



Jim Noseworthy:

Francis Asbury Award winner

When the Rev. Jim Noseworthy started the Francis Asbury Award for the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, he never expected to receive the honor.

So when his name was called June 13 at Annual Conference, Noseworthy was shocked.

"I was sitting on stage listening and wondering who was going to get it," Noseworthy said over a lunch of lasagna June 20. "I actually teared up. It is gratifying to be affirmed for what you are doing, and I am humbly thankful for it."

The award is given annually to a person who fosters ministry through Holston Conference-related higher education. And if anyone has a passion for church-related higher education, it is Noseworthy.

In fact, it was asking himself, "Where is my passion?" that led Noseworthy to Hiwassee College in Madisonville, Tenn., where he has served as president for three years.

"My experience at a United Methodist-related college was very important to me," explained Noseworthy, 58. "I truly noticed a change in my life precipitated by the kind of school it was."

"I believe firmly that I was called here not to close a college, but to help a college move forward."

Stints as minister-in-residence at Methodist College in Fayetteville, N.C., and chaplain and director of church relations at Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa, led Noseworthy to the

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry in Nashville. During his 12 years there (his last title was Assistant General Secretary for Schools, Colleges, and Universities), he visited 123 college campuses in the United States. Hiwassee was one of them.

"I thought it had a cool mission," Noseworthy said of his decision to seek the college's presidency. "And it was like going back to the frontlines. I knew about its challenges and opportunities."

Those challenges include Hiwassee's accreditation disputes with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. In December 2004, SACS tried to revoke Hiwassee's accreditation, based on its perception that the college did not have adequate financial resources to sustain its mission.

Hiwassee disagreed, and its accreditation was restored through a temporary restraining order. The college now is pursuing legal action to reverse SACS' decision.

In the meantime, Hiwassee remains accredited, Noseworthy stressed. "Despite SACS, there has been no institution that has said we no longer will take your credits."

While the discovery phase of litigation has concluded, Noseworthy said he has no idea how long the court case will take to decide.



Photo by Lesli Bales-Sherrod, *The Call*

Hiwassee College President Jim Noseworthy enjoys a lunch of lasagna, salad, and breadsticks at The Patio Italian Restaurant in downtown Madisonville.

"I believe what we have discovered supports our litigation," he said. "Part of my resolve is that Hiwassee has a distinctive mission. We never have been a rich college, and one of the reasons is we have invested heavily in our mission of providing scholarships for students who otherwise could not attend college. We don't do everything fancy, but we do it solidly."

Hiwassee continues to move forward with increased enrollment this fall; improved technology; expanded opportunities for teacher development; better support from the community, the church, and alumni; and at or above average scores on the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency, which all sophomores at Hiwassee are required to take.

Noseworthy also has plans to start new programs on campus and improve the college's facilities.

"I believe firmly that I was called here not to close a college, but to help a college move forward," Noseworthy said. "Schools of conservative Christian perspective are growing, so obviously they are meeting a need. I believe an unashamedly United Methodist college with a unique sense of openness and discovery still can grow. Not everyone's a conservative fundamentalist Christian." ■

Lesli Bales-Sherrod is county government reporter for The (Maryville) Daily Times and attends the French Broad Circuit churches in Knoxville District.

exchange:

GREENEVILLE, Tenn. – Trinity UMC seeks a part-time music director to work with adults, children, youth, and bell choirs – directing some choirs while utilizing volunteer directors in others. Send resume by July 15 to: Trinity UMC, Attention SPR Committee, 524 Tusculum Boulevard, Greeneville, TN 37745, or e-mail trinity@xtn.net.

BRISTOL, Va. – State Street UMC seeks a director of music. Send resumes to: State Street UMC, 300 West Valley Drive, Bristol, VA 24201, Attn: Music Search Committee. ■

calendar:

T-shirt deadline: July 24

Youth groups are encouraged to enter the T-shirt design contest for Resurrection 2007. The upcoming theme is "Grace to Believe, Courage to Live," based on 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. The winning youth group will receive all proceeds from sales at the January event in Gatlinburg, Tenn. – after a 10 percent tithe to the Youth Service Fund. Deadline is July 24. For more info, visit www.holstonyouth.com or call (423) 928-2156.

Ballpark night: Aug. 6

The Tennessee Smokies will play the Birmingham Barons at "Holston Conference Night at the Ballpark" on Sunday, Aug. 6, at 5 p.m. Holston members will receive discounted tickets for \$11 each at field level if they purchase by July 19. To reserve seats, contact Gabe Bowman at (865) 286-2317 or download a registration form at www.holstonyouth.com.

UMM gathering: Aug. 18-19

All men are invited to the Holston Conference United Methodist Men's "Spiritual Gathering" Aug. 18-19 at Comfort Inn in Oak Ridge, Tenn. Download a brochure at <http://holstonconference.com/newsflash/downloads/ummgathering2006.pdf>, or contact Jim Ball at (276) 686-5284 or Bill Smith (865) 354-4218. ■