



A C A D E M I C S

Every child dreams of becoming something specific when they grow up. Often these dreams are seen as fairy tales — a goal that could not be achieved. Even more often our childhood dreams and aspirations do not end up being our career paths once we reach college. As we grow up our interests change, but perhaps our realistic approach to life causes us to lose our childlike ambitions. Imagine what we could become if our dreams as college students were equally as ambitious as that of a child longing to be a doctor or firefighter. Academics give us the path to become who we have always wanted to be. We select majors that serve as our identity, and despite prevalent pressure, the change and growth of each semester often leave us second-guessing ourselves. Harding offers many different avenues in the field of academics to help students not only find their place in academics and social life, but to make their dreams reality. As the well-known phrase goes, “Do what you love and you will never work a day in your life.” Have the confidence and ambition of a child, chase your dreams and use academics to make them your reality.

Megan Ledbetter

On Sept. 11, introduction to journalism and introduction to public relations classes combined to hear an emotionally moving discussion between Department of Communications Chair Jim Miller and communications professor Jack Shock, who served as a volunteer during the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. After a class period full of first-hand stories, Miller dismissed class with this powerful charge of how the academic journey at Harding University can lead to remarkable changes.

“

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”
HERE.

Dr. Jim Miller

People

Whether it is a smile on the sidewalk, a conversation over coffee or a late-night dorm “real talk” session, our interactions with other people shape who we are. With whom did you leave an impression on the sidewalk today? What opportunities did you let walk by unnoticed? As we go through life, these small, life-changing moments often go unnoticed, but ironically, when we stop and take the time, these interactions with the people around us are the moments in which we find ourselves. Whether we find our close friendships that will last a lifetime or meet people from all walks of life, culture and experience, the people here help to create the Harding experience. Find the people who will help you find yourself.

By Megan Ledbetter

ROSS COCHRAN

DEDICATION RECIPIENT

By Megan Ledbetter | Photo by Macy Pate

Dr. Ross Cochran, professor of Bible, was chosen by the student body as the 2017 Petit Jean yearbook dedication recipient. After graduating from Harding in 1979, he spent 18 months in Dublin, Ireland, as a missionary, but returned to the United States and married Nita Allen in 1981. He came back to Harding as a member of the Bible faculty in 1986 and began volunteering with Nita at Camp Tahkodah where he became director in 2004. He served as director for eight years and has been on Harding's Bible faculty for 31 years. After her cancer returned for the second time, Nita passed on May 31, 2016. Despite the heartache and pain that Cochran and his family endured, he never wavered from his dedication and responsibilities to his students. This year, Cochran not only taught students about scripture, but he showed them the power of scripture through his endurance.

Megan Ledbetter: Why do you love your job?

Dr. Ross Cochran: There is nothing I would rather teach than the gospels. There is no one I would rather teach than freshmen. I am with them every day and I get to know them. I feel like students are my friends. I have always had great relationships with students, but there is something about being older. I thought I would lose touch with them, but it has not been that way, and I don't think they are just feeling sorry for me because I lost Nita. They know I love them.

ML: Where did you find yourself as a student at Harding?

RC: I didn't know what I wanted to major in. After my sophomore year I went on a seven-week campaign to Brazil. I found myself in a church one Sunday there. [There] was a group of Christians gathered under a little shelter, and I led singing in Portuguese. I did some other things that were ministry related, and I thought, "This fits me. I enjoy this kind of thing." I declared a major in Bible that summer and that's what I did. That was a "find me" kind of experience.

ML: How has the Harding community helped you and your family through the past year?

RC: People lose people all the time. We all do it, but it is a gift when people who've been through what you have been through are willing to let you go through the process and not say "Hey, it's going to be alright. Hey, I've been there, done that. It's going to be OK." That really doesn't resonate too much, but just to let you go through your process and walk beside you — that's been really good. [...] I've often said, and Nita did too, "I don't know how people get through this without a community." I really don't. It's too much. It's too overwhelming, and it's not as if the crisis creates the relationship. It's that the relationship is there so that when you fall or you need someone to catch you, those people are there.

ML: What is one lesson you want to teach all the students who come through your classes?

RC: I often say if I could inject everybody with one principle, it would be this: what if everybody did what I did? More formally known as the universal imperative — act in such a way that you wish it be made mandatory for everyone to act as you do. That's it. [...] If we conducted ourselves the way that we wished everybody would, what kind of world we have? If I were saying a second thing I recommend to people, it would be to step into your discomfort, because some things that make us nervous should make us nervous. It might be danger, and we need to figure that out, but sometimes it's things I'm not comfortable with. We have to push ourselves to do new things — to have conversations we haven't had before with people we haven't had them with before. I just find that everyone wins when we do.





FAIR WEATHER FEATHER

By Brittany Simers

In addition to pursuing his master's of business administration, graduate student Jacob Feather had a lot on his plate this year. Managing being a student, husband, father and farmer left Jacob with little spare time. During the rare moments he was not working, he thought about career plans for the future.

Jacob discovered he wanted a career that would extend beyond the home, field and classroom.

According to Jacob, growing up around agriculture showed him a love for farming. He said he started searching for a way to combine business and farming after he graduated from Harding in May 2014, with a bachelor's degree in business management.

"Once I decided that was what I wanted to pursue, I got to thinking about how to grow agriculture," Jacob said. "Trade magazines talk about a global market and how the world is no longer flat. My idea was to find a way to pursue agriculture differently than how it is now and to also make money and still help people."

Assistant professor of business Mike Allen said he saw Jacob's enthusiasm for international farming develop through a business course.

"As we were going through international business, that's when he started talking a lot about the opportunities he saw in farmland," Allen said. "People are discovering oil and different kinds of energy, but when it comes to farmland, it's not like God is creating more of it."

Because of proximity and the cost of travel, Central or South America sounded like ideal countries to start an international farming program,

according to Jacob.

"I would like to own land in the country and be able to have a manager run the farm," Jacob said. "I would go there a couple times a year for those first few years to take new technology that they don't have right now and introduce them to it, help them learn and provide jobs for other people."

Callie Feather, Jacob's wife and a Harding alumna, said she knew Jacob's dream would add challenges to their busy schedule.

"He is very busy in the spring and fall, and has a break during the winter, but we realize if his dream comes true, he could be making multiple trips," Callie said. "This dream will take a lot of preparation to become a reality, but with Jacob's work ethic, I believe this dream can become a reality in the future for our family."

Jacob's knowledge of business and his own experience with farming provided him with a mindset for tackling future challenges, according to Allen.

"It's more than just picking a piece of land in a foreign country," Allen said. "It's also understanding the culture and [the] needs of those customers. I think he's well on his way."

Jacob said he wanted to spread more than just agricultural development through his plan.

"I want to use it as a mission to help spread the [Gospel] to those people who are my employees or just people in the community," Jacob said. "I have challenges, but if I can overcome them, I think I'll reap great rewards."

Graduate student Jacob Feather tends to his farm in Griffithville, Arkansas, while also taking classes in management and business ethics. He returned as a graduate student to take business classes with the aspirations of moving himself and his farms internationally. | Photos by Macy Pitt

