

Billy Graham Named Evangelist of 20th Century

Throughout his ministry, the Rev. Billy Graham has earned many titles and recognitions: evangelist, author, minister and spiritual advisor to U.S. presidents. Carson-Newman University felt one title was missing. On Friday, the Jefferson City, Tenn., school named Graham "Evangelist of the 20th Century."

The recognition was presented to Graham at his home in Montreat, N.C., by Carson-Newman University President J. Randall O'Brien.

"I am thankful to Dr. O'Brien and Carson-Newman University for the honor of receiving the 'Evangelist of the 20th Century Award,'" said Graham. "It is especially meaningful to receive this from a school well known for shaping hearts and minds of next-generation students for Jesus Christ.

"I also commend this church-related institution for recently receiving the status of 'university'—well fitting Carson-Newman's mission 'Higher Education for a Higher Purpose.' While I do not deserve this award, I accept it in the name of the One whom I have sought to serve all my life."

O'Brien said the decision to present Graham with the prestigious honor was a unanimous decree from the university's board of trustees.

"We feel we are the privileged ones to be able to present Dr. Graham with this award," said O'Brien. "At Carson-Newman, we believe in the power of the gospel in transforming lives to better serve God and neighbor. I can think of no one in modern history who has helped transform more lives for the kingdom of God than Billy Graham," said O'Brien. "This award joyfully recognizes Dr. Graham's faithful service and heart for sharing with others the saving love of Christ."

Graham's impact throughout his lifetime of ministry cannot be overstated. His accomplishments and recognitions are legendary. Often referred to as "America's Pastor," Graham has been named one of Gallup's "Top 10 Most Admired Men in the World" 56 times since 1948—more than any other individual.

The North Carolina native founded the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association in 1950, and has preached the gospel to more live audiences than anyone in history—some 215 million people in more than 185 countries and territories. He is the author of 31 books, many becoming best-sellers. He is the recipient of the United States Congressional Gold Medal, 1996; and the Honorary Knight Commander of the order of the British Empire, 2001.

The "Evangelist of the Century" honor is the first of its kind to be presented by Carson-Newman University, O'Brien explained. "In the years to come, we will continue to recognize individuals who have distinguished themselves in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with our world," he added.

Graham was married to the late Ruth Bell Graham. Together they had three daughters and two sons. Ruth Graham, the family's third daughter, serves as honorary chair of Carson-Newman's Women of Vision, an organization that helps support the university through personal, professional and philanthropic avenues.

"Ruth Graham has been a grace-gift to Carson-Newman," O'Brien said. "Her ministry to our students and university family has modeled the compassion of Jesus Christ. Oh, the lives she has touched!" he added. "I know her father is proud of her, as are we. We love them both dearly."

Carson-Newman University is a private, Christian liberal arts university. Founded in 1851, the school is located among the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains. The university has an

enrollment of approximately 2,000 students pursuing both undergraduate and graduate degrees.