



SMU. PERKINS
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

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PERKINS HONORS BISHOP JOHN WESLEY HARDT AS 2008 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS

Dallas, Texas – Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, announces the selection of Bishop John Wesley Hardt, Bishop-in-Residence *Emeritus*, as the Perkins School of Theology Distinguished Alumnus for 2008. The award is given each year to an alumnus or alumna who personifies effectiveness and integrity in service to the church and wider community, support and involvement in the goals of the seminary and university, and exemplary character. This award will be presented to Bishop Hardt at a luncheon on Tuesday, January 29, 2008, during Perkins' Ministers Week.

Bishop Hardt's longstanding relationship with Perkins began as a student in the 1940s. He earned his B.A. from SMU in 1942 and his Bachelor's of Divinity from Perkins School of Theology in 1946. Bishop Hardt was elected to the United Methodist episcopacy from the Texas Annual Conference and served as resident bishop of the Oklahoma Area for eight years until his retirement from active ministry in 1988. He returned to Perkins as Bishop-in-Residence until 2000, and since then he has served as Bishop-in-Residence *Emeritus*.

"Bishop John Wesley Hardt has brought enormous distinction to this School of Theology through the quality and depth of his ministry during these decades. His pastoral commitment to students, faculty, and staff is legendary. And he has an encyclopedic knowledge of Methodism, from the systems and structures of the church to the people who have worshipped in our pews, been baptized in our fonts, and shaped the church's life. He continues to honor Perkins School

of Theology by his life and work. It is certainly time for us to honor him,” says William B. Lawrence, dean of Perkins School of Theology.

He has also faithfully served The United Methodist Church in many ways. Locations where he served include the Dekalb and Alba circuits in Texas; Malakoff, Tyler, Atlanta, Marshall, Beaumont, and Houston, Texas; and the Oklahoma Area Conference. Bishop Hardt and his wife, Martha, have traveled around the world visiting Methodist mission work in Asia, Southeast Asia, Africa, Europe, and South America. They have been delegates to World Methodist Conferences in Denver, Dublin, Honolulu, Nairobi, and Singapore.

Four publications also broadened Hardt’s contribution to the Methodist community at large. His books include: *Not the Ashes, But the Fire*, 1976; *Lakeview: A Story of Inspiring Unity*, 1993; *Cecil Peeples: A Twentieth-Century Giant*, 1999; and *Forward in Faith: The Ministry and Mission of Marvin United Methodist Church*, 1999. His next book, co-authored with his son, William C. Hardt, *Historical Atlas of Texas Methodism*, will be published in January 2008. Yet it is his ongoing personal involvement with the Perkins faculty and students that has most endeared him to the Perkins community. In 1998 the Perkins Student Association established the Bishop John Wesley Hardt Award which is presented to students who are involved at Perkins in community life, worship, and student government as well as their local church and community.

Perkins School of Theology is one of five University-related official schools of theology of The United Methodist Church. The school was founded in 1911 by the Methodist Episcopal Church South, now The United Methodist Church. Degree programs include the Master of Church Ministries, Master of Divinity, Master of Sacred Music, Master of Theological Studies, and Doctor of Ministry degree, as well as the Ph.D. in cooperation with SMU’s Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences.

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