



Scarritt and National Colleges International Alumni/ae Association

NEWS

Spring 2025

From the Chair

Grace & peace! Greetings from the SNCIAA board!

When I return to the beloved Scarritt campus, there are two locations that I always make sure I visit. One is the arch that connects Wightman Chapel to the Bennett building. "Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God." William Carey's witness has remained a consistent witness for nearly forty years of ministry and mission. The other visit is to make sure that the squirrel is still in the door facing of Scarritt building located as I exit to enter Susie B. Gray Dining Hall or Gibson dormitory. Indeed, this ritual is another constant reminder of how Scarritt continues to shape my going and coming. That squirrel always leads me to "The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore." (Psalm 121: 8; English Standard Version.) And I am reminded that the psalmist's words were planted in my spirit by Nathalie Pennington, beloved, long-time employee at Scarritt.

The Alumni/ae Board members are inviting you to share your witnesses regarding Scarritt. Let us hear from you! And we hope you will return to Scarritt Bennett Center to visit, be replenished, and certainly share a gift for future encounters by those coming and going.

On Thursday, October 9, 2025, the Alumni/ae Board will be hosting several ZOOM celebrations. We want you to participate. Watch for those details. You should receive an invite by email from a host as October nears. Perhaps you would like to host a ZOOM? Please let us know.

We will announce on October 9, 2025, the dates for an on-campus reunion in October 2026. Please don't wait to visit until 2026, but we hope to have the date available this October so that you will have time to make plans and contact your classmates for this exciting time together.



Emmanuel,
Stacy Douglas
SNCIAA Board Chairperson
Scarritt Graduate School, 1986

From the Executive Director

*Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers,
for by so doing some people have shown
hospitality to angels without knowing it.
Hebrews 13:2 NIV*

Greetings SNCIAA! Let's Get Radical!

First of all, thank you to all who joined us in October for Homecoming and the Centennial Celebration. We had a delightful time. It is our sincere desire that more of you will be engaged in the offerings at Scarritt Bennett Center whether virtually or in-person.

Amid challenges of the current political climate dismantling diversity, equity, and inclusion, Scarritt Bennett Center will continue to lean into its mission of women's empowerment, racial justice, spiritual formation, and transformative education for we are needed now more than ever.

As God would have it, at the Scarritt Bennett Leadership Retreat in 2024, we had already declared that 2025 would be a Radical Year for us. Therefore, we will continue to provide radical hospitality according to scripture found in Hebrews 13:2. Hebrews 13:2 emphasizes the importance of treating all people with kindness and generosity, as we may never know whom we are encountering.

Rooted in mission, we will continue to welcome all. We remain committed to the principles of faith and justice for all. We hope that you will join us in our efforts to create a community where all individuals experience radical hospitality reflecting God's love for all.



Peace and blessings,
Rev. Sondrea L. Tolbert, J.D., M.Div.
Executive Director
Scarritt Bennett Center

Scarritt College Homecoming Strengthens Alumni Bonds

In January 2023, I joined the Board for the Alumni Association. My favorite task has been working with other Board members to plan the 2024 Homecoming, which took place last October. I want to take this opportunity to say a big and enthusiastic THANK YOU to each of you who attended. It was so fun to reconnect with former classmates and to visit with others we've met through continuing education events or annual conference activities.

We kicked off Homecoming with a Tailgate Party in Laskey Library. That was followed by an Old Town Trolley Tour of Nashville, which was planned by Sandra Thomas (1987). Our tour guide kept us entertained with stories of Nashville. We passed The Station Inn, which some remembered, but most of The Gulch area was new to us.

Stacy Douglas (1986), the Chairperson of the Board, led the planning of the worship services. We are so grateful to Marilyn Beecher (1977), Sharon Willis (1980), and Dr. Robert O'Gorman for their inspirational messages. Marilyn shared how Scarritt College prepared her to serve in missions, both internationally (Bulgaria) and nationally. Sharon spoke about faith and how Scarritt shaped her music ministry. Dr. O'Gorman talked about his experience as a professor at Scarritt. He humorously shared how he and his wife wondered how it would be to live in the south. With great affection, he told how they grew to love Scarritt.

The music for the worship services was exceptional. John Palmer (1985) served as organist and pianist. Each time we entered Wightman Chapel, he was playing, and it was beautiful. David Donathan (1987) directed a choir of Homecoming participants. They had very little practice time but provided a lovely program, "The Sounds of Scarritt," for our group, Scarritt Bennett Center staff, and friends.

During free time, Jim Polk (1973) and Mike Hodge (1977) did a presentation on the Civil Rights Movement in Nashville in the 1960's in which students from Scarritt and other colleges were involved. They shared pictures of places that were significant to the Movement. We also enjoyed hearing from DeLaris Risher (1954), one of the first two African American students who attended Scarritt.

Marilyn Morton (1972) and Barbara Barden (1980) posted pictures of Scarritt on Facebook as a way of publicizing Homecoming. Their efforts helped some of us to begin renewing friendships before arriving on campus. During Homecoming, Barbara kept us laughing with games at each meal. Some served as conversation starters, and some got our competitive juices flowing.

In conclusion, I am so grateful to God for Scarritt College and for the opportunity to study there. I love going back to the campus as it is one of my happy places. The next Homecoming is scheduled for October 2026. Hope to see YOU there!

Blessings!

Rachel Lever (1977)

Honoring Legacy, Fueling the Future

Support the Annual Giving Campaign in Tribute to Former Scarritt College Faculty, Kathryn Mitchem

By Jenean Davis, Development Director

Each year, alumni like you make an extraordinary impact through annual giving. Your support fuels Scarritt Bennett Center's innovative programming, and the daily work that keeps our conference and retreat center thriving. Annual gifts—regardless of size—ensure that current and future students have access to the same transformative experiences that shaped your own journey.

This year, we invite you to make your gift with special meaning.

We are proud to launch a **special giving campaign in honor of Kathryn Mitchem**, a beloved mentor, educator, and friend to generations of students. For decades, Kathryn's passion for teaching and unwavering support for her students left an indelible mark on our community. Kathryn worked for many years as a missionary in the field and was eventually asked to join the faculty of Scarritt College as department head for their graduate program in Church and Community. Her legacy is more than a memory—it's a living force in our community. Our goal is to raise \$20,000 in honor of Kathryn's desire to update the beautiful Labyrinth and Peace Garden on Scarritt Bennett's campus.

Kathryn's career of 41 years with the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries has had many chapters and sent her to many destinations but always focused on a single mission - to serve small, rural congregations across the U.S. through the "Church and Community" program. Gifts made to this campaign will directly support initiatives that reflect Kathryn's lifelong commitment: sacred spaces, creative learning spaces, and transformative education opportunities that ensure the next generation of leaders and members of the beloved community can follow in her footsteps.

Whether you were inspired by Kathryn in a classroom discussion, or a quiet word of encouragement when it mattered most, this is your chance to give back in a way that keeps her spirit alive.

Join us in honoring her legacy by making your annual gift today. Every contribution—no matter the size—brings us closer to our goal and strengthens the foundation for future generations.

To contribute, visit www.scarrittbennett.org (place in the memo: In honor of Kathryn Mitchem), or mail your donation to Scarritt Bennett Center - 1027 18th Ave. South, Nashville, TN 37212 (place in the memo: In honor of Kathryn Mitchem), or email Jenean Davis, Development Director, jdavis@scarrittbennett.org with questions.

Together, we remember. Together, we give. Together, we grow.

Scarritt College at Homecoming 2024



Scarritt Bennett Center
1027 18th Ave. South
Nashville, TN 37212

Spring 2025 Alumni/ae Newsletter

Nonprofit Organization
US Postage
PAID
Nashville, TN
Permit NO. 514

Milestones

PASSINGS

Barbara Jane Andrews (SC '72) Nashville, TN d. 2/22/25

Rev. Nick Thomas Woods (National College in Kansas City, 1958 - 1960) DeSoto, Kansas d. 12/15/2024

James "Jim" Allen North (SC '64 Christian Education) Oak Ridge, North Carolina d. 1/19/2025

Afrie Songco Joye (SC '70, Christian Education) Philippines d. 3/18/25

Janet Sue Troxel Foster (employee at Scarritt Graduate School and wife of Christian Education professor Charles R. "Chuck" Foster) Bloomington, Indiana d. 9/6/24

Rev. Dr. James I. Warren (Cadwallader Chair of Theology and the Mission of the Church, Scarritt College & Scarritt Graduate School) Lake Junaluska, North Carolina d. 4/18/24

Send your MILESTONES to

Cyndy Goodrich (SC-66) at cyndygoodrich@aol.com or
202 Old 31W | Cottontown, TN 37048

Prayers for Sarah Wilke on the Passing of Her Father Bishop Richard Wilke

We extend our deepest sympathy to former Scarritt Bennett Center Executive Director Sara Wilke on the passing of her father. Bishop Richard Wilke was a cornerstone of Christian education in the United Methodist Church. Read more at:

<https://www.unitedmethodistbishops.org/newsdetail/umc-mourns-the-passing-of-bishop-wilke-19049291>

