywhere in the world. They are our neighbours. We need to understand them as fellow human beings. They are children of God—spiritual children of Abraham—as we are, and the everlasting gospel that God has said to take to the whole world includes them."

During his acceptance speech at Homecoming, Bill described his decision to study at Avondale as one of the most important of his life, because it gave him a greater vision of the world's needs. "This is a small college," he said, "but an important one."

Alumni notes

Dr Don Hansen, a former lecturer in the Faculty of Arts at Avondale College, has created a new teaching resource as part of a project sponsored by the Australian Christian Heritage Foundation. Don is the author of the *Samuel Marsden Student Workbook*, which accompanies the *Marsden Teacher Handbook*. Don has been contributing to the foundation for the past few years.—*Administration and Research News*

International journal *Brain Injury* published an article by **Dr Malcolm Anderson**, a senior lecturer and the research development coordinator in Avondale College's Faculty of Nursing and Health, in November. Other authors of "Differential pathways of psychological distress in spouses versus parents of people with severe traumatic brain injury: multi-group analysis" include Malcolm's colleague **Tamera Gosling** and **Dr Peter Morey** from the Faculty of Business and Information Technology. Malcolm is researching with collaborators from the Brain Injury Unit at Liverpool Health Service and the Centre for Assessment Research and Development at The Hong Kong Institute of Education.

Student an award winner for helping the needy

Kirsten Bolinger

It all started in Bangkok. Jessica Parsons and friends visited missionaries living in one of the slums of the Thai capital. The experience inspired the then 16-year-old. “I just got hooked,” says Jessica, hooked on serving others.

Jessica’s passion for giving of her time and talent earned her the 2009 Avondale College Alumni Association Community Service Award. The award is worth \$1000, but Jessica will have to wait to collect the money—she is volunteering with the Transformational Development Agency in Rwanda, working with those orphaned because



Community Service Award recipient Jessica Parsons is volunteering with the Transformational Development Agency in Rwanda. One of her responsibilities is helping with Photo Voice. The project offers training in photography to people who are marginalised and encourages them to visually tell their stories. The aim is to raise awareness of how these people view their world and to bring positive social action.

of the genocide and with sex workers and their children. She describes life in Africa as “rough” and many of her experiences as “disheartening.” Receiving the award encouraged her. “It felt like you were saying to me, ‘We still remember you, we still care,’” says Jessica.

She thanks Avondale staff members Brad Watson and Wayne French and former staff member Christina Hawkins for their support. She is also thankful to the college itself. “Taking the international development studies course helped a lot. I loved learning how to make someone’s life better.”

Travelling the world in 2006 would see Jessica would put this theory into practice. She began by sharing her faith with children and families living on the street and with children and women in jail in India. She ran a children’s club in Fiji, served at a summer camp for Christian girls in the United States of America, served as a kitchen hand at a children’s camp in England, taught English at a Christian school in Mexico and returned to Fiji to minister to children at a Christian church. She would visit the country again the following year with her family, serving as part of a dental team on a boat called *Marine Reach*. On campus, Jessica joined the student club, One Mission, becoming its director in the year she organised another trip to Fiji to run a children’s club and to build a library at a Seventh-day Adventist school.

Jessica’s aim in life is simple: “I hope I can do something good, doing good in my eyes is helping those in need.”

An Avondale College alumna has helped raise more than \$50,000 for a Croatian girl who suffers from a rare and aggressive form of leukemia. **Kristina Kukolja** (2002) organised the dinner in her role as a Croatian program presenter and producer for SBS Radio. The multicultural broadcaster raised awareness of the plight of the two-year-old—her name is Leona—by interviewing her mother and the Croatian-based president of the fundraising campaign. Leona’s treatment, and that of her sister, who is Leona’s bone marrow donor, has cost the family more than \$400,000. Leona’s mother told SBS Radio how the family had to move to Germany to receive treatment not offered in Croatia. Kristina, who also operates a boutique public relations agency, organised an on-air and in-print promotional campaign to complement the dinner. “We’re delighted with the outcome in raising \$52,000 for Leona,” she says, “and the donations are still coming in.” Attending the dinner were the Croatian ambassador to Australia and Zealand, the Croatian consul general in Melbourne and celebrities such as George Calombaris, Anthony Koutoufides and cast members from the television show, *Neighbours*. —Kirsten Bolinger

The Avondale experience in perspective

Dr Arthur Patrick

Honorary senior research fellow, Avondale College

President Dr James Cox initiated a new idea for Avondale College in 1981: Homecoming. Suddenly, former students from as far back as 1919 began to cluster, burnishing memories and renewing relationships. All staff members and students were invited to each Homecoming, but the Avondale College Alumni Association extended a particular welcome to those who graduated in designated honour years, from one to seven decades previously, plus those marking their first quarter-century since graduation. Thus, at least once in every 10 years, many staff members and students have returned to their alma mater.

However, some want more opportunities for shared time. For instance, 10 graduates from the years 1953-1957 have gathered on special occasions such as 40th, 50th and 60th birthdays. Since retirement, on four occasions, we've planned several days together: in the Blue Mountains; on the Murray River in a houseboat; and twice in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales. During our 2009 reunion, September 12-15, the group analysed why we cherish being together.

We noted the 10 of us spent 32 years at Avondale, graduating from 16 courses of study. Although we also graduated from other institutions 16 times, Avondale holds the premier place in our memories. All of us found our life partners there; the 10 of us have subsequently enjoyed 520 years of marriage and 322 years of paid work for the Seventh-day Adventist Church—plus uncounted years of volunteer service.

The fact all of us were born during the Great Depression is a minor unifying factor. Far stronger is the sense we regard Avondale highly for stimulating our educational growth, cementing lifelong friendships and enabling us to meet marriage partners from as far away as New Zealand and Western Australia. Avondale also focused our commitment to serve both church and community; in this regard, the example of its staff members was a positive influence upon us, especially because we came to regard them as friends.

We plan another reunion in 2011, including more worship experiences, music and reminiscences, but we realise the next time we are all together may be in the land where time will not be counted by years. Until then, we will prize our Avondale experience, peopled as it is by many more



Graduates from the years 1953-1957: (back row, left to right) David Currie; Tom Ludowici; Allan Lindsay; Athal Tolhurst; Arthur Patrick; (front row, left to right): Gaya (Wilton) Currie; Pam (Iona) Ludowici; Deirdre (Kent) Lindsay; Linley (Willis) Tolhurst; and Joan (Howse) Patrick.

cherished friends than just the 10 of us who have found it possible to meet for planned reunions.

Alumni notes

Carissa Amos (2008) has received Calvary Public Hospital's New Graduate of the Year Award for excellence in quality care. She also received a scholarship from the Canberra-based hospital to further her study in emergency nursing.

Ali (2006) and **Leighton** (2001) **Heise** have successfully juggled children, chord charts, school holidays and studio time to launch their debut album, *Year of the Home*. The two never asked themselves, "Could we make an album?" but, "How could we not make an album?" "Ali often says, 'Look what God gave me today,'" says Leighton. "This literally means, 'Stop, I need to play the piano now,' and she just sits down, the kids go feral and out comes this amazing thought to music. It's cool and a little dangerous watching it happen." Leighton describes the lyrics of their songs as sharing "the realities of life, love, loss and God." Visit aliandleighton.com for information about how to buy *Year of the Home*.



David Clark now teaches organ to 20 children, including Stephen Aveling-Rowe, the first in Australia to graduate from the Suzuki Organ program.

Alumnus introduces first Suzuki Organ program

Lyndelle Lawrence

An Avondale College alumnus has introduced Australia's first Suzuki Organ program for children.

David Clark, the former head of music at Avondale and a qualified Suzuki teacher trainer, is teaching 20 students between the ages of three and 13. They love the variety of sounds on the organ, he says. "It's like a virtual orchestra."

David holds lessons at the Avondale Memorial Seventh-day Adventist Church in Coorabong, New South Wales. He describes the church's encouragement of young organists as "fantastic." "It has already awarded two scholarships to support the students."

Developed in Sweden more than a decade ago, the Suzuki Organ program is taught in Europe and the United States of America but not in Australia until 2008, the year David began offering the program. Another organist in Melbourne has just received accreditation and will begin teaching this year.

Stephen Aveling-Rowe, 11, who has been studying with David for the past 18 months, says he enjoys the power of the organ. "I don't have to blow my own trumpet." Stephen's performance on the world's largest mechanical action pipe organ during the Suzuki graduation concert at Sydney Opera House in November this past year is signifi-

cant: he became the first organ student in Australia to not only perform during the concert, but also to graduate.

All of David's students have performed at churches, including Newcastle's Christ Church Cathedral, in the Hunter. They have also played at the Wahroonga and Stanmore Seventh-day Adventist churches in Sydney, the latter having one of the most historic and famous pipe organs in Australia.

"The organ has been used in worship for more than 2000 years," says David. "No wonder we call it the king of all instruments."



David Clark.

Lecturer's message to teens: "Never give up"

Tammy Zyderveld

The strength of a story about a boy and the challenge of adolescence has seen an Avondale College lecturer choose who would publish his first novel.

Brad Watson received offers from three publishers to produce *Finding David*. The successful offer came from Signs Publishing Company. "I appreciate Brad's ability to tell a good story, as well as his passion to make a difference," says book editor Nathan Brown.

Finding David follows a character called David as he moves into a new school and deals with bullying, romance and a mysterious family tragedy. The book "covertly and realistically walks the reader through what it's like to be a teen today," says Nina Atcheson, the curriculum officer for Adventist Schools Australia, which provided \$2000

to produce resources for teachers.

Students at four high schools provided feedback during the writing process. "*Finding David* taught me about trusting God and practising self-discipline and respect," says Catrina, then a Year 9 student at Northpine Christian College.

Brad feels God is working through him to encourage teens. "My message to them is this," he says. "There's always hope. Never give up."—with Brenton Stacey



Brad Watson launched *Finding David* with Year 10 students at Central Coast Adventist School.

Ann Stafford

ALUMNI HERITAGE WALK

ENGRAVE YOUR NAME IN STONE; HELP PRESERVE OUR HERITAGE

THE WALK

The Avondale College Alumni Association launched its heritage walk at Homecoming in 1999 to raise money to preserve and restore the heritage features of Avondale's Lake Macquarie campus. The walk between Bethel and College Halls features black granite pavers etched with the names of Avondale alumni or Friends of Avondale.

The first paver bears the name of Laura Kent, at 108, Avondale's oldest living alumni until her death in February 2008.

THE COST

The Avondale College Alumni Association invites Avondale alumni or Friends of Avondale to make a \$175 tax-deductible donation to have their names etched on the pavers.

THE HOW-TO

Contact the Advancement Office (see details below) to add your name to the Alumni Heritage Walk. Avondale will etch your name in stone and place a paver in the walk as a permanent reminder of your donation.



Inspired for Life.

the advancement office

Telephone: +61 2 4980 2252 Fax: +61 2 4980 2269 Email: advancement@avondale.edu.au

Postal: PO Box 19, Cooranbong NSW 2265, AUSTRALIA

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