

BSC@150

Birmingham-Southern alumni and friends can be counted on in good times and bad

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*I*t was an exciting, though very challenging, spring at Birmingham-Southern. If you don't already know, in this issue of 'Southern you'll read about two situations over the past few months that have presented the college with one of its most challenging times in its celebrated 150-year history.

During our Sesquicentennial year, two of our students were arrested in association with the arson of nine Alabama churches. Also, in May our Board of Trustees moved to seek reclassification of our athletics program from NCAA Division I to Division III to better serve the college's academic mission and to assist with a trying financial time in the history of the college.

It has been a time that has challenged us as individuals and as a college community. All of us have had to dig deeper, look at the big picture, and focus on the college's history of making the tough decisions that would best serve society and the institution.

But through it all, as we knew would be the case, our alumni and friends have stood behind their college. After the student arrests, hundreds of calls, letters, and e-mails came in with offers of assistance to help rebuild the churches, from financial gifts to offers of donated materials, benefit concerts, and much more. Unsolicited gifts to the college's Alabama Churches Rebuilding and Restoration Fund came in from all over the world to push the total received to more than \$368,000.

On top of that, when BSC Trustee Dr. Pete Bunting '66 issued an Annual Fund challenge offering \$50,000 if Birmingham-Southern alumni could match those funds in unrestricted giving, our alumni went way beyond and gave almost \$130,000. And all in less than one month's time. Giving to this year's Parents' Fund shattered records as well.



Friends reunite during Alumni Reunion 2006.

Support also has been shown in other ways. The Sesquicentennial Alumni Reunion Weekend was a huge success, with more than 1,000 alumni, faculty, staff, and students in attendance at a whole new offering of activities and events, culminating with a celebratory dinner, fantastic fireworks display, and band party on the Academic Quad.

While controversial, the decision to move to NCAA Division III has many supporters. There has been an outpouring of support from

alumni, some of whom are already asking for season tickets to the soon-to-be-launched football program! The hottest selling item in the BSC Bookstore is our football T-shirt, which says "Birmingham-Southern Football: Undefeated Since 1939."

Our college community has turned this challenging period in the college's history into one of excitement. Sure, challenges still remain, but it is comforting to know that no matter what happens, BSC alumni and friends can be counted on to stay the course, to stand behind their beloved college. Even when decisions are questioned, you show how deeply you care with your questions.

How appropriate then that this final Sesquicentennial issue of 'Southern magazine features profiles of outstanding BSC alumni—alumni who have done amazing things in their fields of endeavor. It is a strong reminder of what this place does best—educate leaders.

And within these pages are only a few of our best and brightest. We receive e-mails, letters, and phone calls daily with news of the accomplishments of another alumnus or alumna. They all make us proud. *You* make us proud.

Thank you for what you mean to 'Southern. Thank you for standing strong in your support, even in the toughest of times. You're the reason we can celebrate 150 years of making the world a better place—one graduate at a time.