

# FRONTLINES

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# An Inestimable Legacy

Rick Hove, Faculty Commons Executive Director



Nestled on the shore of Lake Erie, approximately half-way between Toledo and Cleveland, lies the historic town of Sandusky, Ohio. If you wander up through town from the lakefront, in a few blocks you gaze upon the stately stone library, framed by its majestic towers.

Built by wealthy philanthropist Andrew Carnegie in 1901, the Sandusky library was the first of three Carnegie libraries in Ohio. Today its motto reads, "giving all people opportunities to enrich their lives;" surely this library has passed this legacy on for more than 100 years.

I've been thinking about the concept of "legacy" lately. Perhaps my reflections flow from the unfortunate; sadly, I've attended too many funerals lately. Or maybe they percolate due to good news; my oldest son will be married this fall.

We all desire to leave some kind of legacy.

To leave a place, or this life, in such a way that no one notices is universally appalling.

We tend to associate legacies with famous people, like Andrew Carnegie, Jackie Robinson or Charles Darwin. But, whether we know it or not, each of us leaves a legacy, for good or for ill. More to the point: Of what quality is the legacy that trails behind us?

Some legacies are better than others. In fact, some legacies are outright harmful.

Since we all leave a legacy, and some legacies are better than others, wisdom suggests we strive to leave a legacy of notable worth, ideally one of ultimate worth.

Faculty Commons is shaped by the enduring notion of legacy. Jesus told us, "Every student, when he is fully trained, will be like his teacher" (Luke 6:40). So we strive to give every student the opportunity to learn from Christ-loving professors. We think this legacy has the power to transform both students and professors, as well as the university, our country, and the world.

We also strive to ensure that Christian perspectives and values are included in the university culture, so they become a piece of the university's legacy for years to come.

Further, each professor has a powerful legacy. Some see this primarily along the lines of a C.V. (resume), publications, or academic accomplishments. Yet one could argue the most enduring legacy of a professor is found in the thousands of students who now reflect their teacher in what he or she taught and valued.

The library in Sandusky is a beautiful reminder that the world we live in is assuredly shaped by the legacies of those who have gone before us. So let's work to ensure that Christ is a powerful part of the legacy through which our universities shape future generations.

Let's pull together to pass along that which is

of inestimable value. †

Executive Director of Faculty Commons since 2005, Rick has also directed the Rice and Duke ministries. He is a summa cum laude graduate of both Georgia Tech and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Rick, his wife Sonya, and their three children live in Durham, NC.



Above photos: C. Hanckey ©2012

# Differing Conclusions

Ministry Profile: Dave and Janet DeHuff, University of Pennsylvania



How should Christian professors respond when their university invites a high-profile atheist to speak to a target audience of freshmen? Christian professors at the University of Pennsylvania, led by Faculty Commons staff Dave and Janet DeHuff, decided that they would not let the bleak and cynical atheist arguments go unchallenged.

Oxford professor Richard Dawkins aggressively attacks belief in God at every opportunity. He did not disappoint when he spoke in March to 1300 at Penn on the subject of "Proof, Science,

and Skepticism." The Penn Faculty-Staff Christian Forum offered to provide a faculty responder on stage after Dawkins' talk, but the university declined.

So a panel of four Christian professors hosted a respectful and informed public response two nights later titled, "Same Data, Different Conclusions."

With 22 years of faculty ministry at Penn, Dave has a long history of coordinating events like this. But responding to a high-profile visit by an "atheist star" was one of the most difficult.

"Why would I take on something that could be quite 'messy' when my plate was already full for this semester?" Dave later mused. "I realized in hindsight what propelled me. My six-year-old

grandson will be shopping for colleges in 11 short years."

So Dave and the four professors spent two months preparing for their response to Dawkins' lecture. Their hard work was rewarded.

"God causes the wrath of men to praise Him," Dave notes, "and He even used Richard Dawkins' visit to bring the gospel and the Christian worldview into bold relief (science vs. scientism, super-naturalism vs. naturalism, purpose vs. random chance) as seldom before on Penn's campus."

Law professor David Skeel, paleontologist Peter Dodson, and medical school professors Ray Townsend and Jim Kirkpatrick each opened with a five-minute reply to Dawkins' arguments.

The 200-member audience was eager to discuss the issues; they stayed for nearly two hours of Q&A. "Seeing intelligent professors across various disciplines speak about their faith was reassuring for me," wrote a Christian student who struggles with doubts.

Another student noticed the questions from atheists and skeptics in the audience: "The panel was an opportunity for those not of the Christian faith to dialogue with those who hold beliefs different from Dawkins."

Please pray for the Penn students as they continue this dialogue about faith and science. As Dave notes, "Perhaps best of all, Richard Dawkins left town while the faculty panelists remain—accessible to students—week after week. †

## University of Pennsylvania

Created in Philadelphia by Benjamin Franklin in 1751, the University of Pennsylvania (Penn) was the first American institution of higher education to be named a university. Franklin's aim "to train young people for leadership in business, government, and public service" has produced countless leaders from its 12 colleges and 8 professional schools. These leaders include 9 signers of the Declaration of Independence and 11 signers of the Constitution; 215 alumni, faculty, and trustees have served in the U.S. Congress or the Continental Congress, with another 23 as top-level advisors to the President of the United States. More than a dozen scholars have received the Nobel Prize. Penn has 142 research centers and institutes with an annual research budget of \$923 million.

- Total enrollment: 24,725 (half undergraduate)
- The School of Medicine is the nation's first; half of Penn's faculty serve there
- Penn's Wharton School consistently ranks as the top U.S. business school
- Penn developed the first electronic, large-scale, general-purpose digital computer—ENIAC
- Franklin Field is the oldest collegiate football field in use and the site of the famed Penn Relays
- Penn is the only Ivy League university founded with no official religious affiliation

Photos: University of Pennsylvania and Steve Minicola ©2010



University of Pennsylvania library interior.



Ornate architectural detail: Quadrangle at Penn.



Prominent paleontologist Dr. Peter Dodson responds to Dawkins' lecture, noting that for centuries science sought to uncover the glories of God rather than deny that He exists.



# Christ-following Physics Professor

Faculty Profile: Dr. Sam Matteson, *University of North Texas*



Imagine your physics professor including this in his introductory comments on the first day of class:

"I have examined most of the major philosophies and religions of the world and have concluded that the way of Jesus of Nazareth provides meaningful answers to life's most important questions."

Students in Dr. Sam Matteson's physics classes at the University of North Texas (UNT) hear that statement every year, coupled with his invitation to chat further about the subject.

For some students, it's a first step on a journey from agnosticism to faith. One young lady asked, "Were you serious about talking about anything? Then I have questions about the Bible and science."

Another student, Dr. Matteson remembers, reported that his family "was worried that he was heading off to the pagan university and then on his first day and first class our paths crossed."

One more former student sent a photo of himself and his wife from Uruguay where they now serve as missionaries. He wrote, "You have been a beautiful portrait of the gospel to hundreds of students and a prime example of the sort of disciples we pray and hope to form throughout the years of our life. We want to see individuals serving the Lord from within their role in the culture, within their jobs, and among the lost."

He continued, "I will never forget the first day of class where you offered your story and logical argument for why you believe the gospel and how it affects the students. You then carried it out by serving students more attentively and actively than any professor I've encountered."

It could have been so different.



On the first day of class, Dr. Sam Matteson identifies himself as a Christian, resulting in spiritual conversations with his students throughout the semester.

Dr. Matteson recalls, "Forty years ago I was a new graduate student wondering if indeed one could be a passionate Christ-follower and a first-rate scholar or scientist. The popular opinion was that only the uneducated were gullible enough to be hoodwinked by the gospel. No scholar of the first magnitude would buy the claims of Christ."

Then he encountered one who did. And it changed his approach to his career.

Dr. Matteson views his academic career as his calling from God. In addition to his testimony of his faith—through both words and deeds—to students and colleagues, he says, "My calling also requires me to do the very best science that I can. Psalm 111:2 says it well: 'Great are the works of the LORD, researched by all who delight in them.'"

"When I was a youth I felt a call to missions. Faculty Commons has helped me realize that I am on mission, full-time and embedded in the faculty of a major research university."

*Dr. Sam Matteson is a veteran professor of physics where he was recently named the recipient of the J. H. Shelton Award for Excellence in Teaching, the most distinguished recognition of university teaching at UNT. For ten years he served as Chair of the Department of Physics.*

THE PASSION

HE WENT TO THE END SO YOU COULD MAKE...

A BEGINNING.

Why did he do it? Jesus, the Son of God. Why would he leave heaven to endure the torture, pain, humiliation of the cross? Jesus said he came only to do the will of the Father. He came in the Father's name, for the Father's glory, doing all things by the Father, speaking only what the Father told him to speak. And that got him into trouble—with people.

His words and miracles greatly upset some people. So Jesus paid the price. He was sentenced to die by crucifixion. But ultimately it was not the Romans and Jews controlling Jesus' death. They were not making the ultimate decisions. Jesus was never fully at their mercy.

This was Jesus, who healed the blind, even raised people back to life! One was his friend, Lazarus, who had been buried in a tomb for four days! Following that one, the authorities said, "If we let him go on like this, the whole world will be following him." Indeed, Jesus voluntarily gave up his life.

Why??

For us. To step in and take our place. To pay the harsh punishment for our sins. Again, why? Because our sin was keeping us from him. He was willing to die that, to remove the barrier—to offer us forgiveness.

God demonstrates his own love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," the Bible tells us. What this means is that you can make a new beginning with God. He did this for you, but his forgiveness is not yours until a relationship with God himself belongs to you. And he is offering you that. Look at Jesus' passion. Is there any question how much he wants you to know him?

If you have questions about how to begin a relationship with God, please see EveryStudent.com.

EveryStudent.com

Christian faculty at Mississippi State have run several ads over the years (like this recent one above) in their student newspaper, *The Reflector*, pointing students to Christ. Their open witness has been an encouragement to Christian students on campus and to many faculty as well. Organizer Dr. David Peebles told us, "This outreach has gained the notice of the MSU community. Although met with some resistance from various sectors, it has largely been appreciated."

## Join with us in Prayer

Jesus said: "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him?" (Matthew 7:11)

1. Pray for Christian professors in the life sciences (biology, genetics, etc.) who work on academic questions related to the origin of life. Pray God grants to them grace and wisdom as they study and interact with other professors in this field.
2. Pray for our summer mission trips with students and professors, that God would enable them to grow in Christ and take the hope of Jesus Christ to the world.
3. Pray for the many venues at Cru's summer staff training where we will promote faculty ministry. Pray new faculty groups will result from these connections.

## Crossing to Safety

Review by Dr. Jay Lorenzen, *Faculty Commons staff and Retired Professor of Political Science, Air Force Academy*

*Friendship is the greatest of worldly goods. Certainly to me it is the chief happiness of life. If I had to give a piece of advice to a young man about a place to live, I think I should say, 'sacrifice almost everything to live where you can be near your friends.' I know I am very fortunate in that respect.*

— C.S. Lewis

A colleague recently recommended to me *Crossing to Safety* by Wallace Stegner, saying, "No other novel drives me to be a better friend or a better husband than this novel." He had been

attracted to the book originally because the story revolved around the academy and the search for professional and publishing success, the hope for and loss of tenure, the longing for academic security. But Stegner could have set the story in any challenging profession—for the story is about this universal good of friendship.

Stegner's story traces the friendship between two couples, the Langs and the Morgans, whose friendship I found so reminiscent of Jesus' words: "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends."

One of my favorite lines in the book occurs when one of the wives, feeling suddenly sick, is put to bed during a noisy gathering of university colleagues, now friends. Her husband says to everyone:

*"Oh, please don't leave. Sally loves the sounds that friends make."*

Why is it that I find it so hard to build a company of friends? Is it the competitive environment, the struggle to be the richest, the brightest, the cleverest in the room? Or is my identity so rooted in promotion or position that I can't rejoice in the success of others?

In that Oxford community of scholars, known as the Inklings, it was different—all seemed to value a gathering of friends. For J.R.R. Tolkien and his fellow Oxford don, C.S. Lewis, friendships were not just elements in a story. They were as Aristotle said, "the excellence which is most indispensable in life." They came together because of common values and interests. They

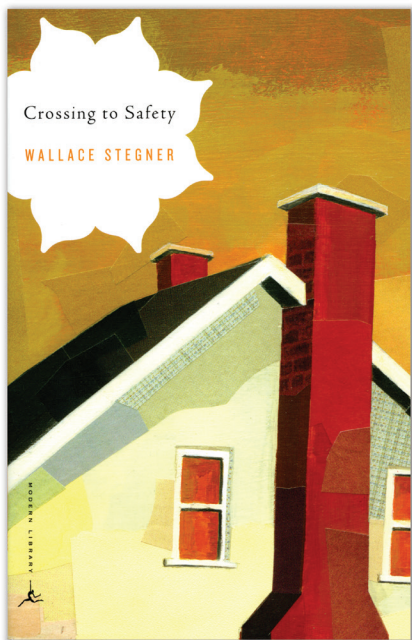
found that sharing one's own joys is one of life's greatest pleasures.

Lewis describes how friendships are born, how they arise from commitments larger than self, even larger than the other:

"Friendship is born the moment when one man says to another, 'What! You too? I thought that no one but myself ....' It is when we are doing things together that friendship springs up—paint-

ing, sailing ships, praying, philosophizing, fighting shoulder to shoulder..."

In *Crossing to Safety*, the Langs and the Morgans likewise find their friendship more important than academic advancement—living out a long-term commitment and loyalty to one another. Facing life's trials and tragedies, they go the distance—crossing to safety—together. †



## Fast Facts:

Faculty Commons was launched at *Kennesaw State* by a professor who recruited others to hear a *Georgia Tech* Christian faculty member speak to their group.

Faculty at *Clemson University* are publishing a faculty ad in the school newspaper this summer with a QR code linked to an evangelistic website.

Dr. Mike Yoder of the *University of Georgia* spent spring break with UGA Cru students in Haiti, enjoying the time with students as much as the mission opportunities.

Cru students at *Cal Poly San Luis Obispo* invited so many professors to the Faculty Appreciation Dinner last month that the venue was filled and reservations closed.



## Investing in the Mission

Your financial investment will enable us to build movements of professors and students to take the hope of Jesus Christ to the world. Will you prayerfully consider partnering with us in this great endeavor? All contributions to Faculty Commons are income tax deductible.

### Cash donations

Make check to Cru and mail to Faculty Commons; 2001 W. Plano Parkway, Suite 2700; Plano, Texas 75075. Or invest online: [give.cru.org/2271527](http://give.cru.org/2271527)

### Maximize your giving to help reach the world for Christ

Stocks, bonds and mutual funds held for at least a year, which have increased in value since the time purchased, will receive extra tax savings when used as a donation.

### Estate Design

At no charge, professionals at the Great Commission Foundation can help you develop a strategy to meet your financial goals minimizing taxes and maximizing Kingdom impact.

If you need assistance, please contact our Director of Ministry Development, Rich McGee at 214-727-6084 or [rich.mcgee@facultycommons.org](mailto:rich.mcgee@facultycommons.org).



### Support Faculty Commons Staff

As part of Cru, all of our staff trust God for their salary and ministry expenses. You can contribute directly to individual staff at [give.cru.org](http://give.cru.org) by typing their name in the search box.

FACULTY COMMONS  
A Cru Ministry

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