

O.C. Weaver: opening new avenues of thought

Dr. Oliver Cornelius (O.C.) Weaver's warmth, engaging manner, and sense of humor helped make his courses in religion, philosophy, and astronomy popular on campus during his long years of teaching at Birmingham-Southern. Dr. Mark L. Wagner '59 of Pikesville, Md., says Weaver was "like the kindly uncle you'd always wished you had."

Wagner, professor emeritus at the University of Maryland, adds that Weaver was "simply a wonderful teacher He was a role model for me during my teaching career. I always remembered his manner and style of connecting with his students."

But it was the intellectual challenge of Weaver's classes and the invitation to a larger world view that former students remember most ardently. Elvin R. Hilyer Jr. '60 of Dahlonoga, Ga., valued Weaver's classes for their "open and lively debate."

Joann Starr Denman '59 of Birmingham says his classes taught her to reach out, expand her way of thinking, and learn how to imagine other cultures; they encouraged her "insatiable curiosity" for understanding how other people think.

Weaver, a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Birmingham-Southern, also earned a bachelor's degree in divinity from Garrett Theological Seminary and a doctoral degree from Northwestern, with additional studies at Yale and at the University of Mysore in India, where he studied as a Fulbright Fellow. He was ordained as a Methodist minister.

He served on the BSC faculty from 1937 to 1938 and again from 1946 to 1983, the interim including Navy service in the Pacific during World War II. From 1983 to 1988, he continued teaching as professor emeritus. He was named L.C. Branscomb Professor of Philosophy at BSC and was, says college historian Don Brown '58, "for 47 years a leading figure on the faculty, in the administration, and in the Methodist church." In 1979, he was recipient of the Omicron Delta Kappa Excellence in Teaching Award.

From 1946 to 1964, Weaver was chair of the Department of Religion and Philosophy and later served as dean of the college. In 1957, he co-authored *Birmingham-Southern College, 1856-1956*, the school's centennial history.

Weaver lives in retirement on the BSC campus.

CCH



1898

North Alabama Conference College opens on a hilltop west of Birmingham.

1905

North Alabama Conference College changes its name to Birmingham College.