

community CONNECTION

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK



“No one discipline can carry the torch”

INFORMING THE GLOBAL CONVERSATION

ACADEMIC OPTION
ADDRESSES POVERTY
& SOCIAL JUSTICE

Carver School: Verlene Goatley

By Dr. Tanya Brice,
Associate Professor of Social Work



Mrs. Verlene Farmer Goatley, left, and Tanya Brice

by different professors in the school.

During the fall semester, the students continued their visits to six individuals representing two nonprofit agencies, a city office, two churches and a restaurant. They delivered small baskets of candies mid-term. They invited people from the downtown community and from other academic units to one of their classes on campus to explore what they think it means to be good neighbors.

They have visited younger cohorts in the school to generate interest in Project Neighbor. As the semester drew to a close, their final assignment was to develop a plan to sustain their social movement after they leave Baylor.

“The traditional model of community practice education focuses heavily on developing a product, whether it’s an assessment or a final presentation,” Sherr said. “Our goal is to make sure there is enough interest in this project to continue it.”

It seems fitting that the profile photo on the class’s Facebook page is of Fred Rogers, who for generations opened his PBS children’s show by singing, “Would you be mine, could you be my mine, won’t you be my neighbor?”

It also may be an appropriate symbol because the wisdom of Fred Rogers’s approach to children’s programming was initially dismissed as too simplistic.

These students have taken the first steps, but they know that relationship must be sustained. They also know that relationship can’t begin without a “Hello.” ♦

Follow Project Neighbor’s activities on Facebook at www.facebook.com/pages/Project-Neighbor

When Verlene Farmer Goatley was a child living in Bridgeport, OK, she became interested in missionary work when a White missionary would come over to the “Black town” and practice being a missionary to Africa with the children.

The zeal this missionary exhibited for the gospel inspired the little girl and set her on a course that would lead her to be one of the first two African American women to integrate the Carver School of Missions and Social Work. She and Freddie Mae Bason, a classmate and friend from Langston University, set out in fall 1953, traveling by bus from Oklahoma to Louisville.

On Dec. 20, 2010, I had the honor of visiting with Mrs. Goatley in Oklahoma City, OK, while she was there visiting her sisters. I was joined by Dr. Laine Scales, Carver School alum, Professor of Higher Education at Baylor, and author of *All That Fits a Woman* (Mercer University Press, 2000). We recorded Mrs. Goatley’s recollections of her days spent at the Carver School as part of an oral history project that Dr. Scales has been working on since 2003.

Mrs. Goatley describes her experience at Carver as “mind-boggling.” When she entered, she had not yet completed her Bachelor’s in Religious Education at

Langston University, so the academic load was challenging.

At Langston, she participated for several summers in domestic missionary work as part of a National Baptist Convention and Southern Baptist Convention partnership. Mrs. Goatley and Freddie Mae Bason were recruited by Dr. Guy Bellamy, an advocate of racial reconciliation working for the Home Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention. Dr. Bellamy arranged for the two women to attend Carver School in 1953 in hopes that the Home Mission Board could hire the two women upon graduation. “Carver School trained me for

continued on page 17

Proof of Accreditation

Are you a Carver School alumna who needs verification that Carver was accredited by the Council on Social Work Education when you received your degree? The CSWE has a web page listing all formerly accredited programs, and it lists The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1984-1997: <http://www.cswe.org/Accreditation/41929/41931.aspx>

If you need further help, contact the Office of Social Work Accreditation and Educational Excellence.
Dr. Judith Bremner, jbremner@cswe.org or 703-519-2047.

Dean's Report continued from page 2

one of the first social work research studies focused on congregations. She had both the practical experience and the academic knowledge and skills we needed to shape our social work program. For the same 10 years that Dr. Myers was leading our graduate program, Dr. Yancey led our baccalaureate program as it grew exponentially, attracting students from across the nation.

During that time, Dr. Yancey continued her research that led to resources and training designed to help congregations serve their communities. Her instruction of advanced practice BSW and MSW classes has led to the student development of resources that are currently shaping how Waco understands and addresses issues such as poverty, urban development, hunger and congregational outreach. Ask any civic leader in Waco; they all know and deeply respect Dr. Yancey, increasingly looking to her for leadership in addressing the challenges of poverty in our community.

I had to think long and hard about her decision to set aside the administrative oversight of the BSW program so that she could expand her research and teaching. As Associate



Dean, she had opportunity for personal mentorship of so many students. She is greatly gifted in the gentle care of guiding the exploring, enthusiastic spirits of young people! Yet as a classroom teacher, that mentoring can take on new dimensions. She is passionate about her research and publication around congregations and communities and the roles social workers can serve to bridge and strengthen those connections; she is instilling that passion in our students.

The reality is that over these years, on many days I have spent more time with Dennis and Gaynor than I have with my spouse. We have dreamed together, wrestled with problems, prayed, and supported one another as friends and research partners. I am blessed to experience the best of all their considerable gifts and skills for the benefit of our students and this School.

I miss them in the daily administration of the school, but I am so excited about the current and future impact of their research and on the students they are mentoring, now that they can devote to them that first calling on their lives. ♦



Miss Verlene from page 5

missions work,” Mrs. Goatley said, “and it confirmed my passion for missions work.”

Although it was a time of acute racial tensions in the nation, Mrs. Goatley describes positive experiences at Carver. She remembers how she and her colleague, Freddie Mae, were met at the bus station when they arrived by the women of Carver. She describes the supportive relationships that she enjoyed among fellow students. When she was denied access to public facilities, such as a movie theater or restaurant, due to Jim Crow policies in Louisville, her White classmates joined her in solidarity, and would not go into those facilities.

“They were women who loved the Lord,” she said.

Mrs. Goatley also earned a Bachelor's of Science in Sociology and Criminal Justice at Langston and pursued a Master's in Religious Education at Carver. She served for seven years in Liberia, West Africa, as a teacher at the Suehn Industrial Missions, a missions project supported by the National Baptist Convention. She was forced to return home due to a severe illness. She later became the director of the Baptist Student Union at Langston University, serving in this capacity for more than 25 years.

Mrs. Goatley married for the first time at age 63 to the Rev. Wilbur Goatley, a 1956 graduate of the Southern Baptist Seminary, who was among the first group of African American men to attend the seminary. They currently live in Eminence, KY, where the Rev. Goatley is Pastor Emeritus. ♦