

# BSC@150

## Join us for Birmingham-Southern College at its Sesquicentennial

BY JEANNE JACKSON

If you've been thinking of coming back to the Hilltop, this is the year. Birmingham-Southern is celebrating 150 years of providing a quality and life-enhancing liberal arts education. With a theme for the Sesquicentennial Celebration of BSC@150: *Advancing Human Dignity*, we've planned a year filled with speakers, music, art, films, service projects, and a huge birthday bash—all guaranteed to stimulate and entertain you. This is the year to come back and once again experience the best of Birmingham-Southern.

Why the theme of "*Advancing Human Dignity*?" A century and a half ago, Methodist reformers in cotton-rich Greensboro, Alabama, began Southern University, the predecessor to our own Birmingham-Southern College. Foremost on their minds was the desire to establish an institution that would combine academic excellence with selfless service in order to provide the type of Christian leaders that their society so desperately needed. In his 1921 inaugural address, President Guy Snively recommitted Birmingham-Southern "to prepare men and women for better and nobler service to God, country, and fellow man." He called it "education for service." In our 150 years as an academic institution, we've moved from Greensboro and changed our name, but what hasn't changed is our commitment to education and service. Our students and our alumni have a deep-rooted commitment to making the world a little better than they found it.

What is special that is happening this year? For starters, our faculty and our student and alumni choirs performed with the Alabama Symphony Orchestra, where *Fanfare for Human Dignity* by Music Professor and Rome Prize recipient Charles Norman Mason was premiered. Pulitzer Prize winners E.O. Wilson, a noted ecologist from Harvard University; former *New York Times* foreign correspondent David Shipler; and journalist Nick Kotz, author of a new book *Judgment Days: Lyndon Baines Johnson, Martin Luther King Jr., and the Laws That Changed America*, will speak. F.W. de Klerk, former president of South Africa who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993 for his work on the peaceful termination of the apartheid regime in that country, will present the Alex P. Stirling Lecture. United States Poet Laureate Rita Dove will read her poetry at the Writing Today conference; sculpture by BSC alumni Branko Medenica, Jim Neel, and others will be on display; and an amazing foreign film series is scheduled. Homecoming 2006 will be better than ever, with retired coaches, former athletes, and a cadre of Rowdy impersonators on hand. And, as always, there will be superb theatre productions, concerts, art shows, and faculty presentations.

Professor of Political Science Natalie Davis and community leader

Sheila Atchison are organizing a two-day program titled "Women, Leadership, and Human Dignity" honoring women who have made momentous contributions to advancing civil and human rights. Among those who will participate in the informal roundtable discussions and lectures is the international president of the YWCA.

In keeping with the theme of human dignity, Birmingham-Southern is joining the Birmingham Museum of Art and the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute to address the impact of the Holocaust. The N.E. Miles Judaic Studies and Middle Eastern Culture Lecture will be presented by Emory University Professor Deborah Lipstadt, author of *History on Trial: My Day in Court with David Irving*. Her lecture, along with exhibits at the Birmingham Museum of Art and the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, will coincide with Holocaust Remembrance Day.

We'll conclude the Sesquicentennial Celebration with flair—a two-day birthday bash during Alumni Weekend May 5-6, 2006. There will be great food, activities for children, sporting events, Alumni Mini-College, Honor Class reunion parties and a live band under tents on the Academic Quad, fireworks, and more. If you can only return to campus one time over the next seven months, be the one to convince your BSC friends to return for "Sesqui-Sensation Under the Stars."

Need more details on these events and more? A complete Sesquicentennial calendar begins on page 14 of this issue of 'Southern magazine. A special Sesquicentennial calendar publication also was mailed to alumni and friends.

Please take time to review the exciting events that alumni, faculty, staff, and students have planned to help us celebrate our past and prepare for our future. Then, join us as often as you can.

Need the phone number or e-mail address of a former classmate or BSC friend to meet up with back on the Hilltop during this exciting year? The Office of Alumni Affairs at 205/226-4909 can help.

This is the year to show off your alma mater to your children, grandchildren, parents, and friends. Make plans today to return to the Hilltop to celebrate 150 years of a place that made an incredible difference in your life and in the lives of others.

**Editor's Note:** Jeanne Jackson is director of Leadership Studies and Environmental Studies at Birmingham-Southern College. She also is serving as coordinator of the college's Sesquicentennial Celebration during the 2005-06 academic year.